WellFirst Health™

Programs are open to all, regardless of insurance, unless otherwise noted*

National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month. Making healthy food choices can help you feel and look your best and stay active. Eating a well-balanced diet and incorporating daily physical activity can also help lower your risk of developing chronic health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. It can also protect against certain types of cancer.

Nutritional needs vary across age groups and also depend upon gender, height, weight and physical activity level, so it's important to talk with your health care provider about which nutrients you should closely monitor for your overall health.

Participate to learn more:

Activity #1:
Eat the Rainbow Challenge

Activity #2:
The Nutrition Facts Label

Activity #3:
Two Truths and a Lie

For questions or more information, email wellness@wellfirstbenefits.com

Health Disparities

"Health disparities" are preventable differences in health among different social or racial groups. Health disparities are a complex and challenging problem across the world. Social factors play the largest role in shaping the overall health of communities. For example, a safe living environment, racial equity, nutritious food, quality education, and supportive relationships free of discrimination is incredibly important to your overall health.

Those who face health disparities often have a higher risk for diet-related diseases including heart disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer (breast and colorectal). In the U.S., certain racial and ethnic groups are affected by food insecurity, which is major social factor for diet-related diseases and cancer.

Did You Know?

- 1 in 3 Native Americans lives in poverty due to lack of stable employment and low wages. According to the USDA, only 26% of Native Communities are within one mile from a supermarket, compared to 59% of all people living in the U.S. *(Source: Feeding America: Native Communities)*
- Nearly 20% of Black individuals experienced food insecurity—more than three times the rate of white households and 22% of Black children live in food insecure households. *(Source: Feeding America: Black Communities)*
- Latinos are 2.5 times more likely to experience food insecurity than white individuals. And 18.5% of Latino children and 1 in 6 Hispanics experience food insecurity. *(Source: Feeding America: Latino Communities)*
- About 6% of Asian Americans and about 19% of Pacific Islanders are food insecure. *(Source: Feeding America: Asian Communities)*

For more information, please visit:
- Nutrition.gov
- Food Assistance Programs
- Find a Local Foodbank

Activity 1: Eat the Rainbow Challenge

This challenge is about choosing many different colored fruits and vegetables to eat each week. Fruits and vegetables and their health benefits are sorted by color in the *Eat the Rainbow Chart* below. Use the chart to track your progress over three weeks. Visit your member page to access the Living Healthy WebMD portal* and other nutrition resources/tools to help you in completing this challenge.

Color	Example Fruit or Vegetable	Benefits	What fruit(s) or vegetable(s) did you eat each week?		
			Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Red	Tomatoes/Tomato Products, Watermelon, Apples, Cranberries, Beets, Cherries, Grapefruit, Red Peppers, Red Grapes, Radishes, Raspberries, Rhubarb, Strawberries	Red foods generally contain nutrients such as lycopene, ellagic acid, quercetin, and hesperidin, to name a few. These nutrients reduce the risk of prostate cancer, lower blood pressure, reduce tumor growth, lower LDL cholesterol levels, scavenge harmful free radicals, and support joint tissue in arthritis cases.			

Color	Example Fruit or Vegetable	Benefits	What fruit(s) or vegetable(s) did you eat each week?		
			Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Orange & Yellow	Sweet Potatoes, Carrots, Pumpkin, Squash, Peppers, Cantaloupe, Mango, Apricots, Oranges, Peaches, Nectarines, Papayas, Pineapple, Yellow Apples	Orange and yellow foods generally contain beta-carotene, zeaxanthin, flavonoids, lycopene, potassium, and vitamin C. These nutrients reduce age-related macular degeneration and the risk of prostate cancer, lower LDL cholesterol and blood pressure, promote collagen formation and healthy joints, fight harmful free radicals, and work with magnesium and calcium to build healthy bones.			
Green	Peppers, Lettuce, Spinach, Broccoli, Green Grapes, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts, Avocado, Kiwi, Honeydew, Green Onions, Peas, Zucchini, Green Beans, Cucumbers, Asparagus	Green vegetables generally contain chlorophyll, fiber, lutein, zeaxanthin, calcium, folate, vitamin C, calcium, and Beta-carotene. The nutrients found in these vegetables reduce cancer risks, lower blood pressure and LDL cholesterol levels, normalize digestion time, support retinal health and vision, fight harmful free radicals, and boost immune system activity.			
Blue & Purple	Blueberries, Blackberries, Cherries, Egg Plant, Figs, Raisins, Plums, Prunes, Purple Grapes, Pomegranate	Blue and purple foods contain nutrients that include lutein, zeaxanthin, resveratrol, vitamin C, fiber, flavonoids, ellagic acid, and quercetin. Similar to the previous nutrients, these nutrients support retinal health, lower LDL cholesterol, boost immune system activity, support healthy digestion, improve calcium and other mineral absorption, fight inflammation, reduce tumor growth, act as anticarcinogens in the digestive tract, and limit the activity of cancer cells.			
White	Bananas, Cauliflower, Garlic, Ginger, Jicama, Mushrooms, Onions, Potatoes, Parsnips, Radishes, Shallots, Leeks, Turnips	White foods contain nutrients such as beta-glucans, EGCG, SDG, and lignans that provide powerful immune-boosting activity. These nutrients also activate natural killer B and T cells; reduce the risk of colon, breast, and prostate cancers; and balance hormone levels, reducing the risk of hormone-related cancers.			

Activity 2: The Nutrition Facts Label

Read through the example nutrition facts label and learn how to use the information on the label to make informed choices and compare products to support your personal nutritional needs. To learn your personalized calorie needs, check out MyPlate Plan or the metabolic calculator in the Living Healthy WebMD Portal* located under the resources tab. Revisit this calculator as you age to see how your caloric needs have changed.

SERVING SIZE

It is common for an item to have more than one serving per container.

A serving size is based on the amount of food that is customarily eaten at one time, but not necessarily how much you should eat or drink.

The entire nutrition label is based on this serving size, and should be kept in mind while comparing or determining if a food is right for you.

NUTRIENTS

This portion of the label helps you learn about the nutrient content of your food or drink. It must include the following nutrients listed in this example label.

Other nutrients may be included as well, but those listed in the example are the ones that are required.

Try to get less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars, and to get more dietary fiber, calcium, iron, vitamin D, and potassium.

Nutrition Facts

4 servings per container
Serving size **1 cup (180g)**

Amount per serving
Calories 245

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	14%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 8mg	3%
Sodium 210mg	9%
Total Carbohydrate 34g	12%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 5g	
Includes 4g Added Sugars	8%
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 4mcg	20%
Calcium 210mg	16%
Iron 4mg	22%
Potassium 380mg	8%

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

INGREDIENTS: BULGUR WHEAT, SAUCE (WATER, HALF AND HALF [MILK, CREAM], PARMESAN CHEESE [PASTEURIZED SKIM MILK, CULTURES, SALT, ENZYMES], CHEDDAR CHEESE [PASTEURIZED MILK, CULTURES, SALT, ENZYMES], OLIVE OIL, BUTTER, SUGAR, XANTHAN GUM, SPICE), LENTILS, CORN, GREEN BEANS, RED BEANS, POTATOES.

CONTAINS: WHEAT, MILK.

This area will also include any ingredients that people may be allergic to, such as wheat, peanuts or milk.

CALORIES

Refers to total number of calories per serving. As a general guide, 100 calories per serving is moderate while 400 is considered high.

Your calorie needs may be higher or lower depending on your age, gender, height, weight and physical activity level.

% DAILY VALUE

This percentage is based on a daily calorie diet of 2,000 calories, as described at the bottom of the label.

The daily value percentage shows how much a nutrient in a serving of the food contributes to a total daily diet. The percentages do not add up to 100%. Generally, a daily value of 5% or less is considered low, while one listed for 20% or more is considered high.

INGREDIENT LIST

The ingredients list is located at the bottom of the nutrition label. It lists the ingredients in descending order, meaning the ingredients used in the greatest amount are listed first, followed by those in smaller amounts (last ingredient is the least). Avoid foods that list unhealthy ingredients first such as high fructose corn syrup, enriched flour, vegetable oil.

Activity 3 Two Truths and a Lie

Two truths and a lie is a game where you guess which two facts are true and which one is a lie. The information may or may not have been addressed in this packet, so just guess, and learn something new! The answers are listed at the bottom of the page.

1.	a. Dextrose, table sugar, and sugars from honey, syrups, and concentrated fruit or vegetable juices are all examples of added sugars. b. Serving size is the recommended amount that you should eat or drink. c. Nutrients to get more of include dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.
2.	a. I have to give up a favorite food to have a healthy diet. b. Drinking more water helps carry nutrients to your cells, reduces hunger, helps your digestive system run more efficiently, and improves energy. c. The % DV can help you determine if a food is high or low in a nutrient.
3.	a. Diets higher in calcium and iron can reduce the risk of osteoporosis and anemia, respectively. b. The terms "fat-free" or "no added sugars" mean "calorie-free". c. The first ingredient listed on the label makes up the greatest amount in a food, more than any of the other ingredients.
4.	a. Nutrients to get less of include saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars. b. Total sugars include naturally occurring sugars found in foods (i.e., fruit) and any added sugars that may be present in the product. c. A serving is the amount of food that you choose to eat for a meal or snack.
5.	a. Today, American diets lack vitamins A and C. b. Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables contain just as many nutrients (or may even have more) as fresh varieties. c. Diets higher in vitamin D and calcium can reduce the risk of osteoporosis.