



# Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle

## National Nutrition Month®

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) Health Promotion and Wellness (HPW) Department is teaming up with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to promote National Nutrition Month® 2015. This year's theme is 'Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle,' and encourages healthy eating and active living.<sup>1</sup> The focus is on consuming fewer calories, making informed food choices, and exercising regularly to help achieve and maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of chronic disease, and promote overall health.<sup>1</sup>

## Healthy Eating

Food is fuel for the body. To perform at your peak, you need to eat nutrient-dense foods, such as whole grains, lean protein, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products. These power-packed foods contain the most vitamins and minerals, which provide you with quality energy, for the least amount of calories. They also reduce your risk of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and several types of cancer, as well as help you to maintain a healthy body weight.

Processed and prepared foods, such as pre-packaged, take-out, and convenience foods often contain high amounts of calories, sodium (salt), added sugars, and fat. Avoid or limit eating them throughout the week. Understanding the appropriate portion sizes can also help you limit excessive calorie intake, particularly when eating high-calorie foods, such as ice cream or potato chips. You can eat healthier by:

- Avoiding oversized portions
- Making half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Making at least half of your grains whole grains
- Switching to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk
- Choosing foods with less sodium
- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks
- Checking out [HPW Healthy Eating](#) for more tips and resources

In addition to what you eat, you need to be aware of when and why you eat. Do you eat when you're bored or stressed? Do you eat because you're happy or sad? Mindful eating is about paying attention to your hunger cues and your level of fullness. If you regularly make poor food



choices or overeat, check out the HPW fact sheets on [Eating with Food in Mind](#) and the [Tracker to Identify Your Food Triggers](#) to help you improve your eating habits.

Living a healthy lifestyle takes time. It requires eating a balanced diet and working out regularly to eventually evolve into a habit or the “go to” choice. There are purported quick fixes which are simply marketing strategies for many fad diets. These diets which routinely eliminate or severely restrict certain food groups often include dietary supplements and do not promote or support enduring lifestyle changes; essentially a temporary commitment with temporary results. To find out more about dietary supplements, check out the HPW fact sheets on [How Healthy are Dietary Supplements](#) and [How Safe are Dietary Supplements](#).

## Active Living

Physical activity is another important factor in healthy living. Engaging in a variety of moderate to intense aerobic exercise, muscle strengthening, and functional body movement activities will help you reach your physical, psychological, and operational prime. By being active you can:

- Control your weight
- Maximize your energy level
- Minimize your stress level
- Enhance your mood
- Improve your sleep
- Strengthen your bones and muscles to prevent injury
- Accelerate your healing following illness or injury
- Reduce your risk of chronic disease
- Increase your ability to perform daily tasks, on and off the job

If you don't work out regularly; it's not too late to start! Try brisk walking, swimming, or bicycling to get started. Aim for 250-300 minutes of moderate intensity exercise every week for weight loss. Make sure to include a combination of activities to get the most out of your fitness routine. Aerobic activity and strength training will assist with weight loss and maintenance. Balance and flexibility exercises will increase range of motion and prevent injury. Check out [HPW Active Living](#) for more tips and resources.

The Navy also offers the Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling System (NOFFS), which personalizes your training routine with exercises that mimic your job-related movements. The program is geared toward all fitness levels and was developed in partnership with physical



fitness experts who train the world's top professional athletes and sports franchises. To learn more, check out [NOFFS](#).

As Sailors and Marines, you understand the meaning of commitment. You took an oath to support and defend. Your ability to fulfill that pledge depends largely on your health and fitness level. That's why it is important to make a similar commitment to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It is your duty to eat a balanced diet and work out regularly so that you are healthy and mission ready at all times.

## References

<sup>1</sup> Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. National Nutrition Month®.

<http://www.eatright.org/NNM/content.aspx?id=7830&terms=national%20nutrition%20month%202015>.

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