

CMMHC WELLNESS BULLETIN

March 2020

National Nutrition Month

National Nutrition Month, a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored each March by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, is the perfect time for both individuals and organizations to promote messages about healthy eating — and to align these messages with the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Making Healthier Food and Drink Choices

A look at U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and National Nutrition Month®

National Nutrition Month® is a time to focus on making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits. Small changes to the way you eat can have big health benefits — helping to prevent health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, and type-2 diabetes.

The 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, developed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides key recommendations to encourage healthy eating.

Healthy Eating Patterns

The Dietary Guidelines focuses on eating *patterns* — the combination of food and beverage choices over time. Healthy eating patterns include a variety of nutritious foods like vegetables, fruits, grains, low-fat and fat-free dairy, lean meats and other protein foods and oils. They limit saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium.

Small Changes Can Make a Big Difference

Making changes to eating patterns can be overwhelming. Small shifts in food choices — over the course of a week, a day, or even a meal — can make a big difference while helping change feel manageable. For example, the benefits of shifting from white bread to whole wheat bread, or from soda to seltzer water, can add up. Remember, every food and beverage choice is an opportunity to move toward a healthy eating pattern!

For More Information

[Learn more and review the detailed recommendations in the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.](#)

Source: <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/promo.asp#newsletter>



Happy
St. Patrick's
Day.

EAT RIGHT



BITE BY BITE

National Nutrition Month®
March 2020



cmmhc
Central Minnesota Mental Health Center
Together, Creating a Healthier Life

eat right. Academy of Nutrition
and Dietetics

Just How Bad is Diet Soda for You?

It's a direct correlation with your weight

So you finally kicked your [regular soda](#) habit, but now you find yourself reaching for cans of the diet soft drink variety. Trouble is – diet soda as a replacement for regular soda – is a whole new problem.

“Switching from regular to diet soda may offer a short term cut in calories, but your body won’t be fooled for long,” says registered dietitian Kristin Kirkpatrick, MS, RD, LD. “Research suggests that your body reacts to certain nonnutritive foods, including the artificial sweeteners in diet soda, in ways that may actually harm your health.”

Here are three reasons why Kirkpatrick says it’s important to ditch the diet drink altogether:

1. Diet soda is associated with weight gain

Some research suggests that the brain reacts to [artificial sweeteners](#) much like it does to sugary sweets. Ingesting them frequently may result in an increased desire for high-calorie foods such as sugary treats, putting you at a greater risk of weight gain and binge eating all the cookies in the break room.

Another [study](#) found that overweight individuals who switched to diet soda were more likely to consume more calories in food than overweight individuals who drank regular soda. Those who drank diet soda even had a higher BMI than their counterparts.

2. Diet soda may cause insulin confusion

The brain normally associates “sweet” with calories. In the realm of human physiology, that’s a good thing. It drives your body to release insulin as sugar’s chaperone to the cells to create fuel. In the past, people assumed this process could not occur when we consumed artificial sweeteners because calories don’t follow the sweet flavor.

But, one [study](#) found the process could very well happen. In the study, individuals who consumed a specific artificial sweetener (sucralose) had increases in both insulin and blood glucose levels. Frequent rises in insulin have been linked to insulin resistance and an increased risk of type 2 diabetes.

Some research has even associated artificially sweetened sodas with increased risk of [stroke](#).

3. Diet soda may change your brain’s reaction to sweetness

Some [research](#) suggests that those who drink diet soda have higher activity in the area of the brain associated with the desire to consume foods high in fat and sugar. So those who drink diet soda seem to alter the brain’s sweet-sensing reward center. This means that diet soda could potentially change how the brain reacts to cravings for [high-calorie foods](#).

So is it better to just drink regular soda?

Not so fast. There is abundant data that tells us that sugar (even when it’s “real”) is not necessarily a sweeter alternative, at least when health is concerned.

If you crave caffeine (in moderation), you are likely better off with plain coffee or tea. If you’re looking for flavor in a drink, try freezing raspberries, cucumber, mint, lemon or lime in ice cubes to add a hint of sweetness. You can even use fruit in soda water to recreate soda’s bubbly appeal.

Quitting a habit is never easy, but experts recommend that kicking soda all the way out of your diet can have profound effects on both your weight and your health.

Source: <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/3-reasons-you-should-kick-your-diet-soda-habit/>

Vegetarian Shepherd's Pies

These mini vegetarian shepherd's pies feature lentils, carrot and corn, crowned with a velvety mashed potato topping. The recipe can also be made in a broiler-safe casserole dish. Serve with a spinach salad with oranges, walnuts and red-wine vinaigrette. *Source: EatingWell Magazine, September/October 2011*

Ingredients

- 1 pound Yukon Gold or white potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, divided
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely diced
- 1/2 cup finely diced carrot
- 1 tablespoon water
- 3/4 frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme or 1/2 teaspoon dried
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 14-ounce can vegetable broth
- 1 1/2 cups cooked or canned (rinsed) lentils (see Tip)



Directions

Step 1:

Place potatoes in a large saucepan and cover with 2 inches of water. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium, partially cover and cook until tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Drain and return the potatoes to the pot. Add buttermilk, butter and 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Mash with a potato masher until mostly smooth.

Step 2:

While the potatoes are cooking, position rack in upper third of oven; preheat broiler. Coat four 10- to 12-ounce broiler-safe ramekins (or an 8-inch-square broiler-safe baking dish) with cooking spray. Place ramekins on a broiler-safe baking sheet.

Step 3:

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion, carrot and water. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in corn, thyme and the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, for 2 minutes. Sprinkle with flour and stir to coat. Stir in broth. Bring to a simmer; cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Stir in lentils and cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes.

Step 4:

Divide the hot lentil mixture among the prepared ramekins (or spread in the baking dish). Top with the mashed potatoes. Broil, rotating halfway through, until the potato is lightly browned in spots, 6 to 10 minutes.

Tips:

To cook lentils, place in a saucepan, cover with at least 1 inch of water, bring to a simmer and cook until just tender, 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the type of lentil. Drain and rinse with cold water. 1 cup dry lentils = about 2 1/2 cups cooked. Or use canned lentils: 15-ounce can = 1 1/2 cups. Rinse canned lentils before cooking with them to reduce the sodium by about 35%





Random Act of Kindness Initiative

A new initiative from the CMMHC Wellness Committee, is a Random Act of Kindness Day. Each month the Wellness committee will be sending out a reminder to staff about completing a Random Act of Kindness around the 15th of each month. The Random Act of Kindness doesn't have to cost any money and can be something as simple as smiling at someone you don't know, leaving a kind comment or could be paying for someone's coffee order. The list is endless when it comes to doing a Random Act of Kindness. Are you interested in learning more about Random Acts of Kindness or the benefits? Visit the Bounce Back Project website! <https://www.bouncebackproject.org/random-acts-of-kindness/>

We hope that you will join the CMMHC Wellness committee in our First **Random Act of Kindness day on March 16, 2020!**



CMMHC's Wellness Committee Mission Statement:

It is the mission of the CMMHC Wellness Committee to promote the health and wellness of staff through education and initiatives that:

- Encourage habits of Wellness
- Increase awareness of factors and resources contributing to well-being
- Inspire and empower individuals to take responsibility for their own health.
- Support a sense of community

Brought to you by your

Central Minnesota Mental Health Center Wellness Committee

- Brie Frantesl
- Maggie Dilks
- Hannah LaDuke
- Marie Fisher
- Steven Loos
- Danielle Eller– Hollerud

