



Nourish

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Let National Nutrition Month Inspire You

We are well into 2026. You might have set some health goals at the start of the year. Maybe you are going strong, or maybe you haven't launched your efforts.

March is National Nutrition Month, an annual campaign launched in 1973 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Ask yourself some questions:

- Do you have steady energy throughout the day?
- Is your focus, concentration and ability maintained?
- Is your immune system strong (meaning few colds and illnesses)?
- Do you experience good sleep?
- Do you get about 30 minutes of physical activity daily?

If you answered “no” to any of these, better nutrition can help. Many people shortchange themselves on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and physical activity. Here are a few ideas:

- Make a fruit smoothie with milk and your favorite frozen fruit. You can toss in a handful of spinach.
- Have veggie chips (such as crinkle-cut carrot chips) instead of chips.
- Add veggies to a pizza, including sliced onions, peppers, mushrooms, zucchini and tomatoes.
- Enjoy whole-grain snacks, such as popcorn or crackers with cheese. Read the ingredient label and look for “whole grain” as a first ingredient.
- Choose whole-grain bread and buns to make sandwiches.
- Find an indoor place to walk during colder months.

Set a goal for National Nutrition Month.

To explore more about nutrition, see the NDSU Extension “[Nourish](#)” resources and online or face-to-face classes. You can learn more about maintaining your brain, immune system, sleeping habits and much more.

Learn how to grow a garden with the NDSU Extension [Field to Fork](#) resources.

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Question

My 46-year-old cousin was diagnosed with colon cancer. He found out during a colonoscopy. He is doing well after treatment. What are the recommendations?

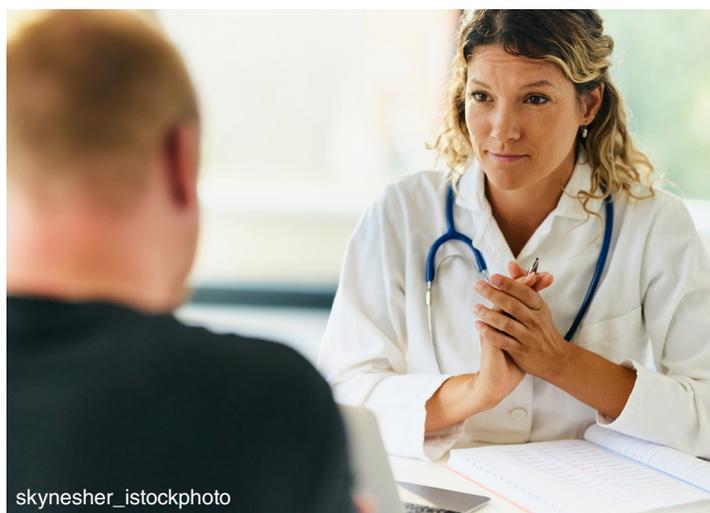
Having a routine colon cancer screening at age 45 is the current recommendation, because younger people are being diagnosed. About one in 10 people with colon cancer are diagnosed before age 50.

Besides colonoscopies, there are stool tests. Some people have no symptoms, while others experience abdominal pain and/or blood in their stools. Visit your health care provider to discuss the best option for you.

March is also National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. The nutrition recommendations for National Nutrition Month can reduce your risk of colon cancer.

- Increase fiber intake by eating more whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables. Start slowly when increasing fiber and drink plenty of water.
- Choose lower-fat dairy products fortified with vitamin D. Consuming dairy may reduce our risk for colon cancer.
- Choose lean proteins and fewer highly processed foods.
- Avoid alcohol, which increases risk for several types of cancer.

Learn more at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [Colon Cancer webpage](#).



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This vegetable-rich recipe is based on Indigenous peoples' planting practices. Stalks of corn were grown surrounded by pole beans. The beans climbed the stalk, and summer or winter squash was planted at the base of the corn. This trio of vegetables sustained early populations, and the combination makes a delicious soup.



Three Sisters Soup

- 2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil (or oil of your choosing)
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 pound (about 4) red potatoes, diced, with skin on
- 1 ¼ teaspoons chili or chipotle powder
- 1 ¼ teaspoons cumin
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth (or vegetable broth)
- 2 (14.5-ounce) cans fire-roasted tomatoes, diced
- 1 small zucchini, diced
- 1 small yellow squash, diced
- 2 ¼ cups sweet corn (frozen, or 3 ears of corn, kernels removed)
- 2 cups kidney beans, drained and rinsed (or green beans)
- Black pepper for taste
- Optional: fresh parsley and grated Parmesan cheese

Heat oil in a large pot or Dutch oven. Add onion to sauté for about 5 minutes, stirring often, until soft. Add garlic and cook for 1-2 minutes longer. Add the potatoes, seasonings and bay leaves. Cook for a few more minutes, stirring almost constantly. Add broth and tomatoes and bring to a boil. Lower the heat to simmer just until the potatoes are just tender, about 10-12 minutes. Add remaining vegetables and bring back to a boil. Season as desired. Cover and let simmer for about 15 minutes, until the skin of the vegetables are tender. Add water if soup seems too thick. Remove bay leaves before serving. Garnish with fresh parsley and a sprinkle of cheese for serving, if desired.

Makes 10 servings. One serving has 180 calories, 4 grams (g) fat, 8 g protein, 30 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber and 590 milligrams sodium.