

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH®

“BEYOND THE TABLE”



Welcome to National Nutrition Month! Every year in March, since 1980, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics sponsors this month-long campaign that focuses on the importance of informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

The theme for this year is *Beyond the Table*. This theme inspires us to look beyond our tables when thinking about our health and the environment. The choices we make daily, including what to eat and drink, can make a big difference to the environment - both now and in the future.

Have you ever thought about the work that goes into producing the foods we eat? - How food is grown or raised, where and how it is made, and its safety. It's important to think about the foods we eat and the nutrition they provide, but is there more we could be doing to improve our health and the environment? Here are a few tips to help you reach *Beyond the Table*...

FOCUS ON A HEALTHY EATING ROUTINE

A “healthy eating routine” describes a way of eating that incorporates nutritious foods and beverages on a regular basis to meet your unique nutritional needs. This approach is different than many fad diets, which promote unnecessary restrictions... It's important to remember that no one food or food group offers all the nutrients we need. So, eating a variety of foods from within each food group offers a wide assortment of nutrients that our bodies need for good health!

- The USDA's MyPlate is a great resource that encourages us to balance our meals with a variety of foods from each food group. For more information about this resource, visit MyPlate.gov.
- Eating away from home? Many restaurants provide nutrition information directly on their menu or even online to help you compare food items and make healthier choices for yourself.
- Learn about resources in your community that offer access to healthy foods, such as food banks.

EAT WITH THE ENVIRONMENT IN MIND

As previously mentioned, our food choices also affect the health of our planet. That's why it is so important to eat with the environment in mind!

- Visit a local farm or farmers market and talk with the people who are growing your food. Many farmers and food producers will be happy to answer your questions, let you sample products, or even provide recipes for foods that may be new to you.
- Want to try gardening but have limited space? Try growing herbs or lettuce indoors or tomatoes, peppers, or berries on your patio or backyard. Schools, churches, and other places may offer community gardens where you can participate in the growing process and share the harvest.
- Before grocery shopping, be sure to check your pantry or fridge for items you already have. Plan meals around these items and create a grocery list with what you still need.
- Create new dishes from leftovers or simply pack them up for lunch or a meal later on in the week.
- Donate extra foods that are still safe to eat to a local food pantry or shelter. No longer safe to eat? Consider composting! In turn, you'll create healthier soil and improve plant growth.

BAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

Be sure to celebrate this Pi Day on March 14 with a slice of your favorite pie!

Why did the pie go to the dentist? - *Because it needed a filling!*

