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NUTRITION FROM THE GROUND UP



During National Nutrition Month®, the American Dietetic Association reminds everyone that an easy way to focus on eating better is to start with the basics: build your nutritional health from the ground up. Registered Dietitian and ADA spokesperson Toby Smithson suggests ways to improve your nutrition from the ground up:

1. **Focus on fruits and veggies:** “Add a serving each day to one meal and increase it every few weeks. Adding more of these foods into your diet is important whether you buy frozen, fresh or organic.”
2. **Look locally:** From farmer’s markets to community-supported agriculture, you have many options to find new, fresh foods in your area. “This can be a great way to eat well and support your community at the same time,” Smithson says.
3. **Make calories count:** “Too often, people think of foods as good or bad and that only those on the ‘good foods’ list are okay to eat,” says Smithson. “When you’re choosing between options, focus instead on the one with more of the vitamins and nutrients that you need. Sometimes, foods with fewer calories aren’t always the healthiest options.” To figure out how many calories you need to achieve a healthy weight, visit www.mypyramid.gov.
4. **Test your taste buds:** A healthy eating plan emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy, and includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans and nuts. “Those are the basics, but within this wide range there are always opportunities to try new things and find new favorites,” Smithson says. “Expand your horizons. Try a fish you’ve never eaten before or find a new vegetable recipe. By testing yourself, you might find new healthy favorites to add to your regular grocery list.”
5. **Trick yourself with treats:** “A healthful diet doesn’t mean deprivation,” says Smithson. “If you have a sweet tooth, have fruit and yogurt for dessert. If you want a snack in the afternoon, have some trail mix or nuts. There is no reason to go hungry just because you’re making healthful changes.”

Enjoy these recipes provided by ADA and get tips on building your healthful diet from the ground up, visit www.eatright.org and click on “For the Public.”

Szechuan Beef Stir-Fry

1 package (10 ounces) fresh vegetable stir-fry blend
3 tablespoons water
2 beef shoulder center steaks (Ranch Steaks), cut 3/4 inch thick (about 8 ounces each)
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 cup prepared sesame-ginger stir-fry sauce
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
2 cups hot cooked white or brown rice, prepared without butter or salt
1/4 cup dry-roasted peanuts

Combine vegetables and water in large nonstick skillet; cover and cook over medium-high heat 4 minutes or until crisp-tender. Remove and drain vegetables. Set aside.

Meanwhile, cut beef steaks into 1/4-inch thick strips.

Heat same skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add half of the beef and half of the garlic; stir-fry 1 to 2 minutes or until outside surface of beef is no longer pink. Remove from skillet; keep warm. Repeat with remaining beef and garlic.

Return beef and vegetables to skillet. Add stir-fry sauce and red pepper; cook and stir 1 to 2 minutes or until heated through. Serve over rice. Sprinkle with peanuts.

Makes 4 servings; Serving size: 1/4 of recipe.

Recipe provided courtesy of John Wiley & Sons, From The Healthy Beef Cookbook by National Cattlemen's Beef Association & American Dietetic Association ©2006, John Wiley & Sons.

Greek Chick-Pea Salad

One 15-ounce can chick-peas (garbanzo beans), rinsed and drained
1 small tomato, seeded and chopped
1/2 cup diced peeled cucumber
2 green onions with green tops, sliced
1/4 cup coarsely chopped Italian parsley
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1/4 cup (1 ounce) crumbled feta cheese
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Combine the chick-peas, tomato, cucumber, onions and parsley in a medium bowl.

In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar and oil; pour over the bean mixture and toss well to mix. Just before serving, sprinkle the salad with cheese and pepper.

Makes 6 Servings (3 cups); Serving size: 1/2 cup

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