

Food Choices for Good Health

March is National Nutrition Month, an annual campaign to promote the importance of making informed food choices and developing healthy habits around eating and physical activity.

Good nutrition is a safety and health asset, both on and off the job. Being in good shape is critical to healthy aging and helps prevent injuries from incidents like [falls](#) and overexertion. For children, nutrition can play a pivotal role in childhood lead [poisoning prevention](#).

“Eating well contributes to cardiovascular well-being and overall health,” said Barbara Caracci, director of Emergency Care Program Development for the National Safety Council.

Sound food choices include those that offer the most nutritional bang for their calorie content, according to the [American Dietetic Association](#). The ADA recommends choosing nutritionally rich foods from each food group each day—those packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients but lower in calories.

The NSC’s *Family Safety & Health* magazine recently featured “[Eating Well When Money is Tight](#),” tips for families wanting to maintain nutritious diets in a challenged economy.

For grabbing a quick, nutritious meal during the workday, the ADA suggests:

- If eating out, read restaurant menus carefully for healthier options. Menu terms that can mean less fat and calories include: baked, braised, broiled, grilled, poached, roasted and steamed.
- In place of fries or chips, choose a side-salad, fruit or baked potato. Or, share a regular order of fries with a friend.
- Make special requests that can improve your meal’s health value, such as asking for sauces on the side or sandwiches with no mayonnaise or bacon.
- Boost the nutrition in all types of sandwiches by adding tomato, lettuce, peppers or other vegetables.
- Enjoy healthfully prepared ethnic foods such as Chinese stir-fry, vegetable-stuffed pitas or Mexican fajitas. Go easy on the sour cream, cheese and guacamole.
- Hold off on the bread or chips until your meal is served.
- Avoid all-you-can-eat specials, buffets and unlimited salad bars if you tend to eat too much.
- If you do choose the buffet, fill up on salads and vegetables first. Try to limit yourself to two trips and use small plates that holds less food.
- Try a smoothie made with juice, fruit and yogurt for a light lunch or snack.
- Stock up for desktop meals with nutritious nonperishable items, such as whole fresh fruits, peanut butter and crackers, canned tuna or soup, granola bars and single-serve packages of whole grain cereal or crackers.