



## DEPARTMENT OF **PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

### March 2025 Nutrition Article **National Nutrition Month**

March is National Nutrition Month. It was established in 1973 by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), the leading organization of food and nutrition professionals. This month-long campaign is designed to spread the message that making informed food choices and developing sound eating habits are the keys to a healthy life. AND's mission focuses on promoting well-being and optimal nutrition for everyone. Its members, who are registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), celebrate their profession on Registered Dietitian Day, observed March 12th.

This year's theme is "Food Connects Us," as food is essential for survival and is deeply rooted in culture. It brings us closer to family and friends, turning meals into opportunities for love, meaningful ingredients, and shared enjoyment. It also connects us to ourselves – nurturing a healthy relationship with it allows us to savor the nourishment that keeps us feeling our best. Health, memories, traditions, seasons, and access all impact our relationship with food, influencing what we eat while our food choices, in turn, affect how we feel.

#### **Connecting with Food**

Aging impacts the way our body processes nutrients, making it increasingly important to think of food as medicine. We need food for survival. It's estimated we can only live three to six weeks without it. Regardless of age or location, the body requires six essential nutrients: carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, and water. The quality of the food we consume is crucial as it directly impacts our health.

Older Americans can connect with real, wholesome food – fruits, vegetables, whole grains, animal- and plant-based proteins, and dairy when appropriate – to live longer, manage chronic diseases, and feel better overall. It's hard to connect with the ultra-processed food products lining grocery store shelves and supplying restaurants and other eateries. Connecting with synthetic ingredients, texturizers, food colorings, and alternative sweeteners isn't possible because the body was never meant to digest them. A poor diet means we have lost the vital connection to food.

#### **Exploring the Connection Between Food and Culture**

While older Americans have unique challenges and circumstances that make implementing a connection with food more difficult, it is important to problem solve. Exploring a better relationship and connection with food by understanding food is medicine can make way for experimentation and creativity.

Regardless of what you may have learned, all real food is healthy, and exploring recipes with different ingredients or cooking techniques enhances connection. Bring foods that represent your culture and/or traditions back to the table, to help you to reconnect with foods that haven't been included for some time. In addition, strengthen your connection to food by including friends and family. Everyone benefits from quality food, not only for nourishment, but for the pleasurable connection it brings when you are in sync with what the body needs and wants. Savor your food, eat wisely, and make thoughtful choices to naturally strengthen your vital connection to nourishment.

## Connecting with a Nutrition Expert

Learning how nutrient needs change with age, incorporating foods from all nourishing groups, and focusing on balanced, sustainable eating habits are great reasons for older Americans to connect with a nutrition expert. Nutrition has become increasingly confusing over the last few decades with its “eat this and not that” approach, often contradictory among medical professionals, the health sector, and the food industry. Despite all the intentional confusion, the nutrition your body needs remains a fact. And who better to help than a registered dietitian nutritionist, accessible at [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) or through a provider referral? They offer the truth about food’s connection to our bodies along with personalized nutrition information tailored to your health goals, likes and dislikes, challenges, and vision for how you connect with food.

Don’t be fooled by all the information that has saturated your brain around food and nutrition. Seek out the trusted individuals who can steer you correctly!

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## RECEIPE OF THE MONTH

### Avocado and Egg Toast

Having quality balance with food groups to support heart health is easy when you choose REAL foods with minimal ingredients and include multiple food groups. Here is an easy and tasty recipe you can have for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Sourcing quality local products like eggs and good bread enhances the gorgeous flavors even more.

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 slices of bread
- ½ avocado
- ¼ tsp butter or ½ tsp avocado oil
- 2 eggs
- 1 Tbsp your choice of seeds (pumpkin or sesame seeds are fun)
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Toast the bread
2. Smear ¼ of the avocado on each slice of toast
3. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste
4. Add butter or oil to a small fry pan and heat.
5. Crack both eggs into the fry pan and cook to desired doneness.
6. Place one egg on each slice of toast.
7. Sprinkle with salt and choice of seeds.

