Nutrition Month 2017: Take the Fight Out of Food!
Spot the problem. Get the facts. Seek support.

Eating should be enjoyable, but it can also be a source of everyday frustration and confusion for many people. Figuring out the healthiest foods to buy, prepare, serve and eat is even more challenging when taking into account nutrition related medical conditions such as diabetes or dealing with consistent disruptive symptoms like gas or bloating.

Almost half (49%) of Canadians get their nutrition information from the Internet, social media or blogs. Unfortunately, not all of the advice found here is accurate, which can exacerbate the struggle with food. There are many unregulated health care professionals talking about nutrition, selling or promoting expensive supplements, as well as bloggers and social media personalities with limited or no nutrition education giving nutrition advice.

In the last three years, there has been a decrease in Canadians getting their food and nutrition advice from regulated health professionals such as dietitians, who are the most trusted source for food and nutrition advice and information. Unfortunately, only one-fifth (20%) of Canadians ask dietitians for nutrition advice and information.

This year, the 2017 Nutrition Month campaign is dedicated to helping Canadians take the fight out of food by guiding them through a three-step approach to improve their relationship with food, no matter what the struggle. **Spot the problem** – Define the food, nutrition or health issue that’s behind the fight first. **Get the facts** – Use facts from credible sources to decide what needs to be done to solve the problem. **Seek support** – Put the plan into action with support from family, friends and regulated health care professionals, including dietitians.

Five common “food fight” examples are featured to illustrate this three-step approach:

**Food Fight #1: Food Fads: Ugh! How do I know which nutrition information to trust?**

From detox cleanses to miracle diets and supplements, there are many false recommendations that promise wellness but are often expensive and not evidenced-based. Learn how to evaluate online health information and stop wasting money on unnecessary products and plans by learning to ask key questions.
Food Fight #2: Digestive Woes: Eek! What’s causing all this gas?

Did you know that swallowed air makes up 90% of the gas in the digestive system? Gas, bloating and burping are all common, but when these symptoms are disruptive to daily living, it’s important to figure out why they are occurring. If you are unsure of your symptoms, it’s important to not self-diagnose a condition as removing certain foods from the diet can lead to unnecessary food and nutrient restrictions as well as hinder a proper diagnosis.

Food Fight #3: Picking Eating: Grr! Why is family mealtime such mayhem?

Up to 35% of children are described by their parents as poor or “picky” eaters, often making mealtimes frustrating! Mealtime tension can often be eased by following this guideline: Adults decide what, when, and where to feed children, while children decide how much and whether to eat. Set a good example! Children are more likely to continue healthy eating habits later into life if started at a young age.

Food Fight #4: Eating and Stress: Help! Why do I always turn to food when I’m stressed?

Turning to food when feeling angry or stressed is called emotional eating and often leads to overeating, especially foods high in calories, fat and sugar which then leads to higher levels of stress and anxiety. Instead of eating mindlessly, try mindful eating. Mindful eating helps people become more aware of the reason they are eating, so they eat when hungry and stop when full, instead of eating because of boredom or stress.

Food Fight #5: Managing a Condition (eg. Diabetes): Sigh! How can I manage my diabetes?

3.4 million Canadians (almost 10% of the population) have diabetes. Currently most websites do not provide sufficient information to support patients in making medical decisions for their diabetes care. Managing diabetes involves a health care team including a dietitian to reduce the risks of further complications.

Follow the links for the complete factsheets and more Nutrition Month 2017 information.

http://www.dietitians.ca/Downloads/Factsheets/NM2017-Factsheet-Set-ENG.aspx
www.NutritionMonth2017.ca

Contributor:
Alisyn Makowski, RD
Clinical/Community Dietitian
Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority