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TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

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March 2023

March is for National Nutrition Month

In 1973 the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics began dedicating the month of March to promote healthy eating habits, informed food choices and the importance of physical activity. The more informed we are, the better we can make decisions for ourselves and our families. This year's theme is **"Fuel for the Future,"** which encourages a nourished eating pattern (diet) at every stage of our life while also protecting the environment! Here are some 'fuel for the future' key messages!

Eat with the environment in mind.

When planning meals try to choose foods that are in season. Seasonal foods will not only taste better but will likely have 'traveled' less distance to your grocery store helping reduce the price.

Grow your own favorite fruits and vegetables! Learn how to start a community, container, or backyard garden with our program series called 'Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities Garden Course.'

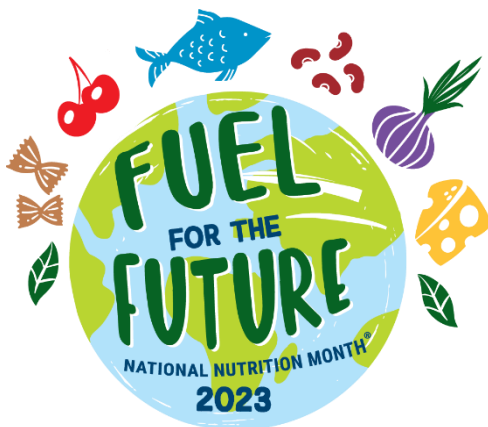
Stay nourished and save money.

Reduce food waste by planning your weekly meals and snacks. Before shopping, see what food you have at home before buying more and make a grocery list to help limit purchasing unneeded items. Another series, 'A Fresh Start to

a Healthier You!' can be a great program to learn more about saving money and meal planning.

Eat a variety of foods from all food groups.

Try to eat a variety of foods which include fresh, frozen, canned, and dried options. Avoid fad diets and practice gratitude for your body by giving it the fuel it needs. 'Get the Facts' is a program series that provides information to support a healthy and balanced diet.



Make tasty foods at home.

Continue practicing cooking and meal preparation skills and look for creative ways to use leftovers rather than throwing them away. Share foods you have in excess with family and friends while creating happy memories by eating together.

Contact an Extension Agent!

The Better Living for Texans program offers programs for people of all ages with nutrition information that is safe, and realistic for you. Contact an Extension Agent in your county to learn more on how to be fueled for the future!

To learn more about National Nutrition Month visit, <https://www.eatright.org/national-nutrition-month-2023>. Get fueled for the future!

Written by: Ingrid Macias, El Paso County Extension Agent – Better Living for Texans
Photo and Source: <https://www.eatright.org/national-nutrition-month-2023>



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Happy National Nutrition Month!!! I know, I'd never heard of it either. It was started 50 years ago by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to help educate and encourage everyone to make "informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits."

<https://www.eatright.org/national-nutrition-month-2023> Each year, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics choose a new theme. This year's theme is "Fuel for the Future" with the intent to eat with sustainability in mind. By doing this, we are thinking about our daily nutritional needs and protecting the environment. That sounds awesome! (Full disclosure...I'm writing this why sampling my daughter's cookie recipes for the upcoming county show! By the way... they taste amazing!)

We have many options on how we choose to celebrate. Below are some of my favorites from the list. (<https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/awareness-campaigns/50-ideas-to-get-involved-in-national-nutrition-month>)

- Organize/participate in in a food drive to help a local food pantry or shelter.
- Give family members a role in helping to prepare a meal or pick put a recipe.
- Practice mindful meals by spending less time on a phone/computer/tv while you're eating.



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- Try new herbs, spices, or citrus fruits (lemon and limes) to bring out new flavors in your foods.
- Start a garden so you have fresh vegetables in your back yard, porch, or patio.
- Conduct or attend an exercise class with your colleagues, peers, and or family.
- Try a new fruit or vegetable each week in March.

If you want to give that last one a try, think about adding different types of greens. This could help you jazz up a salad or dish. Many greens are both nutritious and can add extra flavor.

- Want a pepper flavor, try adding arugula or watercress.
- Want something that's not green, how about red and white radicchio.
- Want a crisp texture, try Romaine.
- Want something mild, try Boston or Bibb Lettuce.

Spinach, Kale, Collard Greens, Mustard Greens, and many others can be very tasty when cooked. Try sauteing the greens in a little oil and spices (these cook down quite a bit, so plan accordingly). Maybe try those greens in a soup, stew, or casserole. Adding fresh spinach to an omelet or frittata can not only add some color but some nutrition too!



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Regardless which type of leafy green you use, they can give you a variety of nutrients. Lettuce is the most eaten vegetable in the United States. But let's not forget all those other dark and light greens as well. Dark-green leaves can offer beta carotene, which helps to form Vitamin A, as well as many antioxidants. Typically, the darker the leaves, the more nutrients there is. "For example, romaine has nine times more vitamin A than iceberg lettuce. Some greens deliver folate, potassium and dietary fiber, too. Greens supply lutein, which contributes to good vision and may help protect your eyes from macular degeneration, and they provide vitamin K, which plays a role in blood clotting and bone health." (<https://www.eatright.org/food/food-groups/vegetables/different-kinds-of-lettuces-and-greens>) The bottom line is...Eat More Veggies! Eat A Variety!!

Let me know which is your favorite type of green and your favorite way to make it.

Sanci Hall is the Tarrant County Better Living for Texan's Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent. Contact her at sanci.hall@ag.tamu.edu & visit our webpage: tarrant.agrilife.org and agrilife.org/urbantarrantnutrition/blt

Sign up [here](#) to receive the Better Living for Texan's - Tarrant County Monthly Newsletter.



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Fruit/Vegetable Highlight – Avocado



Figure 1 Picture provided by Kelton P, Keller 4-H, Senior Level

Avocados have over 100 varieties, seven of them grow in California including the well know Hass Avocado. When categorizing avocados, botanically speaking they are a fruit, but the USDA

treats them as a vegetable. The avocado grows on trees that can grow between 15 to 30 feet tall. One tree can produce up to 400 avocados a year! Avocados add lots of positives to our diet. They are sugar and cholesterol free, and low in sodium. They offer nearly 20 different vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, healthy fats, phytonutrients, carotenoids, phytosterols, and antioxidants. Our bodies need all these nutrients but having a fruit/vegetable that has natural healthy fat is huge! We need fat in our diet to increase the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins



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(A, D, E, and K). Avocados contain 6 grams of fat per serving making them a great addition to your diet.

Per Harvard, “A whole medium avocado contains about 240 calories, 13 grams carbohydrate, 3 grams protein, 22 grams fat (15 grams monounsaturated, 4 grams polyunsaturated, 3 grams saturated), 10 grams fiber, and 11 milligrams sodium. Along with their low sodium levels, avocados contain no cholesterol.” Harvard goes on to explain that the nutrients in avocados have been associated with a reduced risk of chronic disease, especially when used with a nutritious, balanced diet.

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/avocados/#:~:text=A%20whole%20medium%20avocado%20contains,levels%2C%20avocados%20contain%20no%20cholesterol.>)

When you select an avocado from the store, look for an avocado that has a darker green skin that has a softer touch. Those are ripe and ready to eat! If the avocado has a vibrant green color that are firm to the touch, its likely not ripe yet. An unripe avocado can stay on the counter for 4-5 days until it becomes ripe. A ripe avocado can be stored in the refrigerator for 2-3 days. The skin and the seed need to be removed before you eat the Avocado. Let’s review how we cut and remove the seed. Please note, the avocado is on a cutting board and not in their hand.



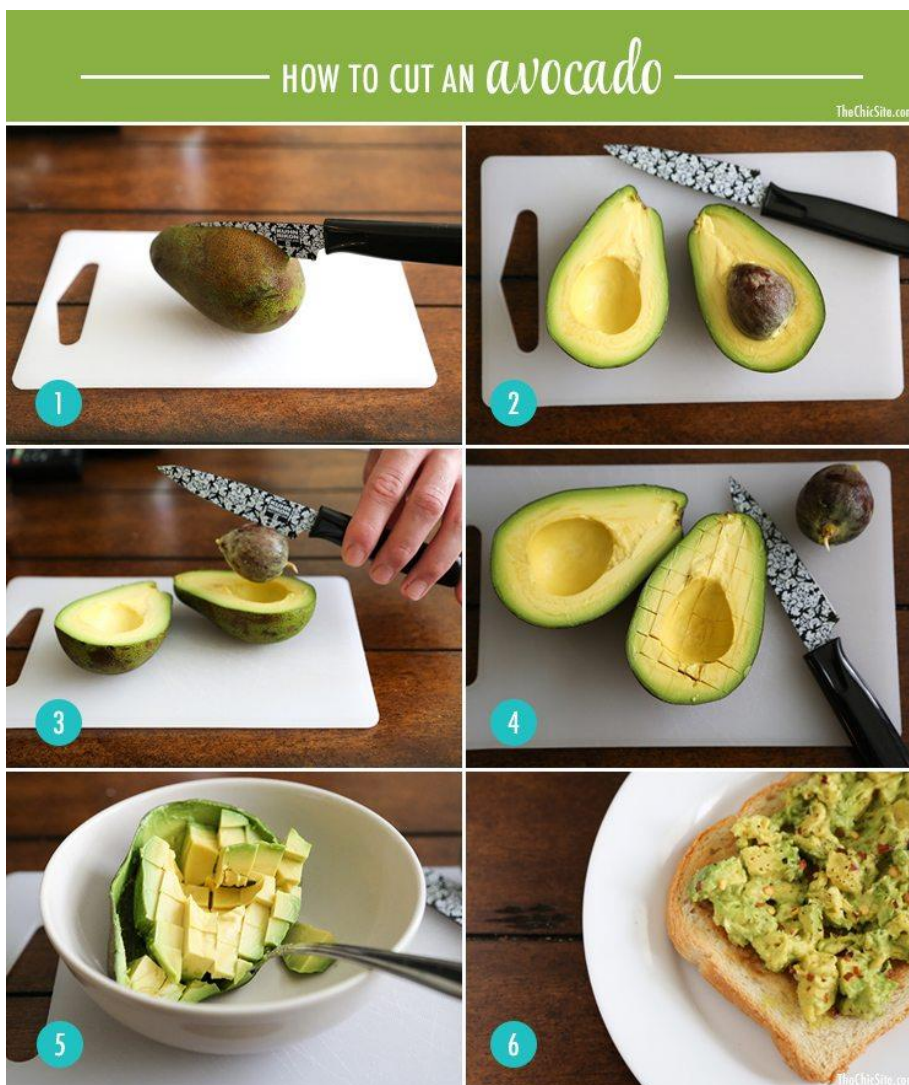
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1. Wash and dry the fruit. Cut the avocado lengthwise.

2. You will end up with two halves.

3. Remove the seed.

4. Cut slices or squares into the avocado, making sure not to slice thru the skin.

5. Spoon out the contents.

6. Make something delicious.

Figure 2 <https://msrachelhollis.com/2014/03/17/lets-pick-avocados/>



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Avocados can be used in salads, put on sandwiches, used as butter on your toast, in place of sour cream, and in GUACAMOLE! Check out the recipe below.



Guacamole

This creamy dip tastes great with cut-up veggies or whole grain pita.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- ¼ red onion
- 1 medium clove garlic
- 2 plum tomatoes
- 1 medium lime
- 2 medium, ripe avocados
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin (optional)
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves, chopped (optional)

Directions

1. Peel onion and garlic clove. Rinse tomatoes.
2. If using, rinse cilantro. Pluck leaves from stems. Tear into small pieces.
3. Mince onion and garlic. Dice tomatoes into ¼-inch pieces.
4. Rinse lime and cut in half. In a medium bowl, squeeze juice from each half. Discard seeds.
5. Cut avocados in half. Remove pits. Using a large spoon, scoop out flesh and add to bowl with juice.
6. Add salt to avocado. If using cumin, add now. Mash well with a fork.
7. Add onion, garlic, tomatoes and optional ingredients of your choice. Stir gently to combine.



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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Observes National Caffeine Awareness Month

National Caffeine Awareness Month is observed to help individuals increase their awareness of how much caffeine they are consuming each day and identify ways to reduce their intake. Caffeine is a bitter tasting compound that is found naturally in various plants and acts as a stimulant of the central nervous system. For many, caffeine is typically included with their early morning coffee or mid-day teas, aiming to help individuals stay awake, focused, and reduce tiredness.

Caffeine is widely consumed throughout the world, and in the United States, it is vastly known for its presence in coffee and ability to help increase energy. Many may think that if they are non-coffee drinkers, they may be out of the woods, but this is not the case. According to Amy Valdez, Texas A&M AgriLife Program Specialist, “caffeine is not only found in a variety of drinks but some foods and over the counter medications as well”. In fact, caffeine can be found in various drinks, such as sodas, energy drinks, black and green tea, and



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espresso. Foods that contain coffee (tiramisu, coffee ice cream, coffee flavored foods), chocolate, and chocolate flavored foods, also contain caffeine, as well as any “energy boosting” snacks or gums. Caffeine can even be found in small amounts in some decaffeinated beverages. In addition, some medications which may contain caffeine include supplements, pain relievers, and cold medications.

While a caffeinated drink is great for a quick pick me up, sometimes the caffeine can mindlessly add up throughout the day. Caffeine in small amounts is safe for most individuals but in rare cases, overconsumption of caffeine can have adverse effects. Having too much caffeine can lead to headaches, dehydration, increased anxiety, increased heart rate, insomnia, indigestion, and more serious risks such as an increase in blood pressure and increased risk of a heart attack. As too much caffeine can lead to these conditions, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends healthy adults should limit their caffeine intake to no more than 400 milligrams per day. According to the FDA, this amount of caffeine is equal to approximately four or five cups of coffee and is “not generally associated with dangerous, negative effects”. Certain individuals are more sensitive to caffeine and can exhibit greater effects from caffeine; they should discuss their limits with their primary care physician. These individuals include those with sleep disorders, GERD or ulcers, those diagnosed with arrhythmia and high blood pressure, and pregnant or breastfeeding women.



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According to the College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, pregnant women should limit their caffeine to 200 mg.

As mentioned, caffeine can be found in numerous foods and drinks that we consume. Below is a guide of some common caffeine sources of and how much they contain.

Sources of Caffeine: Drinks		
Source	Size	Caffeine
(mg)		
Coffee, Brewed	8 oz.	95-200
Coffee, Brewed, Decaf	8 oz.	2-15
Espresso	1 oz.	64
Coffee, Instant	8 oz.	62
Tea, Black, Brewed	8 oz.	47
Tea, Green, Brewed	8 oz.	28
Soda, Cola	8 oz.	22
Energy Drink	8 oz.	40-250
Energy Shot	2 oz.	200

Drink sizes are listed in fluid ounces (oz.) and caffeine in shown in milligrams (mg).



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<u>Sources of Caffeine: Foods</u>		
Source (mg)	Size	Caffeine
Chocolate, Dark, 100%, cocoa	3.5 oz	240
Chocolate, Bittersweet, 55% cocoa	3.5 oz	124
Chocolate, Milk, 33% cocoa	3.5 oz	45

Food sizes are listed in weighted ounces and caffeine is shown in milligrams (mg).

Identifying what sources of caffeine you typically have in a day is a great way to make changes in the amounts you consume. A few additional ways you can observe National Caffeine Awareness Month include:

- Track your caffeine intake to identify what sources to reduce in your daily routine.
- Try a brisk walk or morning exercise to give you that much needed boost of energy.



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- Aim to drink more water and switch out caffeinated beverages, when possible.
- Reduce caffeinated beverages gradually to reduce potential symptoms of withdrawal.

Remember, while caffeine is a great option for energy there are other ways that we can get a similar boost while also maintaining our health and hydration!

Contact: Amy Valdez, Extension Program Specialist

Email: Amy.Valdez@ag.tamu.edu

Sources:

Medline Plus

<https://medlineplus.gov/caffeine.html>

Mayo Clinic. Org

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/caffeine/art-20049372>

Food and Drug Administration

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/spilling-beans-how-much-caffeine-too-much>

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/experts-and-stories/ask-acog/how-much-coffee-can-i-drink-while-pregnant>

Healthline

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/how-much-caffeine-in-coffee>



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National Caffeine Awareness Month

THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDS HEALTHY ADULTS LIMIT THEIR CAFFEINE INTAKE TO 400 MILLIGRAMS PER DAY.

HERE'S A CAFFEINE GUIDE TO SOME POPULAR BEVERAGES!



SOURCE	CAFFEINE (MG)
COFFEE, BREWED	95-200
COFFEE, BREWED, DECAF	2-15
ESPRESSO	64
COFFEE, INSTANT	62
TEA, BLACK, BREWED	47
TEA, GREEN, BREWED	28
SODA, COLA	22
ENERGY DRINK	40-250

GUIDE IS BASED OFF AN 8 FLUID OUNCE SERVING SIZE, EXCEPT FOR ESPRESSO (1 OUNCE SERVING)
CAFFEINE IS PROVIDED IN MILLIGRAMS



SOURCE: MAYO CLINIC & FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION



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Where Are You Going For Spring Break?

Spring Break in Texas is a very popular time for young adults and college students to head to the beach. We want to remind everyone when you are making plans for Spring Break, make sure a sober driver is top priority.

This can be a particularly dangerous and deadly time on Texas roadways. Each Spring Break, too many young, promising lives are cut short due to the fateful and regrettable decision to get behind the wheel and drive drunk.

In an effort to stop this deadly trend, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's *Watch UR BAC* program and The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) are partnering to raise awareness on impaired driving during the Spring Break holiday. The message is for everyone to arrive at their destination sober, safe, and smiling.

Even one life lost is too many. This campaign reminds young adults to know how they are getting home before they start drinking. There are many ways to find a sober ride home, such as asking a friend or family member to be a designated driver, taking mass transit, or using a rideshare service.



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We want everyone to have a happy and safe Spring Break, one that they will remember for years to come, but for all the right reasons, We've partnered with TxDOT to help remind drivers that even one drink before driving is when impairment begins. Under no circumstance is it ever OK to drink and drive. This behavior is illegal, it is deadly, and it is selfish. Do everyone a favor: If you will be drinking during Spring Break, or for any occasion, plan ahead for a sober ride.

In Texas, it is illegal for anyone under 21 to consume alcohol. The state's legal limit for intoxication is .08 blood or breath alcohol concentration (BAC) for those over the age 21. Law enforcement officers can arrest drivers for having a BAC below .08 with probable cause based on the driver's behavior. Drivers under the influence of alcohol may face up to \$17,000 in fines and fees, jail time, and could lose their license.

Watch UR BAC and TxDOT also strongly encourage partygoers to exercise caution in overdosing on alcohol. Know the signs of an alcohol overdose and when someone needs emergency medical care. If any of the following signs after drinking are observed, do not hesitate to request emergency assistance:

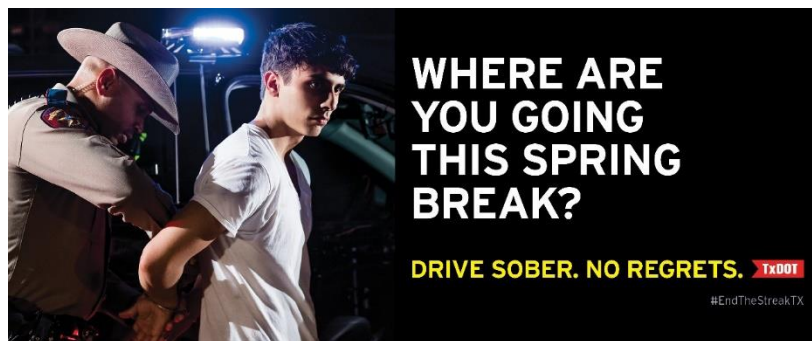


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- Unconsciousness
- Vomiting
- Seizures
- Slow breathing
- Slow heart rate
- Clammy skin
- Delayed responses
- Low body temperature
- Skin or lips turning blue
- Paleness



Celebrate with a Plan

This Spring Break, the *Watch UR BAC* program and TxDOT urge drivers to designate a sober driver before heading out. If planning on drinking, plan how to safely travel without driving.

- Remember: It is never OK to drink and drive. Designate a sober driver, or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.
- Suspect a motorist on the road is driving drunk or intoxicated? Call 911 immediately.



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- Have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take their keys away and make arrangements to get them home safely.

Bobbi Brooks, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's *Watch UR BAC* program is a free, statewide program to promote alcohol awareness, the dangers of impaired driving, and friends watching out for friends.

Local Events

- **Adult Gardening Series - Growing and Nourishing Healthy Community Gardens.** Learn how to: Choose A Garden Location, Soil and Compost, Raised Bed and Container, Maintaining Your Garden, Diseases and Insects, and Harvesting Your Garden
 - Keller Senior Activities Center, 640 Johnson Rd Building C, Keller, TX 76248. 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm
 - Monday, March 6, 2023- Lesson 1
 - Monday, March 13, 2023- Lesson 2
 - Monday, March 20, 2023- Lesson 3
 - Monday, April 3, 2023- Lesson 4



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- Monday, April 10, 2023- Lesson 5
 - Monday, April 17, 2023- Lesson 6
 - Register at: <https://secure.rec1.com/TX/keller-tx/catalog>
-
- **Adult and Youth Walking Group - Walk N Talk** - During this 8-week walking series, friends, family, and others from the community come together to support one another in a fun, simple way. Kids Welcome!!!
 - Keller Library, 640 Johnson Rd, Keller, TX 76248, 11 am – 12:00 pm
 - Tuesday, March 21, 2023
 - Tuesday, March 28, 2023
 - Tuesday, April 4, 2023
 - Tuesday, April 11, 2023
 - Tuesday, April 18, 2023
 - Tuesday, April 25, 2023
 - Tuesday, May 2, 2023
 - Tuesday, May 9, 2023
 - Tuesday, May 16, 2023
 - Register at the Keller Library, (817) 743-4800
 - Watauga Community Center, 7901 Indian Springs Rd, Watauga, TX 76148, 9 am – 10 am



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- Wednesday, March 22, 2023
- Wednesday, March 29, 2023
- Wednesday, April 5, 2023
- Wednesday, April 12, 2023
- Wednesday, April 19, 2023
- Wednesday, April 26, 2023
- Wednesday, May 3, 2023
- Wednesday, May 10, 2023
- Wednesday, May 17, 2023
- Register at <https://forms.gle/wMRJDLJCXmFVYHHV9>





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Recipe of the Month

Recipe and photo from *MyPlate Kitchen* at MyPlate.gov

Whole Grain Strawberry Pancakes

Whole wheat flour adds a nutty flavor and texture to these great-tasting pancakes. Dish these up with berries and a glass of milk on the side for a wholesome start to your day!

Serves: 7

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups whole wheat flour
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs
- 1 container vanilla low-fat yogurt (6 ounces)
- ¾ cup water
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1¾ cups sliced fresh strawberries
- 1 container strawberry low-fat yogurt (6 ounces)



Directions:

1. Heat griddle to 375°F or heat 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Grease with oil if necessary (or spray with cooking spray before heating).
2. In large bowl, mix flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt; set aside.
3. In medium bowl, beat eggs, vanilla yogurt, water and oil until well blended.
4. Pour egg mixture all at once into flour mixture; stir until moistened.
5. For each pancake, pour slightly less than 1/4 cup batter from cup or pitcher onto hot griddle. Cook pancakes 1 to 2 minutes or until bubbly on top, puffed and dry around edges. Turn; cook other sides 1 to 2 minutes or until golden brown.
6. Top each serving (2 pancakes) with 1/4 cup sliced strawberries and 1 to 2 tablespoons strawberry yogurt.

Nutrients Per Serving:

260 calories, 9 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 93 mg cholesterol, 390 mg sodium, 36 g carbohydrates, 4 g fiber, 16 g total sugar, 10 g added sugar, and 9 g protein

Total Cost: \$\$\$\$



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