

Food for Thought

March 2026

March is National Nutrition Month® Discover the Power of Nutrition

Each year during the month of March the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics celebrates National Nutrition Month®. This month we invite everyone to learn about making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits.



This year's theme is "**Discover the Power of Nutrition.**" Nutrition has the power to help individuals and communities thrive. Discover how food and beverage choices can help power your day. Learn tips for accessing healthy foods in your area. And build healthy habits into your day to help you feel great now and in the future.

How can you celebrate National Nutrition Month®?

- ✓ **Eat Breakfast.**
- ✓ **Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables** to add color, flavor and nutrition to your meals.
- ✓ **Be Active** by doing exercise that works for you. You don't have to hit the gym – take a walk after dinner or put on music and dance at home.
- ✓ **Get to Know Food Labels** to help you choose foods and drinks that meet your nutrient needs.
- ✓ **Fix Healthy Snacks.** Choose snacks from two or more of the food groups. Try raw veggies with low-fat cottage cheese or hummus, or a tablespoon of nut or seed butter with an apple or banana.
- ✓ **Drink More Water.** Quench your thirst with water instead of drinks with added sugar. Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water, especially if you are active, an older adult or live or work in hot conditions.
- ✓ **Get Cooking.** Preparing food at home can be healthy, rewarding, and cost-effective. Master some kitchen basics, like dicing onions or cooking dried beans.
- ✓ **Enact Family Mealtime.** Plan to eat as a family at least a few times each week. Set a regular mealtime. Turn off the TV, phones and other electronic devices to encourage mealtime talk. Get kids involved in meal planning and cooking and use this time to teach them about good nutrition.
- ✓ **Explore New Foods and Flavors.** When shopping, make a point of selecting a fruit, vegetable or whole grain that's new to you or your family.
- ✓ **Explore Plant-Based Meals.** Many recipes that use meat and poultry can be made with vegetables, beans, and lentils. Try including one meatless meal per week to start.

There are many healthy and delicious naturally green foods you can add to your St. Patrick's Day festivities.



- ❁ **Go Green Smoothies:** Try adding leafy greens such as spinach or kale, naturally green fruits (kiwi, green grapes, or green apples), or avocados to your favorite smoothie recipe.
- ❁ **Add greens to your favorite dishes:** There are plenty of ways to incorporate more greens into some of your favorite dishes.
 - Add green peppers or spinach when ordering or making pizza at home.
 - Stuff your favorite sandwiches with spinach, romaine lettuce, or slices of avocado.
 - Add greens such as kale or Swiss chard to soups.
 - Scramble green peppers or green onions into an omelet for a nutritious breakfast.
 - Add a variety of leafy greens to your salad (spinach, kale, arugula, to name a few).
 - Add green fruit such as kiwi, green grapes, or honeydew melon to a yogurt parfait or fruit salad.
- ❁ **Snack time:** Include oven baked tortilla chips and guacamole, celery sticks and green peppers with dip, edamame, or pistachios.
- ❁ **Substitute:** Instead of pasta noodles, try making zucchini noodles also known as zoodles and add them to your whole wheat pasta. You can use a low-cost veggie spiralizer or a grater to make these. Instead of bread for sandwiches, try using lettuce as wraps.
- ❁ **Add greens to water:** Try adding sliced cucumbers, mint leaves, or lime to your water for a refreshing burst of flavor.
- ❁ **Plan ahead:** Buy frozen green vegetables to save money and time in the kitchen. Since frozen vegetables have a longer shelf-life, there is less food waste, and frozen vegetables contain just as many nutrients as fresh vegetables do since they are frozen at their peak ripeness.

Sources: <https://www.eatright.org>; <https://extension.umaine.edu/food-health/2022/03/17/6-tips-for-eating-green-on-st-patricks-day/> retrieved 02/24/26

Eat Smart Idaho can help you learn how to eat well for less. For Information on Eat Smart Idaho classes, contact the Nutrition Instructor in your county:

Panhandle: Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai & Shoshone Counties
208-292-2525

North Central Idaho: Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis, & Nez Perce Counties
208-883-2267



To contact the Eat Smart Idaho Coordinator:

Kali Gardiner, RD, LD
Phone: 208-292-2525

www.eatsmartidaho.org
E-mail – kalig@uidaho.edu