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EATING RIGHT BITE BY BITE

Choosing nutritious foods and getting enough physical activity can make a significant difference in your health. For National Nutrition Month® 2020, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics encourages people to make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits.

Each March, the Academy, focuses attention on healthful eating through National Nutrition Month®. This year's theme is Eat Right, Bite by Bite – supporting the philosophy that every bit of nutrition can be a step in the right direction towards better health.

“Developing healthful eating habits does not mean undertaking drastic lifestyle changes,” said Jerlyn Jones, RDN, a national spokesperson for the Academy. “Registered dietitian nutritionists (RDN’s) help their clients develop individualized eating and activity plans with simple steps that can help them meet their health goals. These simple steps are developed to become lifelong habits.”

They provide recipe ideas, cooking tips and other healthful advice for everyday issues such as cooking dinner or meal preparation for picky eaters. In addition, many RDN’s provide medical nutrition therapy to help clients manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. They work as part of a medical team to help clients set nutrition goals to improve their health.

To find a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) near you, use the Academy’s online FIND AN EXPERT service at <https://www.eatright.org/find-an-expert>

Eating fruits and vegetables is part of a healthy diet and associated with reduced risk of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, stroke, and certain types of cancer. Naturally low in calories and sodium they supply vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals. Regrettably, consumption data from the National Eating Trends (NET), NPD group report consumption has declined 7% between 2009-2014.

Try these three unique recipes to increase your vegetable consumption BITE BY BITE.

WILMA'S SPINACH SALAD

12 cups baby spinach
2 cups sliced strawberries
2/3 cup green onion
2 –(11 ounce) cans mandarin oranges (drained)

Dressing

1/4 cup orange juice
1/4 cup honey
2 tablespoons Vegetable oil
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

Shake dressing, pour over spinach. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup sliced almonds, optional.

GARDEN LASAGNA

4 medium zucchini, coarsely chopped
1 large onion, chopped
1 medium-size green pepper, chopped
1 medium carrot, grated
1/2 cup chopped celery
1 clove garlic, minced
3 tablespoons peanut or vegetable oil
2 (16-oz.) cans stewed tomatoes, undrained
1 (8-oz.) can tomato sauce
1 (6-oz.) can tomato paste
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
2 teaspoons dried Italian seasoning
1 teaspoon dried whole basil
1/2 teaspoon seasoning salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
3 quarts water
2 teaspoons salt
9 lasagna noodles
1 (16 oz.) carton ricotta cheese
2 cups (8 oz.) shredded Swiss cheese
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Sauté zucchini, onion, green pepper, carrot, celery, and garlic in oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat 15 minutes. Stir in next 8 ingredients; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes. Uncover and simmer an additional 45 minutes or until sauce is thickened, stirring occasionally.

Combine water and salt in a large Dutch oven; bring to a boil. Gradually add noodles. Boil, uncovered, 12 to 15 minutes or until noodles are just tender; drain well.

Spread 1/4 of sauce in a lightly greased 13-x9-x2-inch baking dish. Top with 3 noodles, 1/3 of ricotta cheese, 1/4 of Swiss & Parmesan cheeses; repeat layers twice. Top with remaining sauce, Swiss & Parmesan cheese. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 35 to 40 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Yield: 8 servings.

CARROT HUMUS

15 ounce can garbanzo beans, drain and rinse
1/2 cup nonfat plain yogurt
1/4 cup water
1 lemon - juice only
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 tablespoon ground cumin
1 carrot, peeled and grated

Place the beans, half of the yogurt, water, lemon juice and spices into a blender or food processor. Blend until fine, adding remaining yogurt. Stir in the grated carrot last. Serve over whole grain crackers or whole wheat pita bread. This dip also goes great with raw veggie sticks.

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