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March is National Nutrition Month – a time to “focus on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.”

*This year's theme is...*

## **Eat Right, Live Right, Feel Right**

The theme encourages you to look at your lifestyle – not just what you are eating. Don't misunderstand, what you eat can greatly influence the physical and mental energy you have. But are you sleeping enough, are you allowing time for yourself to do the things that bring you joy and are you carving out time to be active?

I think we often forget how much of our self-cares are tied together. Skipping meals, lacking balance or popping the top on sweetened beverages throughout the day can certainly zap your energy level and mental focus. Lacking regular physical activity can further deplete energy levels and often lead to poor food choices. And not giving yourself time to do the things you enjoy can lead to food becoming more important to you for pleasure. It can be a delicate balance with lots of moving parts to pay attention to.

### **How do you think you are doing with eating, living and feeling right? Here are some things to consider to set yourself up for success:**

- ♥ make sure you allow 7-9 hours a night for sleep – there is a lot of research on the negative effects of fatigue on the body; being too tired is the number 1 factor in the “I'll do it tomorrow” attitude.
- ♥ include time for things that bring you joy – when your life lacks joy, food often becomes more precious to you because eating favorite foods (healthy or not) now is your entertainment, your reward or your stress buster. Find things that you enjoy, are affordable, available and legal.
- ♥ don't be afraid to seek professional help when you feel stuck – life has lots of ups and downs. When you feel like you can't find your way, ask for help from loved ones and/or professionals.
- ♥ make your health a priority; we all know the importance and benefits of great medical care, but even great medical care won't be enough if you don't participate in your own health first.
- ♥ Move - most sources say the adult human body has at least 650 skeletal muscles, 360 joints and 203 bones. The best way to keep all these parts moving is to move them. It can improve balance, flexibility, endurance, strength, mental health, reduce stress, improve brain function, strengthen bones, lower risk of many chronic illnesses, promote better sleep, control weight, lower BP, lower chronic pain and boost immune function to name a few.
- ♥ the dinner table should not be your desk – clear it off and have family meals at least a few nights a week; it doesn't matter if you have peanut butter sandwiches or beef stew...get together.
- ♥ you can only eat as healthy as the foods you have in your house so put some thought into your grocery list - include a variety of fruits & veggies, lean meats, lean dairy foods and whole grains
- ♥ keep yourself hydrated – the fluid level in your body determines how most of your systems function - including nerves and muscles; it controls your body temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure; and it supports digestion and metabolism. Drink enough fluids throughout the day that you urinate every 2-4 hours and/or your urine is light in color.