

## Immune Boosting Nutrients

Although nutrition will not prevent or cure the current COVID-19 illness, it's still important to consume nutrients to keep immune systems strong. With all the stress and anxiety surrounding the pandemic, immune systems may weaken and put the body at risk for developing or worsening chronic diseases. Some nutrients offer immune-boosting properties that will keep the body healthy during this stressful time:

- Beta-carotene: This powerful antioxidant boosts immune health by preventing damage to cells. You can find it in sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, mango, broccoli and tomatoes.
- Vitamin C: Another strong antioxidant, this vitamin can be found in citrus fruits, berries, melons, tomatoes, bell peppers and broccoli.
- Vitamin D: Low levels of this vitamin have been associated with increased risk of infection and inflammatory diseases. It is best absorbed from getting direct sunlight but is also found in fatty fish, eggs, and milk or 100% juices that are fortified with vitamin D.
- Zinc: This mineral supports the growth of the body's immune cells. It is better absorbed from animal sources such as beef and seafood but is also found in vegetarian sources such as wheat germ, beans, nuts and tofu.
- Probiotics: These "good bacteria " have many health benefits but are known to fight against pathogens. Good sources of probiotics include cultured dairy products such as yogurt or kefir, and fermented foods such as kimchi or sauerkraut.
- Protein: This macronutrient is vital to build and repair body tissue and fights viral and bacterial infections. Protein is found in milk, yogurt, eggs, beef, chicken, seafood, nuts, seeds, beans and lentils.

Eating a healthy and balanced diet, getting in physical activity (even just a few minutes a day), sleeping at least 7 hours a night, and managing stress are all encouraged to strengthen the immune system. Focus on eating nutrient-dense foods, especially those listed above, to keep your body strong during this stressful time.

## Build A Fresh & Flavorful Salad

What better way to celebrate the coming of spring than with crisp, fresh, and colorful salads? Swish chard, cabbage, red and green lettuce, spinach, collard greens, kale, and so much more, are now in season! Check out the website [seasonalfoodguide.org](http://seasonalfoodguide.org) for a complete list of spring produce. Adding color to your plate can boost your immune system, support a healthy gut, regulate blood sugar, lower cholesterol, hydrate your body, and enhance brain health. It's time to start eating these refreshing, healthy foods and creating your own salad will do just the trick.

Build a tasteful, spring salad with 5 simple steps:

1. Select a leafy green: For a lighter flavor choose green or red leaf lettuce, mixed greens, spinach, or romaine lettuce. For a bolder flavor try kale, radicchio, cabbage, or arugula.
2. Add some color with fruits and veggies: Chopped, diced, shredded, sliced, or whole, you choose! You can even add fresh, frozen, canned, or dried versions. The key is to focus on incorporating a variety of colors. Each color has a different vitamin, mineral, antioxidant, and phytochemical profile, giving you a variety of nutrients.
3. Sprinkle on the extras: Add on some cheese (feta, bleu, parmesan) and/or healthy fats (nuts, seeds, avocado, olives) to boost flavor and healthy fat intake. By having some healthy fats added to your salad, it makes it easier for your body to absorb the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K that are necessary for your health.
4. Power it up with protein: Make it a main course meal by adding beans, legumes, chicken, shrimp, tofu, hard-boiled eggs, tuna, salmon, or turkey.
5. Make your own salad dressing: Jazz up your salad with fun flavors from oil, vinegars, spices, fresh herbs, a spritz of citrus juice, or diced onions and garlic. Looking for a great recipe? Whisk together 1/4 cup olive oil, 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar and 1/4 teaspoon ground mustard. Add a dash or two of black pepper and toss into your salad!

Try these recommended combinations to get started with building your spring salads:

- Romaine, grape tomatoes, cucumber, shredded carrots, avocado, and shrimp.
- Spinach, red onion, mandarin oranges, and sliced almonds.
- Mixed greens, grilled chicken strips, dried cranberries, walnuts, and feta cheese.

Happy New Year's friends! With a new year, we often set New Year's Resolutions & goals. Popular resolutions often include losing weight, drinking more water, and eating healthier. Here are a few tips to help you reach some nutritional goals:

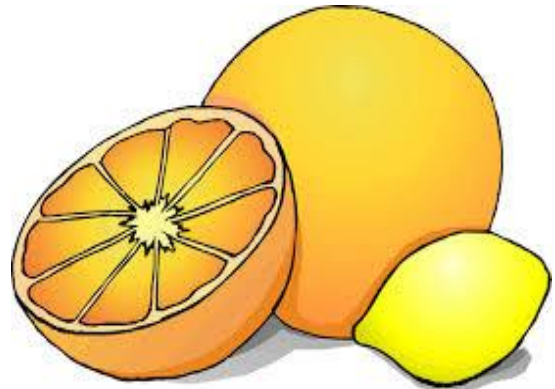
- Drinking more water
  - Aim for at least 8 cups of water per day
  - Water bottles with labels can help reach intake goals
  - Setting timers/alarms for reminders to drink up
- Consuming less salt
  - Rinse any frozen and canned foods, salt is often used as a preservative. Thoroughly rinse under running water a couple of times will help to reduce sodium content
  - Keep the salt shaker off the table! We often salt our food before tasting it.
  - Look for sodium substitutes i.e. Seasoning, citrus, herbs (fresh or dry)
- Eating less saturated fat and more unsaturated fat to encourage heart health
  - Saturated fats solidify at room temperature: butter, lard, animal fat
  - Unsaturated fats remain liquid at room temperature: Oils, avocados, etc.

### **Seasonal foods in January?**

- Citrus fruits - oranges, limes, grapefruit, etc.
- Garlic
- Green Beans
- Broccoli
- Sweet potato

### **Protein Packed Chili**

- 1 pound ground beef, drained
- 1 can small red beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can crushed tomato
- 1 can (16 oz) tomato juice
- 1 cup water
- 1 tbsp ground chili powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder (or fresh)
- Salt and pepper to taste



Possible garnish: Corn chips, shredded cheese, onion, mustard, etc. Brown ground beef, and drain. Return to a large pot and add in the rest of the ingredients. Bring to a low simmer for 10-15 minutes. Turn off, let cool for 5 minutes, and top with desired garnishes.

November 2022 Nutrition Article

World Diabetes Day is on November 14th. There are 3 main types of diabetes: Type 1 (often appears in childhood), Gestational (occurs during pregnancy), and Type 2 (most common type and develops later in life).

If you are consistently experiencing 1 or more of the following symptoms, it could be beneficial to discuss with your doctor.

- Constantly thirsty, unable to quench thirst
- Frequent urination, especially when it keeps you up during the night
- Blurry vision
- Excess feelings of hunger
- Feeling tired or fatigued



Taking good care of yourself, being on the move (exercising), and eating a healthy balanced diet can help maintain blood sugars throughout the day and help battle fatigue.

Two main areas of focus to maintain blood sugars whether you are diabetic or not are to consume:

1. Complex Carbohydrates
  - a. Whole grains - Wheat bread, brown rice, Steel cut oatmeal, etc. (less processed)
  - b. Ancient grains - Quinoa, Wild rice, chia, barley
2. Protein rich foods/snacks
  - a. Meats, canned fish, cottage cheese, yogurt, milk, peanut butter, eggs, beans, tofu, etc.

**Diabetic Friendly and Protein-Packed**  
**Peanut Butter Dip**

- 1 cup Greek Vanilla Yogurt
- 1 tbsp. Peanut Butter
- ¼ tsp. Ground cinnamon (optional)

Place all ingredients in a bowl and mix until smooth.  
Dip using carrot sticks, apple slices, crackers, pretzels, etc.

Nutritional Information: 13 grams carbohydrate, 17 grams protein



\*\*\* Thanksgiving is quickly approaching! As a friendly reminder from the FDA, leftovers should be consumed within 3-4 days after preparing. Toss out any Thanksgiving leftovers by November 28th to avoid any possible food borne illness



October 2022

## Apple Sauce

### Fiber

Fiber is a carbohydrate that cannot be broken down within our bodies, therefore we dispose of it in our output naturally. A diet rich in fiber can help keep us regulated (not constipated), bulk up stools, regulate blood glucose (blood sugar) levels, lower cholesterol, and provide us with much needed energy. The recommended daily intake of fiber is 25-30 grams/day. Foods high in fiber include beans, whole grains, berries, and **apples!**

October 27 is APPLE DAY

Apples are an easy-to-find fruit in Southeast Idaho during the Fall months. Local pumpkin patches will often offer fresh pressed cider and apple products. Applesauce and apple butter are quick and easy to prepare, and offer tons of fiber and vitamin C (1 medium sized apple = 4 grams of fiber and about 15% of daily recommended vitamin C intake).

### Apple Sauce

- 4 apples of your choice, peeled, cored, and cubed
- ½ cup sugar (or sugar substitute)
- ½ cup water
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Place all ingredients in a medium-size pot and simmer for 15-20 min. Mash with a potato masher to desired consistency. Enjoy!

### Apple Butter

- 6 medium sized apples of your choice, peeled, cored, and cubed
- ⅓ cup sugar
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp salt

Place all ingredients into a medium sized pot and simmer on medium-low for 30min or until apples are tender. Smash with a potato masher to desired consistency.

\* Serve sauce or butter on top of ice cream, pudding, toast, cottage cheese, melted brie, etc

\* Rather than using a pot, a slow cooker can also be used at "low" setting for 8-9 hours

\* Store apple butter in an airtight container for up to 10 days or freeze up to 9 months!

## Canning/Freezing

Fall is just around the corner! Many of us have enjoyed gardening this summer and now have an abundance of produce. Begin the canning/freezing process now to save both time and money. Doing so early can also help avoid any food waste. Can fruits and vegetables such as asparagus, peaches, pears, apples, etc. Quickly blanch, dry, and freeze batches of corn on the cob, carrots, vegetable mixes, peppers, etc. Fruits that require little work include berries. Wash them, pat dry, place in a freezer-safe storage bag, and freeze! Take out minutes before enjoying on top or mixed in a cake, yogurt, cottage cheese, or smoothie. Fresh herbs such as parsley, thyme, mint, oregano, and basil can be rinsed, laid out to dry on a paper towel, crushed, and stored in an airtight container for months to be used at a later time. Get creative with your garden's harvest and enjoy the fresh produce before the colder months start rolling in!

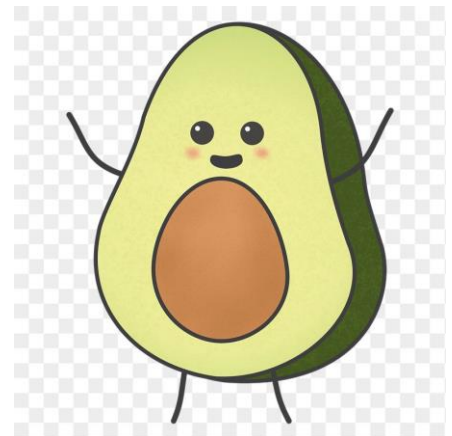
September 16th is National Guacamole month! Take advantage of your fresh harvest and add them to avocados for a fresh, inexpensive, protein-packed snack! One avocado contains about 4 grams of protein, and are rich in fiber and vitamin C

- 2 ripe avocados
- 2 roma tomatoes - minced
- 1 small onion (any color) - minced
- 1 pepper (jalapeno, serrano, anaheim, etc.) - minced
- 1 lime - juiced
- 3 tablespoons fresh cilantro - minced
- Salt & pepper to taste

Peel and smash avocados in a large bowl. Add in the rest of the ingredients and mix well, enjoy! Top guacamole on eggs, cottage cheese, salads, tacos, beans, or enjoy plain!

Notes:

- Peppers can be deveined or seeds taken out to reduce heat
- Store refrigerated in an airtight container up to 5 days



## Simple Summer Heat Survival Guide

The summer heat is upon us! Nutrition can play a big role in making sure our bodies can survive the hot days. Cool off your hot summer days with these nutrition tips:

1. Stay Hydrated: Who doesn't love an ice cold glass of water when it's hot out? Our bodies are made up of about 60% water, and during the summer it's important to make sure you're drinking enough to make up for the heat! Each person should drink half their body weight in ounces. For example, a 150 pound person should drink about 75 fluid ounces of water each day. Make it fun by adding a spritz of lemon or lime to your glass!
2. Focus on Fresh: One of the best things about summer is all the fresh produce. Embrace this time by filling your fridge with fun, fresh fruits and veggies. Watermelon, beets, cucumbers, peppers, cantaloupe, strawberries, tomatoes, blueberries, and blackberries are a few to name. Not only will it help you eat plenty of vitamins and minerals, but most of them contain good amounts of water and can help with your hydration.
3. Make No-Cook Meals: You don't have to heat the kitchen up to enjoy a tasty meal! There are many no-cook summer meal ideas that will keep you cool and fuel your day. Try:
  - a. Simple salads with plenty of lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, and other fresh produce.
  - b. Tuna or chicken salad (see recipe below!)
  - c. Easy sandwiches with lean protein, lettuce, tomato, and other crunchy toppings.

**Try this no-cook meal idea for a refreshing and filling lunch or dinner:**

### Chicken Salad Wrap:

Serves: 2

#### Ingredients:

4 oz canned chicken  
1 stalk celery, finely chopped  
¼ cup chopped red onion  
3 tbsp plain Greek yogurt  
3 tbsp parsley flakes  
1 tbsp lemon juice  
Salt & pepper to taste  
1 whole grain tortilla



#### Directions:

1. In a medium-sized bowl, add the chicken, celery, onion, parsley, Greek yogurt, lemon juice, zest, salt, and pepper. Mix well to incorporate.
2. Enjoy spread onto a whole grain tortilla!

## What's The Deal On Sugar?

This question is so frequently asked by many - and the answer is sometimes complex. Let's dive into sugar with a few tips and recommendations:

1. **All sugar is digested the same.**

It doesn't matter what type of sugar you are consuming (honey, brown sugar, white sugar, etc.) it's all recognized in the body as sugar and digested the same. Some sweeteners like honey and 100% maple syrup do contain some vitamins and minerals such as calcium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium and zinc. However, it's still recommended to consume natural sources in moderation to avoid blood sugar spikes.

2. **Fruit contains sugar, but don't cut fruit out of your diet.**

Yes, fruit does contain natural sugars. However, fruit is extremely nutrient-rich and contains a lot of fiber which helps to lower blood sugar spikes. Often when people cut fruit out completely, they aren't getting enough fiber and vitamins, so it's best to not cut fruit out if you're trying to watch your sugar intake. Instead consume the right portions! Aim for 2-3 fruits daily in 1/2 - 1 cup amounts. Also, all fruit is created equal...there is no fruit that is better or less sugary than the other!

3. **Aim for less than 24-36 teaspoons per day of added sugar.**

According to the American Heart Association, it is recommended that women consume less than 24 grams and men less than 36 grams of added sugar each day. That is equivalent to about 6 or 9 teaspoons of added sugar. To put that into perspective, one can of soda has about 40 grams of sugar...that's about 10 teaspoons!

Don't get caught up in the numbers! Focus on eating whole fruits in 1/2 - 1 cup portions. Watch your added sugar intake by reading the food labels and choose lower sugar options, such as this Blueberry Orange Sparkling Water recipe instead of soda.



## No Sugar Blueberry Orange Sparkling Water Recipe

Serves: 2

Time: 5 minutes

### Ingredients:

- ½ cup blueberries
- 1 clementine or orange; peeled and sectioned
- 6 ice cubes
- 3 cups sparkling water (La Croix, Bubbly, etc.)

### Directions:

1. Divide blueberries and clementines into mason jars or glasses then use a spoon to gently crush the fruit. Add ice, then pour sparkling water over top. Enjoy on a hot summer day!



## Healthy Freezer Foods

Can frozen foods be healthy? The short answer is yes, they can be! I think we all have that same thought that “healthy” and “convenience” shouldn’t be in the same sentence. However, with the food industry’s skyrocket in creativity, there are so many healthy freezer options out there designed to help you eat healthy when in a pinch. Having an emergency stash of frozen foods can make your life so much easier at times. It’s also helpful to manage your food budget.

Here are a few fun freezer foods and meals to try:

### 1. Protein Bowls

These are gaining popularity in the food market, and rightfully so! They contain a good balance of protein, veggies, and complex carbs to nourish the body and provide energy. A few good brands to try including Healthy Choice, Real Good, and Smart Made. With any frozen meal, it’s good to watch the sodium levels - rule of thumb, keep the sodium amount under 250 milligrams per serving.

### 2. Dark Chocolate Covered Fruit

If you love a fun sweet treat after dinner, frozen dark chocolate covered fruit hit the spot. They are full of fiber from fruit and contain antioxidants from dark chocolate. Tru Fru is a great brand to try - they have endless options including dark chocolate peanut butter bananas or chocolate covered raspberries.

3. **Steam-in-the-Bag Veggies:** Stock up on your favorite frozen veggies to save both time and money. There are even bags you can steam in the microwave, saving you the stress of washing extra dishes. Pop one in the microwave for a quick veggie side. It’s easy to toss into pasta or other one pot meals as well!

4. **High Protein Breakfasts:** If you are notorious for skipping breakfast because you’re too tired to cook, there are plenty of healthy pre-made breakfast ideas to try! Prevent the mid-morning crash by stocking up on some healthy frozen breakfast items such as protein waffles, breakfast burritos, or egg sandwiches. A few good brands to try including Kodiak Cakes, Amy’s, or Real Good.

### Key Takeaways:

Frozen foods are the perfect time-savers and are often comparable to fresh! Make your life easier if you don’t have enough time to cook and try some of these options. You’ll be surprised at just how healthy you can eat from the frozen aisles!

## Homestyle Vegetable Beef Soup

From: AllRecipes.com

Serves: 10

### Ingredients:

- 1-pound lean ground beef
- ½ cup diced onion (frozen)
- 1 bag each of frozen chopped carrots, green beans, and corn
- 6 red potatoes, chopped
- 4 cups veggie or beef bouillon, low sodium
- 1 teaspoon salt & pepper



### Directions:

1. Heat ground beef in a pan until cooked through. Break apart with a spoon.
2. Add diced onion. Cook with beef until fragrant.
3. Toss in frozen veggies, potatoes, bouillon, and salt & pepper. Stir together.
4. Let simmer for 25-30 minutes; until veggies are completely cooked through.
5. Enjoy!

## Dinner in 10 Minutes or Less

It's the end of a long day and you're feeling too tired to cook. What do you do? Create an easy dinner in 10 minutes or less! The good news is you don't have to make elaborate meals every night to nourish yourself properly. If you have low energy to cook but are still looking to make a wholesome meal, here are a few tips to make dinner in 10 minutes or less:

1. **First, pick your protein.** Easy proteins to keep in your home include frozen pre-cooked or canned meats (tuna, chicken, salmon), beans, eggs, nuts or nut butters, yogurt, or cottage cheese.
2. **Choose an easy veggie side.** Keep canned or frozen veggies available for an easy cook-in-the-microwave option. Steam your favorites and add a taste of butter, salt, and pepper for a veggie side in minutes! Salad kits and pre-chopped veggies are also helpful to add variety.
3. **Add ½ cup of whole grains or starchy veggies.** Complete the meal with a slice of whole grain bread or roll, microwaveable brown rice, or swap it with a starchy veggie (corn, peas, or potatoes). Whole grains and starchy veggies are rich in B-vitamins and fiber, so essential to help complete the meal!

### Here are a few ideas:

- Breakfast For Dinner:
  - Sauté veggies with scrambled eggs and pair with 1 piece of whole grain toast
- Chicken Salad:
  - Combine canned chicken and a pre-made salad kit together
- Easy Wrap:
  - Wrap a whole grain tortilla with 3-4 slices of deli turkey, 1 slice of cheese, and a handful of chopped spinach

The key to making a meal in minutes is knowing *what* to put together (protein, veggie, and starch) and making sure your pantry, refrigerator, or freezer are stocked with easy options. What kind of creation can you come up with?

## Turkey & Spinach Wrap

Time: 5 Minutes

Serves: 1

### Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp dijon mustard
- 1 whole wheat tortilla or wrap
- 1 cup baby spinach
- 3 oz sliced turkey
- ½ cucumber, sliced



### Directions:

1. Spread the mustard in the center of the tortilla.
2. Place the spinach, turkey, and cucumber on top.
3. Roll together and enjoy! Pair with a side of carrot or celery sticks.

## Super Snacks

Snacks are a great addition to any diet, especially if you have decreased energy throughout the day. Including snacks between meals can help support energy levels, reduce overeating at meals, and even balance blood sugar! It's choosing the right kinds of snacks that's important.

When we consume snacks that are high in simple carbohydrates, it can spike blood sugar and cause an energy crash. Simple carbohydrates include refined crackers, pretzels, white breads or cakes, cookies, and even some granola bars or cereals.

When we include complex carbohydrates and protein at snacks, our energy is more sustained! Complex carbohydrates include whole grains, fruits, and veggies, while protein includes dairy, lean meats, nuts, and seeds.

Here is a list of snack ideas that include both, according to your sweet or savory preference:

### Sweet:

- ¼ cup mixed nuts + 1 cup berries
- 1 banana + 2 tbsp peanut butter
- 1 pear + 1 cup yogurt
- 3 pieces lean beef jerky + 1 apple
- 2 oz cheddar cheese + 1 cup grapes
- 1 cup cottage cheese + ½ cup canned peaches

### Savory:

- 1 cup air popped popcorn + 2 oz cheese
- ¼ cup mixed nuts + 1 cup baby carrots
- 1 piece string cheese + 1 cup cherry tomatoes
- 2 celery stalks (cut into smaller sticks) + 2 tbsp peanut butter
- ¼ cup cottage cheese + 1 cup baby carrots (or other veggie)
  - For a fun protein-rich dip, see the attached recipe!
- ¼ cup whole grain crackers + 2 oz cheddar cheese slices

Pair up your favorite fiber and protein-rich foods to create a healthful snack in seconds. Feel the benefits of having sustained energy throughout the day by eating a good snack every day!

## Easy “Ranch Dressing” Cottage Cheese Dip

\*Provides more protein and calcium than plain ranch dressing!

Serves: 2

Total time: 5 minutes

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 teaspoon dill, dried
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 2 teaspoons parsley, dried
- 1 cup veggies for “dipping” (carrots, celery, bell peppers, etc)



### Directions:

1. Mix together all the dried spices.
2. Mix the spices into 1 cup cottage cheese.
3. Enjoy this “ranch dip” with your favorite fresh veggies!

\*If you want to make an even *easier* dip, omit the seasonings & use dry ranch seasoning powder instead! Add ½ packet per 1 cup cottage cheese.

### **Celebrate a World of Flavors**

March is recognized as National Nutrition Month (NNM), where we celebrate the importance of healthy eating. Every year the theme of NNM changes. This year the theme is Celebrating A World of Flavors! Part of having a healthy diet is adding variety. If you eat the same thing every single day, your body may be lacking nutrients that you can get from other types of food. By celebrating a world of flavors, you can add variety to your diet and reap the benefits of having a well-rounded nutrient intake!

Here are a few tips to add more variety to your daily diet:

1. **Try a new fruit or veggie:** If you're stuck on eating steamed broccoli with dinner every night, try a different veggie side such as cauliflower, carrots, or even brussels sprouts. Choose 1-2 new fruits and veggies to try each week. You don't have to consume fresh produce - fill your freezer with frozen veggies and fruit or try canned - just make sure to rinse before consuming to rid the salt! Get a colorful array of produce to brighten up your meals and add more variety.
2. **Spice up your meals with new flavors:** Cumin, paprika, turmeric, oregano, garlic powder, cinnamon, basil, you name it. The possibilities for flavor are endless! Spice up your meal with a new flavor. Many spices and dried herbs provide anti-inflammatory properties, which can help with inflammation and even balance blood sugar.
3. **Vary your protein:** Lean meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, nuts, beans, peas, and lentils are great protein sources to add to your meals. Spread your protein intake throughout the day by including a source with meals and snacks. Add nuts with a piece of fruit for a snack or toss some lentils into a soup with veggies for an easy protein-packed dinner. When you vary your protein intake, you get a variety of nutrients and essential amino acids, which are the building blocks for many of the body's processes!
4. **Mix up your grains:** If you're stuck on having bread or rolls for your grain serving, branch out and try some other wholesome grains. Brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat sourdough bread, English muffins, and whole grain pastas are great to try! Try a different whole grain choice each day and be sure to make at least ½ your week whole grains instead of white or refined grains.

Each food has their own unique nutrient profile. If we stick to eating the same foods, we may be missing out on nutrients that are rich in other food sources. Make it a goal this month as we celebrate National Nutrition Month to add some variety to your diet using the recommendations listed above!



## Chicken Sausage & Veggie Skillet

Serves: 4

Total Time: 20 minutes



### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 red potatoes, cubed
- 1 package Chicken Sausage, sliced into rounds
- 2 bell peppers, diced (any color!)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- Salt & pepper to taste

### Directions:

1. Add oil & cubed red potatoes to a skillet. Cook for 10-15 minutes until browned & cooked through.
2. Add sliced chicken sausage, bell peppers, and onions. Toss and cook together for 5-10 minutes.
3. Toss in garlic powder, Italian seasoning, paprika, salt, and pepper.
4. Enjoy!

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