



January 18, 2022

## ***New Year Nutrition Notes***

**Kendra Nelson, MPH, RD**

Thank you for registering the NRI Appetite for Life Wellness Workshop on January 18, 2022. Here are the nutrition notes from that program and all the contact information that was shared.

### **Resolve to try cooking at home**

- **When you prepare your own meals, you have full control over the ingredients and can make healthier choices! Some healthy swaps that you can make include (AHA, NHS):**
  - Swapping high-sugar drinks like chocolate milks, sodas, and Kool-Aid for water or milk without added sugar
  - Swapping white bread with whole grain varieties
  - Choosing leaner cuts of meat
  - Making your own healthy salad dressing with oil, vinegar, and herbs.
- **By preparing your meals at home, you can also save money compared to eating out frequently.**
- **Try to make a menu for yourself at the start of each week to meal plan and stick with it! Having a plan makes it easier to stay on track and stay prepared for each meal, even when you are out and about.**

### **Eat more fruits and vegetables: try for 4-5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day**

*(per American Heart Association)*

- **At the NRI, we encourage “eating a rainbow” and adding lots of color to your plate! A few of our favorite colorful foods include:**
  - Fruits with blue, purple, and violet colors contain anthocyanin, a nutrient that is good for brain health and supports healthy aging. NRI Principal Investigator Carol Cheatham has researched the benefits of blueberries on helping to improve memory.
  - Orange and yellow fruits and veggies contain beta-carotene, which supports eye and heart health. Orange and yellow fruits and veggies also often contain Vitamin C, which is great for immune support.
- **Some easy ways to add more fruit and vegetables to your diet include:**
  - Purchasing pre-sliced fruits and veggies and keeping your fridge stocked with healthy options (you can also slice fruits and veggies yourself and store them for easy access and snacking).
  - Purchasing canned and frozen veggies (picked and stored at the peak of freshness!) that are easy to quickly cook and eat.

### **Avoid dehydration – drink lots of water and enjoy hydrating foods**

- **Water is our body’s principal chemical component! We need water for our body to work properly, and even mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you feel tired.**
- **Generally, adequate daily fluid intake for adults is between 2.7-3.7 liters of fluids per day (Mayo Clinic/US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine)**
- **Some easy ways to stay hydrated include:**
  - Keeping a pitcher of water in your fridge and adding fruit for a little bit of extra flavor.
  - Snacking on hydrating foods like watermelon, strawberries, or oranges! (*Healthline*)

## Avoid mindless snacking

- **There isn't anything wrong with having a snack, but mindless snacking can be a bad habit to fall into. A great goal for the New Year is to stay in tune with your body's hunger cues and balance your meals so that if you are snacking, it is with a purpose!**
- **Some easy ways to avoid mindless snacking include:**
  - Staying hydrated! We have already talked about the importance of hydration to keep your body functioning properly. Sometimes, we can mistake thirst for hunger. Staying hydrated can help prevent this.
  - Try to schedule your meals! Have a plan for when you will eat your main meals throughout the day and stick with it to avoid going too long without eating.
  - Try to include more protein in your meals. Protein-filled foods will help you feel satisfied and stay fuller for longer. One of our favorite protein-filled foods at the NRI is eggs because they are also full of choline, a nutrient studied by NRI Director Steven Zeisel. Choline is essential for baby brain development and also impacts muscle recovery and liver function.

## Think improvement, not perfection

- **Changing the way you eat does not need to be an all or nothing effort! Small changes can lead to big results.**
- **Some easy ways to stay motivated and on course:**
  - Start small. If you currently eat takeout four times per week, start by cutting that down to two times a week. Or make one healthy swap this week to start off, rather than replacing every snack in your pantry with fruits and veggies. Next week, make another swap, then another, then another. Build!
  - Set SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) goals for yourself! Instead of saying that you will drink more water this year, say that "In January, I will drink 2 liters of water per day by using a water bottle that tracks my intake."
  - Think of healthy eating habits as a way to change your lifestyle and not as a limiting "diet." Avoid restriction and instead, make mindful choices most of the time while allowing yourself an indulgence at times.

## Contacts and Links to Additional Information

### YOGA

Grace Millsap Yoga

### MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

UNC Campus Health

Meditation 101: Beginners Guide

### UNC NRI CLINICAL STUDIES

All current opportunities: [uncnri.org/participate](https://uncnri.org/participate)

#### Fish Oil Study:

[HRC\\_Studies@unc.edu](mailto:HRC_Studies@unc.edu) or [Victoria\\_Fabry@unc.edu](mailto:Victoria_Fabry@unc.edu)

#### Children's Health Study:

[Brea\\_correll@unc.edu](mailto:Brea_correll@unc.edu)

704-250-5055

[vorugantilab.web.unc.edu](http://vorugantilab.web.unc.edu)

On Facebook @VorugantiLab

### Infant Nutrition and Cognition Study and other studies in Cheatham Lab:

704-250-5018

[feedingbrains@unc.edu](mailto:feedingbrains@unc.edu)

Cheatham Lab website

Stay up to date on what's happening across the UNC Nutrition Research Institute

**Web:** [uncnri.org](https://uncnri.org)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/unckannapolis/](https://facebook.com/unckannapolis/)

**Instagram:** [Instagram.com/unc\\_nri/](https://Instagram.com/unc_nri/)

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/UNC\\_NRI](https://twitter.com/UNC_NRI)

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/company/33275979/admin/](https://linkedin.com/company/33275979/admin/)

Sign up for our weekly e-news.