



MAKE TIME FOR A NUTRITION MAKEOVER.

If you had to point to the one thing that contributes most to Americans' notoriously poor nutritional habits, you might want to look beyond the kitchen table to the clock on the wall. Yep: It's time that seems to push us most toward bad eating habits. Our busy lives make us focus more on speed and convenience than nutrition.

The solution? Pediatrician and author Dr. Natalie Muth says that it's a matter of taking time to focus on your family's eating habits. Here's what she suggests:

Clean out the pantry, fridge and kitchen. Get rid of the bad stuff ... the sugary drinks, junk food, etc. ... and replace it with good stuff. Even better: Make the really good stuff, like fresh fruit, easy to reach.

Plan meals. If you plan ahead, you're less likely to reach for processed food or junk. Use your plan as your shopping list, and only get what you need.

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Cook at home. Sure, this might be asking a lot in these busy times, but research shows that the more you cook at home, the healthier your food likely will be.

Eat together as a family. "Kids who grow up in families that eat together at least three times per week have better nutrition habits," Dr. Muth says. An added bonus? They also tend to have better relationships and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors as teens.

Yes, these steps will take more time, but they'll pay off in improved health ... something everyone has time for.

Sources: <https://www.drnatliemuth.com/post/how-to-give-your-family-a-nutrition-makeover>. Accessed 8 June 2020.

Smart Facts

70%

of the U.S. diet consists of processed foods.

10%

of Americans' disposable income is spent on fast food.

43%

of Americans say they look for healthy options when shopping for food.

Sources: <https://www.standardprocess.com/Blog/5-Hard-to-Swallow-Statistics-About-the-Standard-Am?#.Xt5FXjpKjDc> Accessed 8 June 2020.
<https://www.statista.com/chart/16796/us-interest-in-healthy-food/> Accessed 8 June 2020.



FIGHT THROUGH COVID QUARANTINE FATIGUE .

As the nation pushes through another month of COVID-19 quarantine restrictions, many experts are concerned about the impact “quarantine fatigue” could have on our willingness to continue to be careful. In some ways, experts say we’re dealing with two separate health issues: the mental health impact of ongoing isolation, and the threat of a resurgence of COVID-19 cases as we grow weary of isolation and attempt to return too quickly to our regular routines.

First of all, experts say that fatigue is to be expected. “Quarantine fatigue ... is entirely understandable,” says behavioral economist Syon Bhanot. “Staying home is stressful, boring and, for many, financially devastating.” But experts are quick to add that we can’t use that fatigue as an excuse to let our guard down. While indicators seem to be improving, many states are relaxing restrictions and many institutions are trying to return to pre-pandemic routines, we can’t become complacent.

“Even as some states lift their lockdown orders, public health experts warn that the coming weeks are the critical window for decreasing the number of new cases and starting to push this virus into retreat,” Bhanot wrote in the Washington Post.

So, how do we combat fatigue? By following some simple guidelines:

- Remind yourself that, as much as daily life tries to return to “normal,” the virus is still out there. Nothing about the virus has changed, and we have no vaccine.
- Find new ways to distract yourself. If you haven’t already started a new hobby or a new activity, now is the time. If you did, perhaps consider shifting gears to something new.
- Make connections by reaching out to people through the phone, Zoom or other means.
- If you do decide to go out, continue to wear a mask, wash your hands often and thoroughly, and follow the other precautions you did when the virus first appeared.
- If you must go back to work, remain vigilant even in what might seem to be a controlled environment. Ask your employer about the precautions being followed: Is everyone required to wear masks, is social distancing expected, will you have all personal protective equipment you need, and what will happen if someone develops symptoms? Asking questions not only will allow you to know you’ll be safe, but they’ll also remind you of the things you need to be thinking about all of the time.



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Generally, the key is to remain vigilant, even as you’re getting tired of all of the restrictions. Although many signs suggest the virus is subsiding, it is continuing to spread and, experts warn, if we let down our guard now, we might see a major resurgence in the months ahead.

Sources: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/05/opinion/coronavirus-quarantine-fatigue.html> Accessed 8 June 2020.
<https://www.consumerreports.org/coronavirus/going-back-to-work-while-covid-19-is-still-spreading/> Accessed 8 June 2020.

YOUR BENEFITS CAN SUPPORT BETTER EATING.

You hear a lot about better nutrition leading to better health. Since health benefits are designed to help you stay healthy, does that mean your employee benefits will include tools for better nutrition? The answer usually seems to be, “Yes” ... with exceptions.

Some health plans will cover nutrition and diet care, counseling and services, but you might have to meet certain requirements to receive the coverage. However, in most cases, those requirements are reasonable and designed to help you get the help you need. To find out if you're covered, consider taking these steps:

- **Check your policy and talk to HR.** Those might seem like obvious steps, but many people never look at their plan documents or ask simple questions of HR.
- **Review your wellness plan.** Many wellness plans include diet and nutrition goals, and they'll cover classes, programs, etc., to improve nutrition, along with other tools for improved overall health.
- **Be specific.** Ask specifically whether your plan covers visits with a registered dietician or nutrition counselor, and under what conditions. Some plans cover such services as preventive care, others for certain diagnosis, and still others under wellness plans. How the services are delivered might dictate what services you can and can't access under your plan.
- **Talk to your healthcare provider.** Many plans provide nutrition counseling and care so long as it is prescribed by a physician. Let your provider know your goals for improving your nutrition, and get his or her input on the best course of action.
- **Know your diagnosis.** In many cases, coverage depends on a diagnosis. If you or a family member has a diagnosis of autism, obesity, diabetes or hypertension, for example, you might be eligible for coverage. In some cases, however, you can receive covered services simply for the sake of improved overall health.
- **Know who you're seeing.** Coverage might depend on what kind of service provider you are seeing. Are you visiting a nutrition counselor? A registered dietician? Something else? The answer to that could dictate your coverage.
- **Find out about discounts, etc.** Some benefits plans give you access to discounted services, coupons for certain products, etc. Consider all options and possibilities that could help you improve your family's daily nutrition.

Sources: <https://www.tfwinsurance.com/2015/03/02/how-to-get-your-health-insurance-to-pay-for-nutrition-counseling/> Accessed 08 June 2020.
<https://www.thumbtack.com/question/are-nutritionists-covered-by-health-insurance-326072961015521290/#~:text=Nutritionists%20may%20be%20covered%20by,pressure%20or%20coronary%20heart%20disease.>
Accessed 08 June 2020.



UV Safety Awareness Month

As you ponder the pursuit of a golden tan, think about this: Most skin cancers are caused by exposure to UV rays from the sun or manmade sources such as tanning beds. That doesn't mean you should avoid the sun ... only that you should be safe. Learn more at <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/be-safe-in-sun.html>.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: TOMATOES

First things first: Technically, the tomato is a fruit – so ruled because of its botanical make-up. Functionally, though, tomatoes tend to be treated as vegetables, a point that even the U.S. Supreme Court addressed in the 19th century, when it ruled that tomato should be treated (and taxed) as a vegetable.

None of that matters when it comes to eating a tomato, of course, which is one of nature's most versatile products. Tasty when eaten raw, it also can form the foundation for countless prepared foods, from relishes and soups to sauces and side dishes – a somewhat surprising outcome for a fruit that was considered poisonous by American colonists.

While most tomatoes ripen to a bright red, tomato varieties range from yellow to purple when ripe. Regardless of the variety, though, when choosing a tomato, look for a fruit that is firm, glossy, smooth and plump. Avoid ones with bruises, soft spots or other damage.

Tomatoes will continue to ripen after you buy them, so be aware of how quickly you'll use them when purchasing them. If you buy them fully ripe, you can store them in the refrigerator, but the cold air could affect the flavor. The best option? Pick 'em ripe and eat 'em as soon as possible.



Source: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/foods/tomatoes>. Accessed 8 June 2020.
<https://www.planetnatural.com/tomato-gardening-guru/history/>. Accessed 8 June 2020.



Ingredients:

4 large, fresh tomatoes, peeled and diced
½ cup English cucumber, peeled and finely diced
½ cup finely diced red bell pepper
¼ cup minced green onion
1 large jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground cumin
1 pinch dried oregano
Pinch cayenne pepper, or to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 pint cherry tomatoes
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
1 lime, juiced
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
Salt and ground black pepper to taste
2 tablespoon thinly lived fresh basil

Recipe: Chef John's Gazpacho

Directions:

Combine diced tomatoes, cucumber, bell pepper, green onion, jalapeno and garlic in a large bowl. Stir in salt, cumin, oregano, cayenne pepper and black pepper. Place cherry tomatoes, olive oil, lime juice, balsamic vinegar and Worcestershire sauce in a blender. Puree until smooth, then pour pureed mixture through a strainer into the tomato-cucumber mixture; stir to combine. Place 1/3 of the tomato mixture into the blender. Puree until smooth, then pour pureed mixture into remaining tomato-cucumber mixture. Stir to combine. Cover and chill in refrigerator for 2 hours. Season cold soup with salt and black pepper to taste. Ladle into bowls and top with basil.

Nutrition Information:

CALORIES: 132; **CARBOHYDRATES:** 10.5G; **PROTEIN:** 2G; **CHOLESTEROL:** 0MG;
SODIUM: 410MG; **FAT:** 9.2G; **DIETARY FIBER:** 2.8G ; **SUGAR:** 4G; **POTASSIUM:** 499MG

Source: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/222331/chef-johns-gazpacho/> Accessed 8 June 2020.