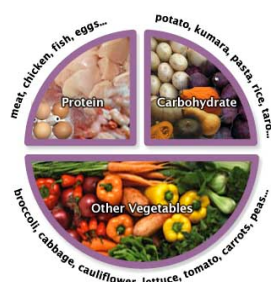


March 2009 Nutrition Tip

March is National Nutrition Month®. This campaign was created by the American Dietetic Association to focus attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits. With that in mind, what are you doing to help yourself “Eat Right”?

The first thing you can do is make smart choices from every food group. All of the following food groups provide various nutrients necessary for good health; grains, vegetables, fruit, protein and healthy oils. Therefore be skeptical of any eating plan that encourages you to avoid one of these groups. Making smart choices means choosing healthy options within each group. For example choose more whole grains like brown rice, quinoa, and whole wheat and less refined grains like white rice, white bread and cold cereal. Choose lean proteins like poultry, fish, and beans and less fatty proteins like beef, bacon and salami. Focus on healthy oils in olives, nuts, and avocados and less artery clogging oils found in butter, cheese and ice cream. Remember, all foods can be incorporated into a healthy diet. What matters most are the choices you make 90% of the time versus the treats that you allow 10% of the time.



Another important factor in eating right is to not overdo portion sizes. Even “healthy” foods can be overeaten contributing to weight gain and ill health. Use the plate and palm methods to help estimate how big your portions should be. The plate method can help you put together a balanced meal with half of the plate non-starchy vegetables, a quarter of the plate a grain or starchy vegetable and the remaining quarter a protein source. Based on our size we require different amounts of food. You can use the palm of your hand to roughly estimate what 1 serving of a food item should be for you. Most people require 1 serving of a protein, 1-2 servings of a starch and 2+ servings of a vegetable at each meal.

One final factor to consider in helping yourself eat right is to not mistake hunger for thirst. This means that when we are thirsty we may actually interpret this as hunger. We then snack on something rather than take care of our true need for fluids. Most people require 6-8 glasses (8 ounces) of fluids every day. Although water is the ideal fluid for hydration, other fluids like decaffeinated tea, juice, milk, and soup also count towards your daily goal. Carry fluids with you and sip on them throughout the day to ensure that your hydration needs are being met.

Nutrition Consultations are available at Synergy+. Contact Dionne directly to schedule an appointment. Dionne Detraz, RD, dionnedetraz@comcast.net, 415-250-0567