

National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month, which happens to coincide with my intent to start talking about the six nutrients over the next few months. If you like to research and/or get info from the internet check out www.eatright.org for lots of in depth analysis and articles listed under titles such as Kid's Nutrition Needs, Nutrition for Everyone, and Weight Management. There are also a lot of nutrition facts about things, such as different types of sugars, and ideas for healthy snacks. So check it out!

The Six Nutrients

We all have heard of nutrients, but exactly 'what are they?' and 'what do they do?' Nutrients are the substances in food that your body needs to function properly to repair itself, to grow, and to supply you with energy. There are six nutrients that the body needs and they are carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water. Carbohydrates, proteins and fats are the ones that provide the body with energy. Energy from nutrients are measured in 'units of heat' called calories. Calories are used to measure energy for our body as watts are used to measure electrical energy for our house.

Carbohydrates

This month we will take a closer look at carbohydrates, or carbs as they are known nowadays and their role in our everyday lives. Carbohydrates are the starches and sugars found in foods and they are the body's preferred source of energy. Health experts recommend 55 to 65% of your daily calories come from carbohydrates, mainly complex carbohydrates. Complex carbs are the starches found in rice and other grains, nuts, beans and peas, and potatoes. Simple carbs, or sugars, are naturally found in fruits (fructose) and milk (lactose), but sugars are also added to many manufactured food products, such as candy, cookies, and soft drinks. So when you read a food label and see a word that ends in 'ose', that is usually a form of sugar. Your body needs carbohydrates; they are not bad if you eat more complex carbs and as with many other things in life, taken in moderation. So why does everyone fell so badly about carbohydrates? Well it may have to do with the fact that before the body can burn carbs, it must first convert them to glucose, see the 'ose' at the end, a simple sugar and the body's chief fuel. Glucose is used right away, but if you have too much and it is not used right away it becomes stored in muscles as glycogen. Later, if more glucose is needed, the glycogen will be converted back to glucose and used. When you consume more carbohydrates than the body can burn, then that glycogen is stored in body fat and that probably has a lot to do with the bad rap for the carbs. Besides being the body's main source of energy, complex carbohydrates can provide the body with fiber. Fiber is not used for energy nor can it be digested, but it is essential to help move waste through the digestive tract and prevent constipation, appendicitis, and many other intestinal problems. Finally, you are asking, 'What can I eat to get some of these great complex carbohydrates?' Well the answer would be some of everyone's favorites, they include fruits, vegetables, pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, popcorn, and whole wheat bread to name a few. Remember, do not doctor that oatmeal up with a ton of sugar, you are defeating your purpose; moderation is the key when it comes to carbohydrates, especially the ones with the most sugar.

From the Nurses' Desk

Nurse Teia—With Spring Break and warm weather right around the corner here are some tips on having fun in the sun:

*minimize sun exposure between 10am-4pm

*cover up with hats and clothing

*utilize sunscreen

*wear sunglasses with UV filter protection

*check the UV index daily (this is a prediction of the sun's UV radiation and it is available on TV and internet)

UV Index

Risk

Minutes to

Precautions

Rating		Burn	
0-2	Minimal	60	Sunscreen, UV sunglasses
2-4	Low	45	Sunscreen, UV sunglasses
4-6	Moderate	30	Sunscreen, UV sunglasses & hat
6-10	High	15	Sunscreen, UV sunglasses, hat & umbrella
10-15	Very high	10	Sunscreen, UV sunglasses, hat, umbrella and avoiding midday sun

Nurse Amanda—Approximately 12 million Americans have a food allergy, including more than 2 million school-age children. It is time to preregister at the high school for next year and is very important to fill out the emergency information card completely and make sure your medications for the nurse to keep at school are accurate and not expired. Early detection and prevention is the key to saving lives.

Nurse Tiona—Basic First Aid and Safety Tips for Parents and Children at home.

1. Keep a first aid kit in a handy location
2. Teach your child some basic first aid (how to take care of minor cuts and burns at home).
3. Make sure your child knows to call 911 in emergency situation.
4. Post work numbers and any other family members or neighbors phone numbers that can be called in case of an emergency.
5. Also make sure that your child knows their own address and phone number.

Next Month

In April we will be taking a closer look at proteins and the role they play in your health. Until then, keep up the efforts for a healthier you.