



Improve Your Health: *Bite by Bite*

March is National Nutrition Month and there is no better time than now to challenge yourself to think about nutrition in a new way. This year, the focus is **Eating Right: Bite by Bite**. What if you tried a different approach to eating and food choices? Instead of “all or nothing” and “good or bad” judgements of eating habits and foods (like most diets promote), try taking a “bite by bite” perspective.

With each bite you take, you are faced with a decision and an opportunity to provide the nutrients your body needs to function at its best. If you are trying to make improvements in your health, you don’t need to have a “good meal” vs “bad meal” or an “on-the-diet day” vs “cheat day”. Making one tiny improvement to one meal can start a chain of benefits and this is just as worthy an effort.

These small changes can add up over time and are often more sustainable than “starting a diet” since they don’t seem so overwhelming. For example, if you are concerned about your heart health and your blood pressure is high, try identify one change you can make at your next meal. Perhaps it is adding a piece of fruit to you plate (high in potassium) or reading the label on a packaged product to choose an option with less sodium.

Maybe you are in excellent health and don’t have any major health issues to address. Another way to think about nutrition is: every bite you take, you have the opportunity to speed up or slow down the aging process. Various nutrients are needed to support longevity, such as a variety of phytonutrients and antioxidants. Choosing to add foods that provide these, such as berries, salmon, nuts, and leafy green vegetables in a slow and manageable way can result in big benefits – and a longer life – down the road.

Start with adding one of these nutrient-dense items to your plate at one meal, and see how it goes. Over time, increase the frequency and portion size of these items, and before you know it, you’ve balanced out and improved your overall intake one step (one bite!) at a time.

This month, Tahoe Forest Health System is offering a FREE community talk to help you live longer and healthier. Please join us for **Your Authentic Wellness - Food for Longevity: Using Nutrition to Slow the Aging Process**, Thursday, March 26, 5:15 pm – 6:30 pm. Call the Tahoe Forest center for Health at 530-587-3769 or visit <https://www.tfhd.com/wellness-neighborhood/wellness-news> for more information.

Article provided by Dana Dose, RDN, LD, CDE, Wellness Dietitian and member of the Wellness Neighborhood, Rethink Healthy Team. You can reach Dana at ddose@tfhd.com/530-550-6767.