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What's in your fridge?

Posted: Tuesday, Mar. 12, 2013

March is National Nutrition Month and the arrival of Spring is just around the corner which means it is the perfect time to make over your fridge and pantry to rearrange, diminish clutter, and make space for healthy and tasty food!. Melissa Herrmann Dierks RD, LDN, CDE has some quick tips for a healthy kitchen check-up on what foods and beverages you should stock up on for a healthier fridge and pantry this season!

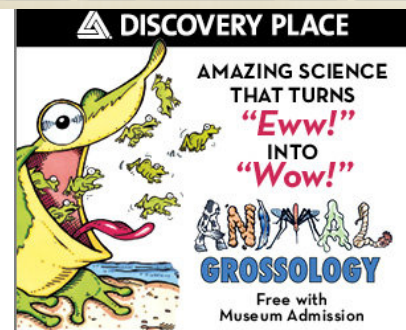
National Nutrition Month is a perfect time for us to learn more about the importance of making informed food and beverage choices so we can develop more sound eating habits to support a healthy lifestyle. The more you know, the better your plan will be. Keep in mind that a healthy diet is about balance, variety and moderation. Labeling individual foods or beverages as simply "good" or "bad" is not productive and typically does not work for a long term strategy. It's best to really learn about calories, fiber and fat so you can make the best decisions about what will work best for you and your diet goals.

Here are some quick tips to get started with your healthy kitchen check-up:

1. Read food labels and look for at least 3 grams of fiber in the breads, cereals, bagels, English Muffins, and rolls in your kitchen. Fiber is found in plant foods and helps with digestion, weight management and controlling blood sugar.
2. Aim for cheese that offers no more than 3 grams of fat per one ounce serving. Low-fat cheese helps with weight management and keeping your diet heart healthy.
3. Look for whole wheat or whole grain pasta and brown rice. Whole grains offer a variety of health benefits and tastes great!
4. Make sure your kitchen contains a variety of vegetable options including fresh, frozen or canned. Avoid butter or cheese sauces. Canned vegetables can be an affordable way to increase vegetable intake, if possible look for reduced sodium versions or pour the liquid off to reduce sodium intake.
5. Do you have healthy fats on hand such as a healthy margarine like Brummel and Brown, olive oil, avocado, walnuts, almonds or reduced fat salad dressing? Avoid stick margarines which often contain trans fats, and full-fat salad dressings that can be loaded with calories.
6. Don't forget about healthy hydration. Too often we mistaken hunger for thirst and that could lead to overindulgence and dehydration. While water is best, you may want a little flavor so look to a beverage such as vitaminwater zero with its excellent blend of B and C



Natasha S. Johnson - MCT Store |



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vitamins. It tastes great and has zero calories. If soda is a favorite, choose diet soda or look for the 90 calorie mini can size options.

Supermarket Savvy offers a Name Brand Shopping List at www.supermarketsavvy.com that lists healthy food choices by brand name making shopping easier. www.choosemyplate.gov can help you determine your calorie needs and provides information on healthy food choices.

Melissa Herrmann Dierks RD, LDN, CDE owner of the Huntersville, NC based Eat Smart Nutrition Co. is a consultant to food and beverage industry including The Coca-Cola Company.

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Mandy Ravin is a mom of three who manages the MomsCharlotte site in between carpool drops-offs, soccer games, gymnastics meets, homework, laundry and trying

to stay sane in the nutty world that is being a mom. Mandy can be reached at: mravin@charlotteobserver.com and welcomes your ideas, events, feedback, resources, and anything else that helps you be a happier mom.

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