

MARCH WELLNESS:

NUTRITION MONTH



March is National Nutrition Month. It is a great time to think about your eating habits. Did you know that nutritional needs change through the decades? Fueling your body and promoting health with food choices differs depending on your age.

Please note that nutritional needs may also differ based on medical conditions, activity levels, family history and additional factors. Therefore, individual nutritional plans should be discussed with a medical professional.

However, there are general tips based on age that offer a good starting point for the discussion with your doctor or nutritional professional. Here are general tips and considerations offered through the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

1. **Teens to 20s: Bone Building**

Calcium-rich foods and beverages are important in your 20s because bone density is still being built. In addition to help in building strong bones, calcium is also important for keeping muscles, nerves and the heart healthy.

2. **20s to 30s: Baby on Board... and More to Consider**

It is important for women in their 20s and 30s to get enough folic acid in their diet if they are planning on getting pregnant.

In addition, both men and women should begin to think about a nutritionally sound diet based on whole plant foods; which can help reduce the risk of certain chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer.

Another point to consider for this age group is to avoid “dieting”. Fluctuating between weight gain and loss is unhealthy and it has been linked to increased the risks of osteoporosis and cardiovascular issues.

3. **30s to 40s: Keeping Score**

This is a time to be sure that you are consuming enough fruits and vegetables, which offer vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that are important for good health.

During these years, it is also important to get enough dietary fiber, which may help with protection against heart disease and some types of cancer.

4. **40s to 50s: Mindful Eating**

Caloric needs generally decrease as we age, so being mindful of eating habits (the right foods and the right amounts) and physical activity (getting enough) would be beneficial. Getting enough Vitamin D may also be beneficial, as this nutrient is good for bone health, and may reduce risks of some cancers, heart disease and infectious diseases.

5. **60s and Beyond: Protein Power**

Muscle mass tends to decrease as we age. Incorporating strength training and getting enough protein in your diet can help maintain muscle. Protein is also good for bone health. It is also important to get enough Vitamin B12 in your diet, as this nutrient helps keeps the brain and nervous system healthy, and helps your body make red blood cells.

For more information on healthy nutrition through the decades, click here: [Eat Right for Life](#)