

# NAVIGATING NUTRITION

A look at making informed food choices and developing healthful eating habits.



**Its time to put your best fork forward.**

“Why do we eat?” may seem like a silly question with an obvious answer - to obtain the energy we need to support our everyday activities.

While this is true to an extent, oftentimes we do not eat because of sustenance but because of *taste*. Moreover, our daily food choices are usually influenced by social situations, budgets, stress levels, or time constraints rather than actual *hunger*.

**Even though food is essential for survival, not all foods are created equal.**

Eating certain foods, especially in excess, can be detrimental to our health. The act of eating can be reinforcing and provide us with pleasure, even when it's not driven by a calorie deficit. This has a hand in overeating and obesity, which are on the rise across the globe.

With this in mind, we are all unique with different bodies, goals, backgrounds, and tastes. There are ways to create healthy habits introducing you to new flavors and foods.

Achieving balance and building a healthier eating pattern can be simple and low-stress. Here are some tips to get you started.

## Choose a *variety* of nutritious foods

Selecting nutrient-rich foods and beverages first is a way to make better choices within your daily eating plan. Reach for foods like:

- Brightly colored fruits and 100% fruit juice
- Vibrantly colored vegetables
- Whole-grain, fortified and fiber-rich grain foods
- Low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt or fortified plant-based alternatives
- Lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, soyfoods such as tofu and tempeh, beans, lentils and nuts

## Plan ahead

Planning ahead can help save money and reduce mealtime stress!

- Choose a specific day of the week to create a food shopping list and hit the grocery store.
- Start small: Aim to create enough dinners for 2-3 days of the week.
- Choose a meal prep day. Focus first on foods that take the longest to cook: proteins like chicken and fish; whole grains like brown rice, quinoa, and farro; dried beans and legumes; and, roasted vegetables.
- Consider preparing staple foods that can be easily added to a meal or used as a snack: greens for a salad, hardboiled eggs, or a bowl of chopped fruit.

