

The Daily Union Article
Saturday, March 23, 2019
Title: National Nutrition Month

March is a time of transition. The winter season transitions to spring weather. The weather allows us to transition from more home-bound type activities to ones that draw us out into our yard, neighborhood, and community. The season presents itself with opportunities for change, as well. One of those many changes might just be a change in attitude toward the better as it relates to health and wellness.

This month is National Nutrition Month (NNM) where health and wellness agencies bond together with messages showing their commitment, in part, to improving the nation's health.

What changes do you want or need to make to become a success story for National Nutrition Month? Are you eating enough fruits and vegetables, drinking enough water, and getting enough physical activity? Do you have the knowledge and tools to make March your month of transition and change for better health?

Just as a doctor will take the pulse of their patient as an indication of their health, you should take your own pulse on the knowledge you have or need to make physical health and well-being a priority beginning this month. Take a few minutes to quiz yourself and determine your health and wellness pulse by circling your stand on these nutrition statements:

1. Fact or Fiction The amount of calories needed daily is the same for everyone.
2. Fact or Fiction Eating carbohydrates causes weight gain.
3. Fact or Fiction Doing some physical activity is better than doing non at all.
4. Fact or Fiction Sugars found naturally in fruit and milk are the same as sugars added to foods, like candies and cookies.
5. Fact or Fiction Portion sizes have increased over the years.
6. Fact or Fiction Only fresh produce is considered to be a good source for fruits and vegetables.
7. Fact or Fiction Oils, which are a source of fat, provide important nutrients.
8. Fact or Fiction Vegetarian diets are not appropriate for certain age groups.
9. Fact or Fiction Everyone should take a multivitamin mineral supplement.
10. Fact or Fiction All sources of nutrition information are credible.

So was your nutrition knowledge pulse strong or a bit on the weak side? If you're not sure, take a look at the answers and explanations that follow.

1. **FICTION** The amount of calories needed daily will depend on a person's age, gender, height, weight, and activity level.
2. **FICTION** Too many calories from any type of food (or beverage) can result in weight gain.
3. **FACT** Research has shown that even a little physical activity is better than being sedentary.
4. **FICTION** Foods and beverages that contain naturally occurring sugars, such as fruit, milk, and yogurt contribute important nutrients. In comparison, foods and drinks with added sugars, such as desserts and soft drinks often contain no nutrients, just calories.
5. **FACT** The size of portions for both foods and drinks have increased. In fact, many people consume in one sitting what is considered to be several servings. The new Nutrition Facts Label will reflect some of these larger portions and help you determine the total amount of calories (and other nutrients) that are consumed per serving (or per container).
6. **FICTION** All types of fruits and vegetables, including fresh, frozen, canned, 100% juice, and dried will help you meet your daily goals. With forms other than fresh, it's important to look for fruits in water or their own juice (with no added sugars) and vegetables with no added salt or ones labeled reduced or low sodium.
7. **FACT** Fats can be either solid or liquid at room temperature. Liquid types of fats, like vegetable oils, are sources of necessary nutrients. Whereas solid fats are high in saturated fat and/or trans fats, both of which should be limited. All types of fat are high in calories, so portion sizes of these foods can make a big difference. The daily allowance for most people is just a few teaspoons.
8. **FICTION** Well-planned vegetarian and vegan eating plans that include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes can be nutritionally adequate during all stages of the life cycle.
9. **FICTION** For most people, nutrient needs should be obtained through food sources. When a person's diet is lacking in certain foods and nutrients, a vitamin and/or mineral supplement may be required. There are also higher requirements in some cases, such as during pregnancy or with a diagnosed deficiency. Always check with a health care provider before taking a dietary supplement.
10. **FICTION** Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation available when it comes to nutrition, especially on the internet. Look for sources of credible information from health care organizations, government agencies, dietitians, and your local K-State Research and Extension office (785) 238-4161.

Quiz & Answer Responses found in the NNM 2019 toolkit at: www.eatright.org

About National Nutrition Month (NNM) Nineteen seventy-three (1973) marked the first year our nation recognized nutrition awareness with National Nutrition Week. As

the effort gained momentum, National Nutrition Month was inaugurated in 1980. Created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the National Nutrition Month occurs in March of every year. The goal is to promote nutrition education and provide consumers with information about the importance of making informed food choices and suggestions for developing sound eating and physical activity habits. Alongside the Academy, other agencies and institutions have joined in as sponsors for National Nutrition Month to expand the reach of the campaign's messages.

For more information about making smart food choices for your health, contact me at the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office at 785-238-4161 or visit our website at <https://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/>. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!