

Top six pro tips for Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month, a perfect opportunity to revisit lifestyle habits that impact long-term health. Regardless of individual dietary preferences, the following six tips offer actionable advice for anyone seeking to enhance their well-being.

1. Keep portions in check. Being mindful of portion sizes helps prevent overeating that leads to weight gain. “Normal” portions have become out of control, especially in restaurants. Start with less than you think you need, and assess your satisfaction before finishing. Use smaller plates to naturally reduce portion sizes without feeling deprived.

2. Get junk food out of sight. Out of sight, out of mind works wonders for unhealthy foods. By keeping these foods out of immediate reach, you're less likely to consume them impulsively, making room for healthier choices in your diet. The opposite is true as well – keep healthy foods easily accessible to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

3. Eat more beans. There's more than one reason beans are dubbed the “magical fruit.” Not only are they easy, affordable, and compatible with various flavors, but their high plant protein content, fiber, and nutrient density make them an excellent choice to boost nutritional intake and overall health. Enjoy beans at least once a day – think lentil soup, hummus, chili, bean dips, and added to soup and grain dishes.

4. Put meals on a bed of greens. This simple trick not only enhances the nutritional value of your meals but also helps in reducing the intake of less healthy foods by physically displacing them on your plate. It's an effortless way to ensure you're getting a dose of essential vitamins and minerals with every meal. Raw lettuce is great for burgers, roasted vegetables, and salads, while cooked greens are perfect for stews, grain dishes, and sautees.

5. Take time to plan. Bid farewell to those last-minute GrubHub orders! Dedicating a portion of your week to meal and grocery planning can dramatically transform your eating habits. By strategically planning meals, you're empowered to make healthier food selections, alleviate the daily dinner dilemma, and guarantee that your kitchen is stocked with all the essentials for nutritious meals all week long. This approach not only streamlines your dietary choices but also supports a more relaxed and health-conscious lifestyle.

6. Love the food that loves you back. Choosing foods that nourish your body and enhance your health is a form of self-respect. Opt for whole, nutrient-rich foods that provide energy and support your overall well-being. Loving these foods means you're also loving yourself by prioritizing your health.



Quick Bean, Sweet Potato, & Avocado Tacos



This flavorful, nutritious all-in-one meal is a fast and easy way to get more beans in your diet, and it comes together in under 20 minutes.

Ingredients:

- 1 large sweet potato
- 1 can (15 oz) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 ripe avocados
- Juice of 1 lime
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 4-6 small corn or flour tortillas
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1/4 red onion, finely sliced
- Optional garnishes: corn, chopped tomatoes, salsa, sliced jalapeño, sour cream, shredded cheese

Instructions:

Peel and dice the sweet potato into small cubes and place on a microwave-safe plate. Cook in the microwave on high for 2 minutes. Check cubes for doneness. If they need more cooking, toss gently and cook for another minute.

In a medium bowl, mash the black beans slightly with a fork, leaving some whole for texture. Add lime juice, cumin, chili powder, salt, and pepper. Mix well to combine.

Cut the avocados in half, remove the pits, and scoop the flesh into a separate bowl. Mash the avocado lightly with a fork and season with a little salt and lime juice to taste.

Warm the tortillas for a few seconds in a microwave or on a hot skillet. Spread a layer of the seasoned beans onto each tortilla. Top with the sweet potato cubes and mashed avocado.

Top with chopped cilantro and red onion slices along with favorite garnishes.

Enjoy while they're fresh and warm!

Makes 2-3 servings.