

**March is National Nutrition Month** and we would like to emphasize the significance of the three main keys to good nutrition; balance, variety, and moderation.

The importance of good nutrition is nothing new. There are many things standing between us and a healthy lifestyle, like busy work and home schedules. But with 4 of the 10 leading causes of death in the U.S. - heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes – being directly related to the way we eat, a healthy diet is not something that can be ignored. Taking small steps to improve your nutritional intake each month will make huge difference in your health.

Good nutrition is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Combined with physical activity, your diet can help you to reach and maintain a healthy weight, reduce your risk of chronic diseases (like heart disease and cancer), and promote your overall health.

To stay healthy, your body needs the right balance of carbohydrates (fruits, oats, potatoes, etc.), fats (nuts, corn, soy, etc.), and protein (fish, turkey, cheese, etc.). Carbohydrates are key for maximum energy, speed, stamina, concentration, recovery, and better fluid balance. They are vital for athletes and active individuals because they are the primary fuel for your body.

You also need vitamins, minerals, and other substances from many different foods. Vitamins and minerals are nutrients that your body needs to grow and develop normally. While some foods have better levels of these important vitamins and minerals, no single food or food group has it all. It's important to eat a variety of different foods to ensure you're taking in the proper amounts.

Moderation means eating neither too much nor too little of any food or nutrient. Too much food can result in excess weight and even too much of certain nutrients, while eating too little can lead to numerous nutrient deficiencies and low body mass. Healthy eating habits means eating the right amounts of food, not just less.

Like a finely-tuned racing car, your body needs the right fuel (food) and regular maintenance (exercise, lifestyle, and mental attitude) to achieve its true health potential. Nothing is more important than healthy eating!