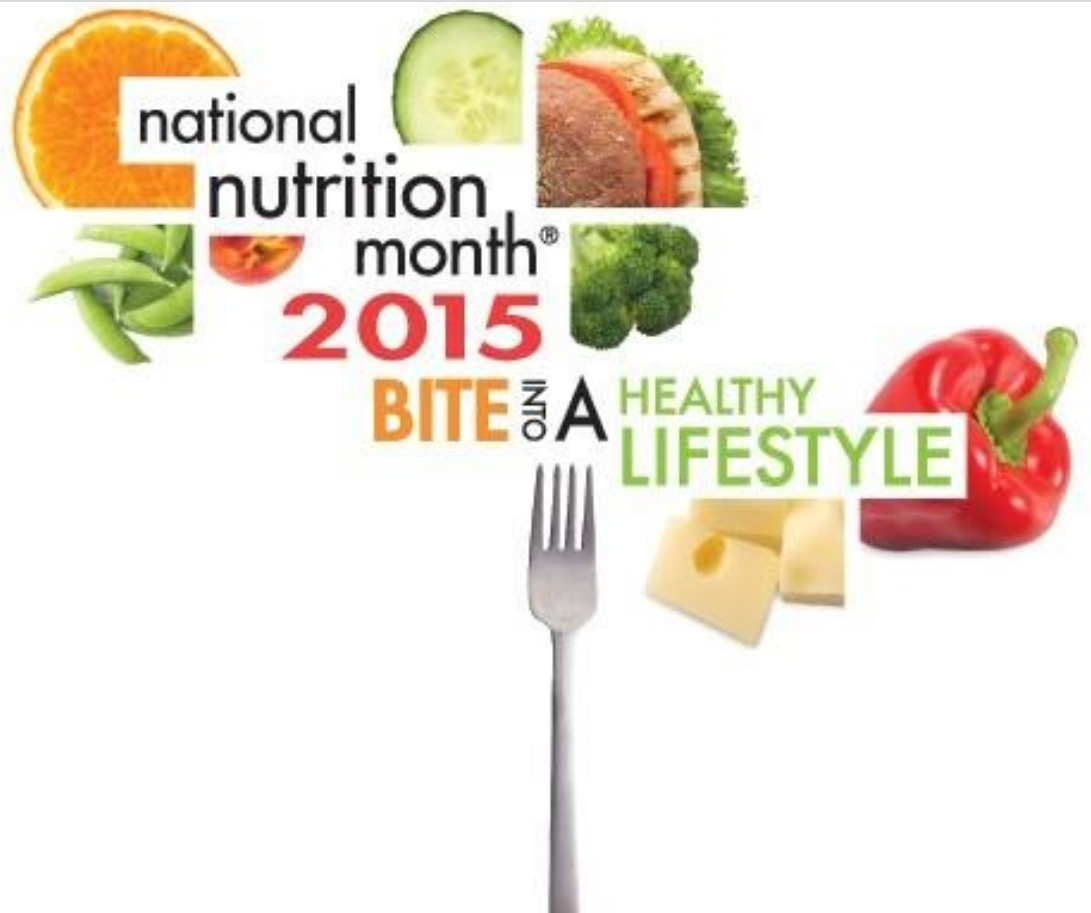


# EATRIGHTBOSTON

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2015



## National Nutrition Month

If you're a college basketball fan, you're excited because March Madness arrives at this time of the year. March is another form of madness for dietitians across America- it's National Nutrition Month! Everyone is frantically blogging or tweeting and spreading the word on how to eat healthy. The theme this year is **"Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle."**

The month-long celebration encourages healthy food and exercise tips which can be found at [www.choosemyplate.org](http://www.choosemyplate.org). The model suggestions are as follows:

- Make  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your plate grains with at least 50% whole grains
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Make  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your plate is lean protein
- Switch to fat free or 1% milk
- Practice balance and enjoy your food, but eat less portions
- Drink more water and less sugary beverages
- Compare sodium on food labels; choose the ones with less sodium

## Slow and Steady Wins the Race?

Are shorter sessions with intermittent spurts of high paced workouts better for you than longer stretches of continuous, moderate exercise? The answer to that depends on what your fitness goals are. We know that any form of physical activity will have general health benefits, but the type of exercise you engage in adds other advantages.

Shorter, fast-paced exercise is also known as high intensity interval training (HIIT). HIIT consists of alternating short, intense bursts of exercise with either less intense exercise, or complete rest in between. It's about "challenge and recovery."

If you're looking to lose weight faster, HIIT might be the better option. Exercise programs like CrossFit and boot camps incorporate HIIT exercise routines. CrossFit is a strength and conditioning program consisting mainly of a mix of aerobic and anaerobic exercise.

The principle behind this type of training is to increase your heart rate to its maximum for a short period of time. After a quick break, you repeat it. Concerns for this type of training include more risk to bodily injury; if you rush into strenuous activity without a proper warm-up, you risk pulling or damaging muscles, tendons and bones.

If you're going to be running a marathon, then you're better off with an aerobic, long-paced endurance activity. Endurance training keeps heart rates in the mid-range for a greater length of time. It improves cardiovascular fitness, and lowers risk of diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes. Lower intensity activities don't always build muscle, though.

Let's face it-the higher intensity circuits are not for everybody.



Many of these programs are administered by a leader who is barking orders versus the serenity of running groups that weave through wooded trails. Most fitness experts agree that incorporating exercise programs depends on what your fitness goals are and that variety and switching between styles is good, overall, for training purposes.

The American Heart Association suggests a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week. And as always start any exercise program slowly, and with the approval of your physician.

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## Fit or Fab?

All too often, gyms advertise their services with young, fit bods that give the illusion that you too can look like this. Images of lean bodies are certainly one way to market but how honest are they being?

Being fit does not mean that you have to look like a cover shot of Shape magazine. Perhaps we overemphasize the importance of weight loss and

not look at the value of exercise in improving health enough?

In a recent study of over 334,000 European men and women and published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, researchers found that as little as a daily 20-minute walk can reduce an individual's risk of early death and extend life expectancy. I think we all have 20 minutes to devote to enjoying better health and a longer, more productive life. Don't you agree?

# Fatty Liver Disease

According to the American Liver Foundation, fatty liver disease is the most commonly diagnosed liver problem in the United States today, with approximately 25% of the population who are living with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). This medical condition is associated with obesity, high cholesterol and triglycerides, metabolic syndrome, and diabetes; and it can eventually lead to other liver conditions, including liver failure. NAFLD is different from Alcohol-Related Liver Disease where alcohol consumption and binge drinking causes stress on the liver that can lead to permanent scarring and damage.

The liver is the second largest organ in your body, weighing in at about three pounds. It is a powerhouse and has a complex role in your body to remove harmful substances from your blood, and to process the foods and drinks we ingest into nutrients your body uses for energy and cellular metabolism.

NAFLD is the build-up of excess fat (typically triglycerides) in liver cells, which is stored from calories (generally from fats and carbohydrates) that it doesn't need right away. If more than 5% - 10% percent of the liver's weight is fat, then it is called a fatty liver. Normally fats are burned off for energy, but if there is an excess of calories and a lack of exercise, triglycerides are never released. NAFLD can be left undiagnosed for five to ten

years before the organ shows signs of damage. The disease is initially suspected if blood tests show high levels of liver enzymes. An ultrasound is also used to confirm the NAFLD diagnosis. There are two types of NAFLD: hepatic steatosis and nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH). The latter is the more severe and can lead to scarring and liver damage.

Overuse of pain relievers like acetaminophen, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and other herbal medications also compound the risk of developing NAFLD by adding more strain on the liver to process their ingredients. Always check with your health care practitioner if you are over-using these products.

While there are no medical treatments yet for NAFLD, it is preventable and reversible, in most cases. Engaging in lifestyle changes that include a regular exercise program, gradual and sustained weight loss, and a healthy diet (high fiber, whole grains, lean proteins, and poly & monounsaturated fats) are your first steps. Research shows that a 10% reduction in weight loss can improve liver function. Limit alcohol intake and follow dosing recommendations for any medications you are taking. With over one third of Americans in an obese state, NAFLD rates are expected to rise, posing a major health risk for years to come.

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*Happy Spring!*