

EATRIGHT BOSTON

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2017



National Nutrition Month

For the sports enthusiast, March is filled with lots of college basketball games. For dietitians, it's a month long promotion to teach people about eating well. *"Put Your Best Fork Forward"* is the theme for National Nutrition Month 2017. Making small changes during this month helps to improve health now and into the future. Essentially, the theme reminds and relays to people that they hold the tool to make healthier food choices. Not sure what happened to the spoon-it must have jumped over the moon and missed the big campaign!

Visit www.eatright.org/nnm for more information.

I've been a dietitian now for some time. I did my time walking around the hospital floors in my white lab coat. I traded that in for a hairnet when I joined the food service management team. I especially enjoyed working with the heart and soul of the department- the kitchen staff. I vividly recall one of my workers that brought in pigs feet for lunch. While I pride myself in promoting variety in meal planning, I could not get past the pickled hoof to try it.

Enjoy the newsletter!

Sophie

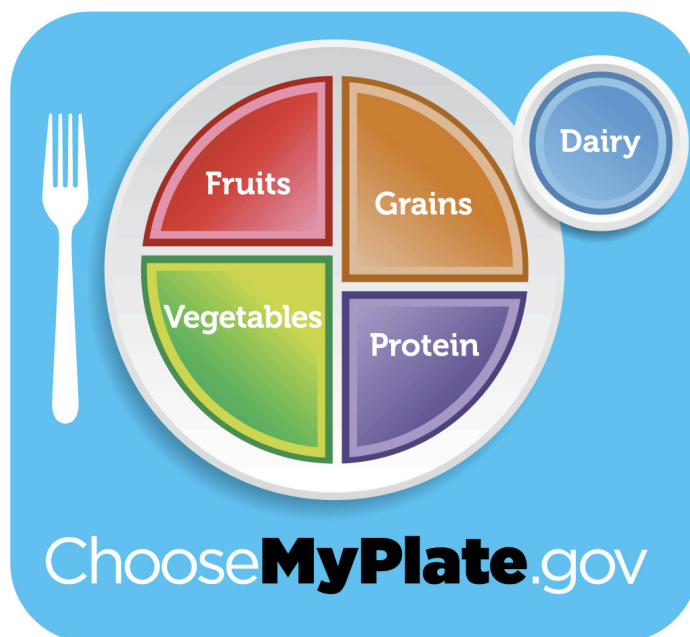


Variety is Key

While some people don't mind eating the same things everyday (and you all know who you are!), it's important to get some variety in your diet...

I suppose that's also true of in you life! Maybe that's why I am still a New Englander and get to experience changes with the seasons. The My Plate food model encourages that you make half of your serving plate fruits and vegetables and to use whole grains and lean proteins on the other half. Here are some other suggestions to make the transition to healthier eating a little easier:

- Plan meals to include different colored **vegetables** throughout the week.
- Experiment with different vegetables when preparing healthy soups and salads.
- Pack a variety of different colored **fruits** as snacks.
- Enjoy fruit in place of sweets for dessert.
- Try preparing a **whole grain** that is new to you, such as brown rice instead of white.
- Switch to a **whole grain** bread or wrap for sandwiches.
- Look for cereals and snacks that use **whole grain** flours.
- Experiment with seafood by grilling or baking fish in place of some other **protein** food for dinner two times per week.
- Try sweetening plain low-fat yogurt with different types of fruits or whole grain cereals.
- Enjoy a healthy snack of raw veggies with dips made from low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese.
- Include more plant-based oils in place of solid fats.
- Plan meals with servings from all of the 5 food groups whenever possible.
- Limit sources of added sugars, sodium, saturated fat and *trans* fat
- Limit sweet desserts and snacks.
- Drink milk or water in place of a sugar-sweetened beverage.
- Choose foods and drinks with less added sugars by using the Nutrition Facts label.
- Be creative by swapping out different **fruits**, **vegetables**, **whole grains**, lean **proteins**, and low-fat or fat-free **dairy** foods when preparing recipes.
- Focus on one small change at a time.



Fiber Facts

The topic of fiber always comes up in my office, so it's always worth revisiting it. By definition, **Dietary Fiber**, consists of polysaccharides (carbohydrates) and lignin in plants that are resistant to being broken down by our bodies' digestive enzymes. It is often referred to as "plant cell wall-associated fiber" when directly compared to **Added Fiber**, which is defined as isolated, non-digestible carbohydrate.

Let's start with the plant cell wall-associated fiber, or what I like to call the "real" stuff! These include: fruits, vegetables, whole grains (steel cut oats, cracked wheat, stone-ground wheat), nuts, seeds, and legumes. They are the foods that are packed with two kinds of intrinsic, intact fiber referred to as soluble and insoluble fiber. We know that *Dietary Fiber* has multiple beneficial physiological effects in the body: it increases fecal volume and bulking (weight of stool), decreases transit time (it moves things along in the intestines more quickly), and it increases stool frequency. The Institute of Medicine concluded that *Dietary Fiber* helps to prevent constipation, lowers cholesterol and blood sugar, helps the immune system, and improves gastrointestinal bacterial fermentation.

So, who are the other fiber players? They are generally referred to as "isolated" or "synthetic fiber." Or, they may be seen as *Added Fiber* on a food label. They do not have the same health benefits of *Dietary Fiber*. They include polydextrose, inulin, and maltodextrin.

Polydextrose is a synthetic sugar polymer (compound) made by linking glucose sugars together in such a way that our body's natural digestive enzymes cannot split them apart. As a result, polydextrose is only partially metabolized in the human digestive system. When it ends up in the colon, it is partially fermented by the gut microbiota. Granted FDA approval in 1981, polydextrose was classified as a soluble fiber. Unlike the soluble fiber in oats and barley, polydextrose does not have any physiological

effect on cholesterol or fasting blood sugar levels.

The food manufacturing industry is wild about this polymer because it can replace portions of sugar, starch and fat in commercial beverages, desserts, breads, muffins, puddings, and cereals, to name a few. Hence, it renders the product lower in sugar, calories and fat when compared to its counterpart foods. You will begin to see Litesse®, a product manufactured by DuPont appear in many foods. According to Dupont's website, "Litesse® should be labeled as "polydextrose" or "E1200" within the ingredient statement for food and beverage products."

Inulin is an isolated soluble, fructose (fruit sugar) polymer of plant origin, specifically found in onions, Jerusalem artichokes, and chicory root. It is being added to food items to increase their fiber content and is being used as a prebiotic. Prebiotics promote the growth of bacteria in the intestine, and in this case, they increase bifidobacteria. Inulin increases stool frequency by increasing bacterial mass and is well tolerated at doses lower than 20 g/day, but it might cause gastrointestinal symptoms, such as flatulence, at higher doses. Like polydextrose, this *Added Fiber* does not affect satiety (i.e. it won't fill you up like dietary fiber does), and can cause more gas in the colon.

Demand for more fiber in foods that would not inherently have fiber in them has peaked the food industry's interest, or perhaps, its financial profit, to deliver what the masses want. However, there is no scientific evidence from long-term studies that show these *Added Fiber* products will have the same kinds of health effects on reducing disease risk if substituted for the *Dietary Fiber*. Fruits, vegetable, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes not only provide us with intact fiber, but they are abundantly rich in vitamins and phytochemicals, like antioxidants that protect our bodies and keep us healthy.

Featured Recipe

There certainly are a lot of granola bars on the market these days but one of my favorites remains to be Larabars. While it is much easier (and not so messy!) to buy them, it's fun to try and make your own version. If ever you are having a chocolate craving, these will hit the spot! Feel free to improvise on the recipe. I thought rolling them in coconut flakes would be a nice topping, as well.



Homemade Nut Butter Balls

A heart-healthy treat!

INGREDIENTS:

10 Sunsweet Sweet Ones prunes (individually wrapped ones)
½ cup all natural peanut butter
2 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa
2 Tablespoons water
Peanuts, chopped finely or crushed

DIRECTIONS:

1. Add prunes (or dates, if that's your preference) to a food processor and pulse until paste-like.
2. Add peanut butter, water, cocoa, and vanilla extract. Pulse until mixed. Roll into a ball of dough.
3. Divide the "dough" by hand and roll into small balls (your choice of size).
4. Roll in chopped peanuts and serve!

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