



# Healthy Eating Month

## Message for Commanding Officers

March is National Nutrition Month,<sup>®</sup> an annual public education campaign created and sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. This year's theme is "Savor the Flavor of Eating Right," encouraging the public to enjoy food for its flavor, and take pleasure in food traditions and social experiences that involve food as a central component. Healthy eating includes not only what we eat but also being mindful of how, when, and why we eat.<sup>1</sup>



SAVOR  
THE FLAVOR  
OF EATING  
RIGHT

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH<sup>®</sup> 2016

 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

The topic of healthy eating is important to the lives of Sailors and Marines; according to the 2014 Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment, 43 percent of active duty Sailor respondents and 44 percent of active duty Marine respondents indicated they did not eat at least two servings of fruit per day.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, 36 percent of Sailor respondents and 68 percent of Marine respondents stated they were not eating at least two servings of vegetables per day.<sup>2</sup> Sailor and Marine respondents also indicated having a diet high in fatty foods – 39 and 38 percent respectively.<sup>2</sup>

During National Nutrition Month<sup>®</sup> help your Sailors, Marines, and civilian personnel "Savor the Flavor of Eating Right" by sharing resources that teach them about nutrition and show them how to develop healthier eating habits that will contribute to their overall wellness, physical fitness, and mission readiness. Access the tools and resources by clicking on the blue, underlined hyperlinked text throughout the document.

## What Can Leadership Do?

**As a Commanding Officer, you play an important role in promoting healthy eating lifestyle behaviors among your Sailors, Marines, and civilian personnel:**

- Reference the March Healthy Eating Month [activity guide](#) to find activities that will help your command develop healthier eating habits, such as participating in the [30-Day Fruit and Veggie Challenge](#). At the end of the month, recognize those who started eating healthier and incorporated exercise into their daily routine.



- Encourage Command Fitness Leaders to empower their command to take ownership of their health and wellness by engaging in mindful eating and setting the standard for proper nutrition.
- Post these [10 Tips for Healthy Eating](#) to encourage healthy choices and behavior.
- Ensure healthy snacks are readily available if food is offered at the command.

**Leadership can also work with Health Promotion Coordinators and Command Fitness Leaders to:**

- Help Sailors, Marines, and civilian personnel learn about all the different types of fruits and vegetables available to them in fresh, frozen, dried, juice, or canned forms by challenging them to a [30-Day Fruit and Veggie Challenge](#).
- Encourage Sailors, Marines, and civilian personnel to eat more fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables of varying colors boost different functions in the body, and individuals should eat at least three colors each day.<sup>3</sup> Help them get started with [Eat the Rainbow—A Colorful Approach to Healthy Eating](#).
- Encourage Sailors, Marines, and civilian personnel to [follow a healthy lifestyle](#) by consuming fewer calories, making informed food decisions, and exercising regularly.
- Show Sailors, Marines, and civilian personnel the potential health and safety [risks that come with using supplements](#), and how they can get those same nutrients through food.
- Explain how the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans should impact the way Sailors, Marines, and civilian personnel eat.
- Let Sailors, Marines, and civilian personnel know that healthy eating can be easy, fun, and rewarding when they [add flavor to cooking](#) and [spice up](#) their meals.
- Help Sailors, Marines, and civilian personnel better understand the factors that contribute to their eating habits by challenging them to track their hunger, food intake, and mood for one week using the [Tracker to Identify Your Food Triggers](#).
- Teach Sailors, Marines, and civilian personnel to practice mindful eating. When they are aware of what they are eating, they will most likely make better food choices. Share [Eating with Food in Mind](#) to get them started.
- Think about how Sailors', Marines', and civilian personnel's daily routines impact their diet. Healthy eating behaviors differ for each individual so teach them how to [eat healthy for their lifestyle](#).
- Show wounded, ill, and injured Sailors and/or Marines how to make it [easier to prepare healthy foods](#), and [manage portion control](#) to support their recovery and healing.



## Resources

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

<http://www.nationalnutritionmonth.org/nnm/>. Accessed January 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center EpiData Center Department. Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment 2014. <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/general-tools-and-programs/HRA-2014-report-final.pdf>. Published 2015. Accessed January 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Commander, Navy Installation Command Fitness, Sports and Deployed Forces Support. Eat the Rainbow. [http://navyfitness.org/nutrition/noffs\\_fueling\\_series/eat\\_the\\_rainbow/](http://navyfitness.org/nutrition/noffs_fueling_series/eat_the_rainbow/). Accessed January 2016.