



Blog of the month – March 2017

Time to rethink good nutrition

In honor of National Nutrition Month®, we're focusing our March blog on finding easy ways to improve your overall nutrition. Unfortunately for many, the very idea of good nutrition can bring on thoughts of expensive eating plans, boring food and depravation. But good nutrition shouldn't be complicated and arduous. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) offers up some practical ways to help you rethink the whole idea of good nutrition and get on a lifelong path of joyful, good-for-you eating that'll really work.

Set realistic goals

Improving your nutritional habits isn't an all or nothing concept. It takes time to break bad eating habits and create better ones. Go for small changes that you can build on over time. Keep a food journal to track your changes and progress.

Plan your meals ahead of time

Fixing dinner on the fly is tough ... and an easy way to bag it and go for fast food instead. Here's a better idea: Plan out a week's worth of dinners ahead of time. Shopping for well thought-out meals will be easier on your wallet too.

Eat three meals a day

Food is fuel and your body needs that fuel throughout the day. Three purposeful meals a day will help you avoid unhealthy overindulgences and trips to the vending machine.

But snacks are okay; just choose them wisely

Enjoying snacks is okay and actually a good way to prevent those pesky in-between meal hungries. But you've got to be mindful about your choices here. Think about portable and easy-to-eat fruits and vegetables, low-fat cheese and single-serving whole-grain, low-fat crackers and bars.

Enjoy a variety of foods every day

Good nutrition isn't boring and tasteless. There are lots of wonderful options to enjoy every day. Go for fruits and vegetables; wholesome grains (like our favorite, barley); lean meats, fish and poultry; and fat-free or low-fat dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese.

Put away the remote (and smart phone)

One of the best ways to improve your nutritional habits is to be more mindful of your eating. Watching TV or perusing social media during mealtime can lead to unhealthy food choices and overeating.

Slow down

This is for all you fast eaters out there. Nutrition professionals say it takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the message that your body is receiving food. When your brain gets this message, you stop feeling hungry. So slow down, enjoy your meal and give your brain a chance to get the word.

Fiber up

Dietary fiber is a must for good nutrition. It offers important health benefits like reducing the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes. And it fills you up! So be sure to include wholesome grains like barley, legumes, fruits and vegetables. For more information about fiber-rich barley and delicious recipe ideas, visit www.barleyfoods.org.