

During National Nutrition Month, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Offers Practical Ways to Enjoy Food While Eating Less

Food is meant to be enjoyed, but eating less is the key to weight management and disease prevention, according to the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. During National Nutrition Month[®], the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association) encourages everyone to "Get Your Plate in Shape."

"One way to accomplish this is by eating the foods you enjoy while being mindful of portion sizes and total calories," says registered dietitian and Academy Spokesperson Marjorie Nolan.

"Eating should be pleasurable, but it is important to be aware of how much food we eat every day. A key step to maintaining a healthy lifestyle is putting less food on your plate," Nolan says.

Nolan offers simple and practical ways to eat fewer calories while savoring and enjoying in your food:

- **Be mindful of your daily calorie needs.** Find your personal daily calorie quota using the *Dietary Guidelines'* icon, *MyPlate*. When planning your meals and snacks throughout the day, keep your calorie needs in mind. "A simple way to do this is to think about the portions on your plate," Nolan says. "Divide your plate in four sections with one each for whole grains, lean proteins, vegetables and fruits, and a side of dairy, such as a cup of low-fat milk or yogurt or an ounce of cheese."
- **Avoid oversized portions by using smaller plates, bowls and glasses.** "The standard 10-inch plate may be too large for you. Switch to 8-inch or appetizer-sized plates and you will automatically portion and eat less without feeling deprived," says Nolan. Pile your plate with nutrient-dense, lower-calorie foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains and lean protein foods like beans, seafood, lean meat and poultry.
- **Get into the kitchen and stay in charge of what you're eating.** Cooking more often at home not only allows you to balance what's on your plate, but also enables you to choose healthier fats, less sodium and increase the fiber in your diet while balancing the amount of calories you eat. "Then, when you eat out, you'll be more apt to recognize healthy portion sizes based on your experiences at home. Take the tactic of choosing lower calorie menu options when dining out by focusing on vegetables, fruits and whole grains," Nolan says.
- **Watch out for liquid calories.** The calories in fruit juices and drinks with added sugar, sports drinks, sugar-laden coffee beverages and soft drinks can add up fast. Also, think before you drink alcoholic beverages as they have calories too. Remember to drink alcohol sensibly by capping it with one drink a day for women or two drinks a day for

men. (A standard drink is 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits.)

- **Log in.** "Food logging can be a great tool for keeping track of the foods you eat and ensuring you stay in your calorie limit," Nolan says. "By having awareness of everything you eat and drink, you'll be more apt to stick within your healthy calorie range. Write down what you're eating throughout the day so that it's not such a big task to tackle at one time in the day, or use the [USDA's Super Tracker](#) which helps plan, analyze and track your diet and physical activity. You'll likely eat less and savor your food more."

As part of this public education campaign, the Academy's National Nutrition Month website www.eatright.org/nnm includes helpful tips, fun games, promotional tools and nutrition education resources, all designed to spread the message of good nutrition around the "Get Your Plate in Shape" theme.

For more information, please feel free to call the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office at 903-473-4580.