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“Put Your Best Fork Forward” for National Nutrition Month

By Megan Mannina, Clinical Dietitian at Evans Army Community Hospital

National Nutrition Month is a great time to reflect on the diet and lifestyle choices made so far this year to determine whether they have moved you in a positive direction toward your goals. By “putting your best fork forward,” you remember that every bite counts and that even small changes over time can lead to vast improvements in health and well-being! Start by focusing on the following highlights of this year’s Nutrition Month theme.

Eat a variety. Are you getting bored with your food choices? Do you feel like you eat the same thing every day? Switch it up! Instead of your typical egg sandwich in the morning, try a breakfast burrito, (add spinach, onions, and mushrooms into your whole grain tortilla with eggs) or try hearty oatmeal with nuts and cinnamon to warm up a cold winter morning.

Cook more at home. Not only will this save money in the long run, but eating out can cause you to consume more calories, sodium, and saturated fat overall. By cooking at home, you have complete control over what goes into your food. Are you nervous to cook a new ingredient such as fish? Now is the time to try it! Make an aluminum foil tent, place the fish inside, garnish with lemon and seasonings, and bake until tender. Pair with roasted asparagus and a steaming hot baked potato (skin on) for a complete meal. The entire meal can be made in the oven at the same time!

Eat the right amount. This can be tricky if you have never counted your calories or even know how many calories are appropriate for you. Instead of stressing about calorie counting, shed excess calories by increasing vegetable intake overall. Vegetables are very low in calories, but high in fiber, which helps you feel full and satisfied. Even if your goal is weight loss, starving is never the answer. When in doubt, add more vegetables to your meal.

Exercise! There is no way to escape exercise or no magic pill that replaces it. No matter how perfect your diet, exercise is still a crucial component to

maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Exercise helps with issues such as insulin resistance, diabetes, weight gain, stress, sleep issues, and chronic pain. Start with a simple walk, most days of the week, and notice how much better you look and feel.

Consult a professional. A registered dietitian is a wonderful (and free) resource you can utilize to get on or stay on a track toward your health goals. To schedule an appointment with a dietitian, call the Nutrition Care Division at (719) 526-7290. We look forward to meeting you!