

# Aging Healthfully Newsletter

Illinois Department on Aging



## March is National Nutrition Month ®

National Nutrition Month ® came about in 1973, originally as “National Nutrition Week” and soon became a month-long observance as of 1980.

**The purpose is to motivate people to make healthful, informed food choices, and develop sound eating and exercise habits.**

**This year’s theme is Eat Right, Bite by Bite!**

This message is a simple and powerful one – Every bite matters. Small goals or making doable changes with respect to your eating and exercise habits can really make a difference long term.

**Whether it is one bite at a time or one step at a time, it all counts!**

**Here are some simple tips to making small, lasting changes to your lifestyle:**

- ✓ **If you normally skip breakfast, try eating a small “snack-sized” meal that includes protein and carbohydrates such as:**
  - Peanut butter on an English muffin with ½ of a sliced banana.
  - 4oz yogurt with a handful of blueberries and ½ cup whole grain cereal sprinkled on top.
  - Hardboiled egg, whole grain toast with butter, and a clementine.
- ✓ **Plan for healthy and convenient snacks to have on hand so you will be less tempted to eat something that may not be as nutritious:**
  - Piece of mozzarella string cheese paired with 5 whole grain Triscuit crackers.
  - 1 tablespoon nut butter along with a sliced, small apple.
  - ½ cup canned pineapple packed in 100% juice or water with ½ cup cottage cheese.
  - 5.5 can V8 juice (low sodium preferably) and 2 domino-sized slices of cheese.
- ✓ **Try flavoring your water with fruit or 100% fruit juice in the place of sugar-sweetened beverages like soda:**
  - Add a slice of lemon, lime, or orange to your water to naturally add flavor without adding sugar.
  - Try 1-2oz of 100% cranberry juice in 8oz club soda or water with a lime wedge.
  - Try sparkling coconut water with 1-2oz of 100% pineapple juice.
- ✓ **Always plan to have at least 1 cup of vegetables and/or fruit with every meal**
  - Incorporate cooked spinach or other dark leafy greens into your soups, casseroles, stews, and burgers instead of eating them raw in a salad.
  - Enjoy fruit for dessert topped with whipped cream and dark chocolate chips or melted dark chocolate on top.

## March is also National Frozen Foods Month

Frozen foods like fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grain breads, waffles, and rolls make it that much easier to enjoy eating a healthy diet because the prep-work has been done for you!

### Tips for Selecting Healthy Frozen Foods:

1. Look for frozen fruits and vegetables with no added sugar, sodium, or sauces – Check the ingredients and nutrition facts label to be sure.
  - Green beans, asparagus, broccoli, spinach, stir-fry blend vegetables, and stew-ready vegetables.
  - Mixed berries, mango, and tropical fruit.
2. Steamer versions of frozen vegetables make for a quick dinner side that still contains most all the vitamins and nutrients as it did when it was fresh!
3. Choose frozen lean poultry, seafood, beef, and pork such as:
  - Plain boneless, skinless chicken and turkey breast, and frozen turkey breakfast sausage.
  - Tilapia, shrimp, scallops, salmon.
  - 90% or higher lean ground beef/sirloin, plain unseasoned pork loin, and “round” or “loin” cuts of red meats.
4. Look for frozen vegetarian and veggie-based options that are easy to make such as:
  - Soy and black bean-based burgers, veggie-based breakfast sausage, cheese and spinach tortellini and ravioli.
5. Choose frozen whole grain options such as:
  - Whole grain rolls, breads, and waffles.
6. Look for individual portion sizes of frozen, calorie-dense foods such as pizza, ice cream, and other frozen novelties to help keep portion sizes just right.
7. Avoid frozen items with added sauces and seasonings, which tend to be very high in sodium.
8. Compare labels on frozen foods in similar categories to determine which ones are the best option (e.g. those that are lowest in sodium, sugar, and saturated fat).

### **Attachments:**

- Health Tips for 2020 NNM ®
- NNM ® Crossword Puzzle 2020 (Activity)
- Nutrition Sudoku 2020 (Activity)
- National Nutrition Month ® 2020 Word Search for Adults (Activity)
- National Nutrition Month ® 2020 Quiz (Activity)
- **Recipes:** Chicken Guacamole Salad; Sesame Shrimp Salad



### **References:**

- <https://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month/most-asked-questions-about-national-nutrition-month>  
<https://www.eatright.org/food/planning-and-prep/smart-shopping/frozen-foods-convenient-and-nutritious>

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<https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/CommunityServices/nutrition/Pages/nutrition.aspx>