Too many people eat the same foods over and over, which prevents them from getting optimum nutrition. For National Nutrition Month why not take a closer look at what you eat…from the ground up. Consider selecting a more varied diet, including functional foods.

Functional foods are foods that provide health benefits that go beyond providing basic nutrition. They may help prevent diseases, reduce risk of developing diseases, or enhance overall health. Some of these functional foods occur naturally such as oats, soy, tomatoes, flaxseed, broccoli, fruits and vegetables, fish, garlic, grapes/grape juice, flaxseed, and nuts. Other foods are fortified with a nutrient and include juice with added calcium or fiber, milk with vitamin D, and grains with extra fiber. Some have been enhanced to improve their nutrition such as eggs, and granola bars with added Omega 3 fatty acids, or dairy products with probiotics.

Thousands of functional foods contain plant pigments called phytochemicals. Phytochemicals may reduce cancer risk; reduce heart disease by lowering cholesterol or reducing blood pressure; or improve health, by functioning as antioxidants. Antioxidants help keep our bodies healthy by repairing cell damage that occur daily in our bodies. Sources of phytochemicals include fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices.

On the next two pages you’ll find menus that are chock full of functional foods to get you started. They’re approximately 1600 calories, high in fiber, and heart healthy. They serve as an example just how easy it is get eat healthier without eating a bunch of “weird” foods.

After reading the menus, take stock of what you are currently eat. Are you getting the recommended 1.5 - 2 cups of fruit daily? Are you eating the 2 cups of vegetables daily? Are you eating broccoli every single day? That’s a good vegetable choice to be sure, but by eating vegetables the “colors of the rainbow,” you get a wider variety of those functional foods! Or are you missing functional foods altogether? Remember one food isn’t going to “save you” and one food isn’t going to ruin your health. Just start thinking “functional” now!

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Why It’s a Good For You:

Breakfast
Milk – Calcium and Vitamin D in milk help prevent osteoporosis, high blood pressure, stroke and colon cancer.
Berries- Blueberries, blackberries, raspberries and strawberries are rich in antioxidants that may help lower cancer and heart disease risk.
Whole grain/high fiber cereals can help digestive health and may reduce cancer risk. Aim to get 25 grams of fiber daily with >5 grams of fiber per serving. Good choices include bran flakes, raisin bran, Kashi® cereals, Wheat Chex®, Fiber One®, Frosted Mini Wheats®
Eggland’s Best Egg’s: EB eggs have lower cholesterol than regular eggs and have Omega 3 fatty acids added. Omegas 3’s are beneficial for heart health, brain and eye function, infant development, and lowering blood pressure. These are the best known Omega 3 eggs, but more are popping up in your local dairy case.

Dinner
Whole grain pastas have a slower blood sugar response which is helpful with diabetes. They’re a good fiber source too.
Tomato products are a great source of lycopene which lowers risk of heart attack, prostate and other cancers. No time to make spaghetti sauce from scratch? Use a jarred sauce with no more than 3 grams fat per serving.
Broccoli is a cruciferous vegetable which may reduce your risk of diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Other veggies in this “stinky family” are cabbage, cauliflower, & Brussels sprouts.
Raw veggie salads are full of phytochemicals. Don’t ruin them with high fat cheese, and fatty extras. Keep them lean by using reduced fat salad dressings that have no more than 2 grams of fat per TBSP. While Olive oil is great for heart health and cancer prevention, 1 TBSP has 124 calories and 14 grams of fat. For oil and vinegar dressing, go heavy on the vinegar and limit the olive oil to 1 tsp (40 calories 5 grams fat).

MENU #1

Breakfast
1% Milk, 8 ounces
1 cup fresh berries
Whole Grain, high fiber cereal, ¾ cup
Eggland’s Best® scrambled egg (cooked in a non stick pan using non stick cooking spray)

Lunch
Sandwich:
2 slices whole grain, high fiber bread
2 ounces lean deli meat
1 ounce reduced fat cheese (1-2%)
Greek Chick Pea Salad*, ½ cup

Snack #1
15-30 grapes

Dinner
Whole Grain Pasta, 1 cup
Turkey Spaghetti Sauce*, 1 cup
Broccoli, 1 cup
Grated Parmesan cheese, 2 TBSP
Side Veggie Salad
Reduced fat salad dressing

Why It’s Good For You:

Lunch
Whole grain breads can be high in fiber, just read the label to be sure. Look for those that have at least 2 grams of fiber per slice. Eating whole grains may also lower your risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer.
Lean deli meats are not functional foods, but provide protein to help keep you full and satisfied. Select those that are 97% fat free or less. Good choices include Healthy Choice®, Sara Lee®, Boar’s Head®, Dietz & Watson®, Honeysuckle White®, and Oscar Mayer Light®. Select lower sodium versions from the deli, if you are concerned about the sodium content.
Low-fat cheese is a good source of calcium and protein. It can help reduce heart disease risk. Include those that are 1-2%, or those with 5 grams of fat or less per ounce/serving. Tasty choices are Cabot’s® 50% light, Kraft® 2%, Alpine Lace®, Borden’s®, Sargento’s® 2%, or Cracker Barrel 2%.
Chick peas (garbanzo beans), and other legumes such as dried beans, fresh green beans and soybeans are great sources of antioxidants and help your immune system protect you against cancer. Their soluble fiber also helps lower your cholesterol.

Snack #1
Reach for a fruit instead of the chips! They’re full of phytochemicals and crunch.

Snack #2
Popcorn Delight*, 1 serving (popcorn, almonds, dried fruit, sugar and cinnamon)

* Recipe Included
Why It’s Good For You:

**Breakfast**

- **Citrus fruits** and juices contain antioxidants. **OJ** with added calcium helps protect your bones when you skip your milk mustache.
- **Whole grain/high fiber English muffins** help meet your daily goal of 25 grams of fiber. Just because it’s brown doesn’t always mean its high fiber. Be sure to read the label for fiber content: at least 2 grams per slice or 4 grams for English muffins.
- **Canadian bacon** is not a functional food. But it is a leaner breakfast protein choice with only 2 grams of fat per ounce. Pair it with the low fat cheese and your breakfast will keep you from getting hungry before lunch. Plus you get some calcium for your bones, too.

**Snack #1**

- **High fiber granola bars** add fiber to your day and taste yummy. But beware of those that are glorified candy bars, or the 90 calorie bars. They are low fiber, and won’t keep your hunger at bay. You could wind up eating 2 or three to be satisfied. Good choices provide no more than 150 calories, < 5 grams fat and > 5 grams fiber. Try Kellogg’s® Fiber Plus Antioxidants, Fiber One®, and Kashi® Chewy TLC bars.

**Snack #2**

- **Probiotic yogurt** is basically any yogurt that contains live active cultures. They have the “good” bacteria that helps the body fight “bad” bacteria in the intestines to regulate digestion. There is controversy whether those with the special added probiotics such as Activia® are better than the original familiar yogurts. Whatever type you select, make sure they are lower fat or fat free, lower sugar and contain some type of live cultures.

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**Menu #2**

**Breakfast: On the Go!**

- 6 oz OJ with added Calcium (or fresh citrus fruit)
- 2 slices whole grain bread, or High fiber English muffin
- Canadian bacon, 2 ounces
- 1 ounce low fat (1-2%) cheese

**Lunch**

- Tomato soup, 1 cup or other vegetable soup
- **Chicken salad** (Made with 3 oz can of light chicken, drained, 2 TBSP reduced fat/light mayo and onions, relish, spices, seasonings)
- 6 reduced fat Triscuit® crackers (or other whole grain crackers)

**Fresh Fruit**

**Snack #1**

- High fiber granola bar

**Snack #2**

- **Salmon Burger**
- Mixed vegetables, 1 cup

**Dinner**

- **Salmon** and other fatty fish such as white albacore tuna, trout, herring and sardines are rich in omega 3 fatty acids, which may protect against heart disease. Aim for two 3-ounce servings each week. Not a fish eater? Ask your doctor about fish oil pills. Flax seeds are a good source of Omega 3’s, too. Look for them added to more foods soon.

- **Mixed vegetables** are a good way to "eat the color of the rainbow." Remember different color vegetables have different phytochemicals for preventing disease and promoting health. Don’t forget carrots, green beans, spinach, cauliflower, etc.

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Why It’s Good For You:

**Lunch**

- Have some more lycopene with your tomato soup. Change it up with some vegetable soup or those rich in high fiber beans and legumes. Be sure to check the label for fiber as they vary greatly.

- **Chicken salad** can be heart healthy if you use lower fat mayo or salad dressing. Add those phytochemical spices such as celery seed, and garlic or onion powder. Throw in some crunch with diced onions, sweet pickle relish, celery, raisins or even grapes.

- **Whole grain crackers** are an easy way to add fiber along with your crunch. Keep serving size to <130 calories, ~3 grams fat and at least 3 grams fiber.

It’s always a good time to add fresh fruit to increase fiber, and phytochemicals!
Can We Afford To Eat This Way?

We’re all looking for ways to save money at the grocery store. But I’m always hearing, “it costs too much to each healthy,” so I headed to a local Walmart during early March to compare prices. Many prices were the same, or cheaper for healthier foods. Now some of the choices, like Eggland’s Best® eggs, and the Dole® bag salads were higher priced. But some foods may worth the extra cost for the added nutrition or ease of preparation. Wherever you grocery shop, look for foods on sale, and stock up when prices are low. Canned vegetables were very affordable at 60¢ (generic) to 92¢ (name brand) per can. Select fresh produce in season whenever possible to save more. For example, clementines are still in season, and inexpensive. Strawberries are available, but expensive, since they’re not in season locally until May.

### Healthier Foods

| **Raisin Bran Kellogg’s**, $2.50, 20 oz. box | 200 calories, 1.5 gram fat, 7 grams fiber |
| **Frosted Mini Wheats**, $2.50, 18 oz. box | 200 calories, 1 gram fat, 6 grams fiber |
| **Nature’s Own®** whole wheat bread, $2.38 | 1 slice (22 slices in bag) |
| **Fiber One® Chocolate Mocha bars** $2.50 | 140 calories, 4 grams fat, 9 grams fiber |
| **Triscuit®**, reduced fat crackers $2.98 | 120 calories, 2.5 grams fat, 3 grams fiber |
| **Wheat Thins®, reduced fat** $2.98 | 130 calories, 3.5 grams fat, 2 grams fiber |
| **Emerald Almonds, 100 calorie pack**, $2.58 | 100 calories, 9 grams fat, 2 grams fiber |
| **Cabot’s 50% Light Cheddar Cheese**, $2.66 | 70 calories, 4.5 grams fat |
| **Yoplait Light Yogurt**, $0.50, 6 oz. | 100 calories, 0 grams fat |
| **Canned Salmon**, $2.37, 14.75 oz. |  |
| **Clementines** $3.88 per bag of 15 |  |
| **Eggland’s Best® eggs**, $2.48 per dozen |  |
| **Dole® bag salad mixes**, $3.18 per bag |  |

### Less Healthy Food Choices

| **Special K**, $3.88, 18 oz. box | Serving size- 1 cup |
| **Reese’s Puffs**, $2.88, 18 oz. box | Serving size- 3/4 cup |
| **Wonder White Bread**, $1.97 | 1 slice (20 slices in bag) |
| **Nature Valley® Chocolate Almond bar** $2.80 | 1 bar (6 in box) |
| **Cheez-It crackers®** $2.78 | 100 calories, 4 grams fat, 1 gram fiber |
| **Lays® Potato Chips**, $3.00, 11 oz bag (one sale) | Serving size: 15 chips |
| **Ritz® Snack Mix**, 100 calorie packs, $2.50 | 1 pack (6 in box) |
| **Cabot’s Cheddar Cheese**, $2.66 | 100 calories, 3 grams fat, 1 gram fiber |
| **Ben & Jerry’s Minis**, $1.00, 3.6 oz. | 220 calories, 11 grams fat |
| **Canned Tuna in oil** $2.26, 12 oz. |  |
| **Fresh strawberries**, $3.98, 1#, 2 servings |  |
| **Regular eggs**, $1.57 per dozen |  |
| **Potato salad**, $2.98, 2# container |  |
**Nutrition Month Recipes**

**Greek Chick-Pea Salad**
*(Recipe from The New Family Cookbook for People with Diabetes, published by Simon & Schuster, copyright 2007. Used by permission.)*

One 15-ounce can chick-peas (garbanzo beans), rinsed and drained
1 small tomato, seeded and chopped
½ cup diced peeled cucumber
2 green onions with green tops, sliced
¼ cup coarsely chopped Italian parsley
2 TBSP red wine vinegar
2 TBSP extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup (1 ounce) crumbled feta cheese
¼ tsp freshly ground pepper

Combine the chick-peas, tomato, cucumber, onions and parsley in a medium bowl.

In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar and oil; pour over the bean mixture and toss well to mix. Just before serving, sprinkle the salad with cheese and pepper.

Makes 6, ½-cup servings. Per serving 132 calories, 7 g fat, 5 gm protein, 14 gm carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 120 mg sodium.

**Mary-Jo’s Turkey Spaghetti Sauce**

1 # ground turkey breast (98% fat free)
1 medium onion, diced
5, 14.5 ounce can of whole peeled tomatoes
2 small cans tomato paste
Pepper to taste
1 TBSP basil
2 TBSP oregano
1 TBSP Italian seasoning
1-2 TBSP garlic powder
1 ½ tsp salt
1/3 cup sugar
1 TBSP Worcestershire sauce
3 ounces grated Romano cheese (or Kraft® Grated Parmesan and Romano Cheese)

Brown ground turkey breast with diced onions in a skillet. Break up clumps and place in a large sauce pot.

Blend canned tomatoes in a food processor or blender, and add to the ground turkey. Add all other ingredients to the sauce pot. Simmer, covered for 1 hour, or until desired thickness is reached.

Makes ~10 cups sauce. One cup provides 178 calories, 3 g fat, 49 g protein, 25 g carbohydrates, 3.5 g fiber, 1192 mg sodium, 173 mg calcium.

**Helpful hints:**
- If the ground turkey forms into large clumps, blend some of it with tomatoes for a smoother sauce.
- The sauce may be doubled or tripled and frozen for future meals.
- Serve as you would for any spaghetti sauce: over pasta, manicotti, stuffed shells or lasagna.

**Popcorn Delight**
*(Recipe provided courtesy of John Wiley & Sons, from Expect the Best: Your Guide to Healthy Eating Before, During & After Pregnancy by American Dietetic Association ©2009, John Wiley & Sons).*

3 cups popped fat-free, unsalted popcorn
1 TBSP sliced almonds
2 TBSP raisins or other dried fruit such as cranberries, apricots or dates
½ tsp cinnamon
1 tsp sugar

In a medium bowl, combine the ingredients and toss well.

Recipe makes one serving of 230 calories, 7 gm fat, 6 gm protein, 39 gm carbohydrate, 6 gm fiber, 274 mg sodium.

**Salmon Burgers**
*(Recipe provided courtesy of John Wiley & Sons, from Expect the Best: Your Guide to Healthy Eating Before, During & After Pregnancy by American Dietetic Association ©2009, John Wiley & Sons).*

1, 6 ½-ounce can, salmon
2 TBSP unseasoned bread crumbs
1 egg
½ TBSP diced shallots
2 TBSP diced red bell pepper
1 tsp dried dill
2 tsp canola oil
2 whole-grain sandwich buns

Place the salmon in a medium bowl and break it up with a fork. Add the bread crumbs, egg, shallots, bell pepper and dill; combine well. Form the mixture into 2 burgers.

In a medium skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Cook for about 4 minutes on each side. Serve on the sandwich buns.

Makes 2 servings of one burger each. Per burger: 503 calories, 20 g fat (4 g saturated, 1 g trans), 35 g protein, 41 g carbohydrates, 6 g fiber, 625 mg sodium.
10 More Ways to Include Functional Foods…

…Or how to enjoy more fruits vegetables, whole grains and dairy, courtesy of the American Dietetic Association.

To get the most nutrition out of your calories, choose foods packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients. Pick fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low fat dairy more often. Be aware of your portion sizes. Even low-calorie foods can add up when portions are larger than you need.

1- Mix up a breakfast smoothie made with low-fat milk, frozen strawberries and a banana.

2- Make a veggie wrap with roasted vegetables and low-fat cheese in a whole-wheat tortilla.

3- Banana split: Top a sliced banana with a scoop of low-fat frozen yogurt. Sprinkle with a tablespoon of chopped nuts.

4- Add some soy. Try a soy burger, roasted soy nuts, or add soy milk or tofu to smoothies.

5- Prepare instant oatmeal with low-fat or fat-free milk in place of water. Top with a few dried cranberries and almonds.

6- Stuff an omelet with vegetables. Turn any omelet into a hearty meal with broccoli, squash, carrots, peppers, tomatoes or onions, with low-fat sharp cheddar cheese.

7- “Sandwich” in fruit and vegetables. Add pizzazz to sandwiches with sliced pineapple, apple, peppers, cucumbers and tomato as fillings.

8- Wake up to fruit. Make a habit of adding fruit to your morning oatmeal, ready-to-eat cereal, yogurt or toaster waffle.

9- Top a baked potato with beans and salsa, or broccoli and low-fat cheese.

10- Stuff a whole grain pita with ricotta cheese and Granny Smith apple slices. Add a dash of cinnamon.

Get Your “Nutrition From the Ground Up” With These Helpful Classes

March
3/3: Diabetic Dining Made Easy- Wednesday morning, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
3/8: Diabetic Dining Made Easy- MONDAY EVENING, 7-9 PM
3/15: Food & Fitness Weight Loss Seminar- Monday evening, 7-9 PM
3/29: Lean ‘N Easy Cholesterol Lowering Class- Monday evening, 7-9 PM

April
4/12: Diabetic Dining Made Easy- MONDAY EVENING, 7-9 PM
4/14: Diabetic Dining Made Easy- Wednesday morning, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
4/19: Food & Fitness Weight Loss Seminar- Monday evening, 7-9 PM
4/26: Lean ‘N Easy Cholesterol Lowering Class- Monday evening, 7-9 PM

May
5/3: Diabetic Dining Made Easy- MONDAY EVENING, 7-9 PM
5/5: Diabetic Dining Made Easy- Wednesday morning, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
5/10: Food & Fitness Weight Loss Seminar- Monday evening, 7 – 9 PM
5/17: Lean ‘N Easy Cholesterol Lowering Class, Monday evening, 7-9 PM

June
6/7: Food & Fitness Weight Loss Seminar- Monday evening, 7 – 9 PM
6/14: Lean ‘N Easy Cholesterol Lowering Class, Monday evening, 7-9 PM

All classes meet in the first floor conference room at VCU Physicians at Stony Point, 6000 Stony Point Parkway, Richmond, VA 23235. The fee for each class is $35.00 per person, per class. For more information, brochures, or to register, please contact Mary-Jo Sawyer, RD, msawyer@mcvh-vcu.edu or 327-8830.

INDIVIDUAL NUTRITION COUNSELING

is available for those who desire to have a one-to-one session with our Registered Dietitian. While some insurance plans cover this service, please consult your plan to determine coverage. Otherwise, payment is expected at time of service. For current fees, call Mary-Jo Sawyer, RD 327-8830 or email msawyer@mcvh-vcu.edu.