

Nutrition Communications Network



Science-Based Nutrition Messages for the Holiday Season

Late fall and early winter bring lots of focus on food with holiday celebrations and the end-of-year rush. Use the science-based nutrition messages in this guide to help fuel your social media outreach, web content, and other constituent communication during this busy season. Inside you'll find ready-to-post monthly messages with health-conscious tips, infographics, shareable resources, and a sample blog post that can be used to engage your members or followers. We encourage you to use the #NutritionFactsLabel hashtag along with the messages.

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Key Observances

National Farm to School Month

Vegetarian Awareness Month

National Apple Month

October 7: Child Health Day

October 14-18: National School Lunch Week

October 16: FAO World Food Day

October 31: Halloween

OCTOBER 2024

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If your idea of Halloween fun is a party at home, remember to "scare" bacteria away by keeping all perishable foods chilled until serving time. Don't let bacteria "creep" up on you by leaving goodies out of the fridge for more than two hours.

#FoodSafety

<https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/halloween-food-safety-tips-parents>



Growing bodies and developing brains need regular, healthy meals. Prepare healthier breakfast options children will enjoy by mixing whole-grain cereal with berries.

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/healthy-breakfasts-kids-its-all-about-balance>

This year's World Food Day shines a spotlight on food as a human right. The campaign raises awareness worldwide of the need for everyone to access various nutritious, affordable, accessible, safe, and sustainable foods. Get involved and learn how you can celebrate #WorldFoodDay2024.

<https://www.fao.org/world-food-day/take-action/en>

Help kids make informed choices in the school cafeteria by instilling healthy habits at home. Teach them how to decode the #NutritionFactsLabel and use their label-reading skills in the cafeteria line or grocery store. Equipping your kids with the tools they need to make informed decisions outside the home is a grade-A approach! #NationalSchoolLunchWeek

<https://www.fda.gov/media/89325/download?attachment>



This #VegetarianAwarenessMonth, get creative with nutrient-rich, plant-based foods packed with dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Experiment with dried, canned, or frozen vegetables already in your pantry or freezer. Use canned black beans, dried lentils, or frozen corn and peas for an easy weeknight side dish. <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/vegetables>

Fruits are packed with essential nutrients like potassium, fiber, vitamin C, and folate that many adults do not get enough of. This #NationalAppleMonth, increase your intake of nutrients that you will 'apple-solutely' enjoy and incorporate this mighty fruit into your next salad or fall chili. <https://www.fda.gov/media/135621/download>

Cutting down sodium, one bite at a time! The FDA and USDA are working together to reduce sodium in school meals. Lower sodium targets mean healthier options for kids, setting the foundation for a lifetime of good health. #SodiumSmart #SchoolLunchWeek <https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/sodium-your-diet>

Power your day with milk or fortified soy-based beverages that fit your lifestyle and meet your nutrient needs. Use the #NutritionFactsLabel to compare and choose milk and fortified soy-based beverages that are higher in protein, vitamin D, calcium, and potassium and lower in saturated fat and added sugars. <https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/using-nutrition-facts-label-choose-milk-and-plant-based-beverages>

Harvest the benefits of #FarmToSchoolMonth and encourage your kids to explore food's journey from farm to table. Teach them where food comes from through activities like planting a garden or exploring your local farmers' market for produce rich in vitamins and nutrients. <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/InteractiveNutritionFactsLabel/vitamins.cfm>



NOVEMBER

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Planning Thanksgiving dinner? When thawing your turkey, avoid using hot water and use the refrigerator, cold water, or microwave for safe thawing for a food-safe holiday meal. Now that's a "tur-key" to success! #FoodSafety

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/food-safety-tips-healthy-holidays>



Want to compare the protein content in plant-based foods to animal-based foods? Use the #NutritionFactsLabel to learn how plant-based foods like canned beans, peas, or plant-based meat alternatives can deliver the protein and nutrients your body needs. #WorldVeganDay

<https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/InteractiveNutritionFactsLabel/protein.cfm>

Fall into healthier habits this season! Elevate your dishes by choosing cooking methods like roasting, grilling, or steaming. Boost the flavor with autumn spices, fresh herbs, or a splash of citrus while keeping your saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars intake in check.

#FoodSafety

<https://www.fda.gov/media/131191/download>

Make it a habit to incorporate healthy eating habits into your everyday life, including during holiday celebrations and gatherings. Try serving a twist on your favorite dish by substituting unsweetened applesauce for butter when baking, using low-fat milk instead of cream, or experimenting with low-salt herbs and spices.

https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-04/TipSheet_29_Celebrations.pdf

Incorporate potassium-rich foods as part of a healthy eating pattern for heart, muscle, and nervous system health. Use the #NutritionFactsLabel in the grocery aisle to find products like milk, yogurt, canned beans, peas, and lentils that can help meet your Daily Value for potassium.

https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/InteractiveNutritionFactsLabel/assets/InteractiveNFL_Vitamins&Minerals_October2021.pdf

Test your food safety knowledge about ready-to-cook foods. Even if a ready-to-cook food like frozen pizza or frozen chicken looks and smells normal, it could still be contaminated with bacteria or other organisms that might make you sick since bacteria can still live at freezing temperatures. Always remember to follow the package cooking instructions for best safety and quality. #FDATips

<https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/test-your-safety-knowledge-about-ready-cook-foods>



Some foods that don't taste salty can still be high in sodium which is why using taste alone is not always an accurate way to judge a food's sodium content. Check for the Nutrition Facts label and also look for nutrient claims such as "Salt/Sodium-Free" or "Reduced Sodium" on food packages to quickly identify foods that contain less sodium. Don't get caught in a "salty" situation and make more informed choices today! #FDAFoundation

<https://www.fda.gov/media/84261/download>

Making healthier dietary choices can help you lower the risk of developing certain chronic diseases. To help monitor nutrients in your healthy eating pattern, use the #NutrientFactsLabel and look for packaged foods with a higher %DV of dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, and potassium to reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis, and high blood pressure.

https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/InteractiveNutritionFactsLabel/assets/InteractiveNFL_Vitamins&Minerals_October2021.pdf

After a holiday feast, make the most of leftovers. Smaller portions are better for snacking and safer too! Store leftovers in small containers in the fridge or freezer and use them again for lunch or an easy afternoon snack. Remember to set your fridge to 40 °F or below and freezer to 0 °F or below.

<https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/food-safety-your-kitchen#Shopping>

#DYK that type 2 diabetes most often occurs in middle-aged and older adults, but can develop at any age? Lower your risk for type 2 diabetes by eating a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, protein foods, and dairy and lower in saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars with the help of the Nutrition Facts Label. #NationalDiabetesMonth

<https://www.fda.gov/media/151823/download?attachment>

Key Observances

Worldwide Food Service Safety Month

December 1-7: National Handwashing Awareness Week

December 3: Giving Tuesday

December 31: New Year's Eve

DECEMBER

2024

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#DYK that heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States? Choose foods lower in sodium this winter like lower-sodium chicken broth and canned beans to maintain a healthy heart. #FDAFoundation

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/womens-health-topics/heart-health-women>

Give the gift of a healthier future this #GivingTuesday and share this FDA resource about the importance of understanding the #NutritionFactsLabel.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZonbBo-yg&embeds_referring_uri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fda.gov%2F&source_ve_path=MjM4N

Whether baking with packaged cookie dough or cooking ready-to-cook foods like frozen lasagna this holiday season, remember that eating these foods right out of the package without cooking them increases your risk of foodborne illness. Always follow the package cooking instructions to keep yourself and your loved ones safe and healthy.

<https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/holiday-food-safety>

Warm up with fun ways to stay active and build healthier eating habits this winter. Embrace the season by snowboarding or sledding and enjoy nutrient-rich options like whole grain oatmeal with in-season fruits or a low-sodium chicken vegetable stew after a day on the slopes.

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/knowledge-and-news-women-owh-blog/commit-healthier-version-you>





This #NationalHandwashingAwarenessWeek, keep your holiday cooking clean and safe. Don't forget to "clean" up your act by washing your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food.

<https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/safe-food-handling#:~:text=CLEAN,-Wash%20hands%20and&text=Wash%20your%20hands%20with%20warm,after%20preparing%20each%20food%20item>

Discover how to make healthier food choices with the Interactive Nutrition Facts Label quiz! Test your knowledge and compare sample food packages to identify which label is highest in dietary fiber or lowest in sodium, and see what %DV of added sugar you would consume based on different serving sizes. #FDAFoundation

<https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/interactivenutritionfactslabel/quiz/>

Feeling overwhelmed by the holiday hustle and bustle? Planning your meals in advance can make a big difference. Save time in the morning by prepping breakfast the night before. Slice peaches for a yogurt parfait or cereal, chop veggies the night before for an omelet or mix up muffin batter to refrigerate overnight. Food preparation can go a long way in helping you stay on track to meet your nutrition goals!

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/healthy-breakfasts-kids-its-all-about-balance>

#DYK that if you reduce the amount of sodium you consume, your "taste" for sodium will gradually decrease over time? Choose lower-sodium or no-salt-added snack products and light or reduced-sodium condiments, or rinse sodium-containing canned foods, such as beans, tuna, and vegetables before eating. #FDATips

<https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/sodium-your-diet>

Do you know how to interpret the serving size on the #NutritionFactsLabel? Servings per container show the total number of servings in the entire package or container, based on the amount of food typically consumed at one time. Since packages often contain more than one serving, it is important to pay attention to serving sizes as you plan your meals throughout the day! #FDAFoundation

<https://www.fda.gov/food/new-nutrition-facts-label/serving-size-new-nutrition-facts-label>

Infographics

FOOD FACTS



Safe Food Handling: *What You Need to Know*



The food supply in the United States is among the safest in the world. However, when certain disease-causing bacteria or pathogens contaminate food, they can cause foodborne illness, often called “food poisoning.” The Federal government estimates that there are about 48 million cases of foodborne illness annually – the equivalent of sickening 1 in 6 Americans each year. And each year, these illnesses result in an estimated 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths.

Know the Symptoms

Consuming dangerous foodborne bacteria will usually cause illness within 1 to 3 days of eating the contaminated food. However, sickness can also occur within 20 minutes or up to 6 weeks later. Symptoms of foodborne illness can include: vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain – and flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, and body ache.

Handle Foods Safely

Although most healthy people will recover from a foodborne illness within a short period of time, some can develop chronic, severe, or even life-threatening health problems. In addition, some people are at a higher risk for developing foodborne illness, including pregnant women, young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems (such as transplant patients and individuals with HIV/AIDS, cancer, or diabetes). To keep your family safer from food poisoning, follow these four simple steps: clean, separate, cook, and chill.

CLEAN

Wash hands and surfaces often

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets.
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item.
- Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels, launder them often in the hot cycle.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Scrub firm produce with a clean produce brush.
- With canned goods, remember to clean lids before opening.

SEPARATE

Separate raw meats from other foods

- Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags, and refrigerator.
- Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs unless the plate has been washed in hot, soapy water.
- Don't reuse marinades used on raw foods unless you bring them to a boil first.

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Sodium: Look at the Label

Over 70% of dietary sodium comes from eating packaged and prepared foods

Use the Nutrition Facts Label!

Packaged and prepared foods can contain high levels of sodium, whether or not they taste salty. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is working with the food industry to make reasonable reductions in sodium across a wide variety of foods so Americans have an easier time consuming less sodium if they want to. Even though sodium may already be in these foods, you can follow these steps to lower your daily sodium intake.

- **Limit sodium to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg)* per day for adults**—that's equal to about 1 teaspoon of table salt! Recommended limits are even lower for children under age 14.
- **Use % Daily Value (%DV)** to see if a serving of food is high or low in sodium and to compare food products. As a general guide: 5% DV or less per serving of sodium is considered low, and 20% DV or more per serving of sodium is considered high.
- **Pay attention to the serving size** and the number of servings you eat or drink to determine how much sodium you are consuming.

Choose Less Sodium

Nutrition Facts

4 servings per container
Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)

Amount per serving
Calories 240

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 4g 5%

Saturated Fat 1.5g 8%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 5mg 2%

Sodium 460mg 20%

Dietary Fiber 7g 25%

Total Sugars 4g

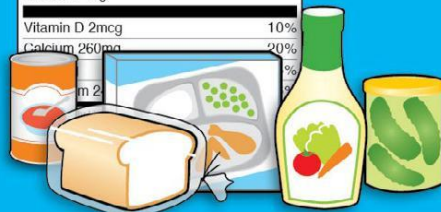
Includes 2g Added Sugars 4%

Protein 11g

Vitamin D 2mcg 10%

Calcium 260mg 20%

20% DV or more per serving is considered high!



Sodium and Health

Diets higher in sodium are associated with an increased risk of developing **high blood pressure** (also known as **hypertension**). Uncontrolled high blood pressure can raise the risk of heart attacks, heart failure, stroke, kidney disease, and blindness. Consuming less sodium can help reduce your risk of developing these health conditions.

* The Daily Value (100% DV) for sodium—reference amount not to exceed each day

Shareable Resources

- ❖ [Interactive Nutrition Facts Label](#)
- ❖ [Interactive Nutrition Facts Label Quiz](#)
- ❖ [Interactive Nutrition Facts Label: Vitamins and Minerals](#)
- ❖ [Sodium in Your Diet](#)
- ❖ [Using the Nutrition Facts Label: For Older Adults](#)
- ❖ [Halloween Food Safety Tips for Parents](#)
- ❖ [Holiday Food Safety](#)
- ❖ [MyPlate Tools](#)



Blog Post

Time-Saving Tips for Healthy Eating: Making the Most of Your Kitchen Time

Finding time in the day to prepare nutritious meals for the whole family can be particularly difficult during the holiday season. However, with a few smart strategies and some planning, you can save time in the kitchen and prepare meals the whole family will enjoy. Make the most of your kitchen preparation with only a couple of simple steps to make preparing weeknight meals a healthy habit.

Tips for Bringing Nutrition into Your Home



Plan Ahead

An important first step to making the most of your time in the kitchen is to dedicate time to plan meals for the week. Preparing recipes ahead of time will save time, money, and stress. With a plan for the week, you can reduce the number of grocery trips, enjoy dishes more than once per week, and plan to cook on the weekdays when you have the most time to prepare a meal. Dedicate time over the weekend to brainstorm recipe ideas the whole family will enjoy that incorporate a variety of food groups and cooking styles. Don't know where to start? Sit down with a cup of coffee or tea to read a new cookbook or find recipe inspiration online at [USDA's MyPlate](#). Have a busy week with friends? Invite them over for dinner and ask for their favorite weeknight dishes. Going into the week with a meal plan is a recipe for success!

Pick Smart Using the Nutrition Facts Label

The [Nutrition Facts Label](#) on the back of food and beverage packages is designed to help consumers make quick, informed decisions in the grocery store for a healthy diet. Use the label to compare added sugar, saturated fat, or sodium in foods like tortillas, cereal, or plant-based meat alternatives included on the ingredient list for your planned weekly recipes. While reviewing the label, pay attention to serving sizes and the % Daily Value to better understand the nutritional content of the foods on your grocery list. The Nutrition Facts Label can also help you compare different ingredient lists to select foods that work for you and your family's preferences and are higher in [nutrients you want to get more of](#) like dietary fiber, calcium, and vitamin D.

Prep in Abundance

Once your weekly meal plan is set and you've gathered the ingredients, it's time to cook! Take advantage of the time you've allotted to prepare the meal and cook enough food for later by doubling recipes and freezing them to use again that week or month. Chop extra vegetables like onions and peppers or cook additional batches of grains like rice or quinoa to use again

throughout the week. If you don't have enough ingredients to double the recipe, use frozen fruit or vegetables like pre-chopped onions or mixed fruit to help save on preparation time. Take advantage of every moment in the kitchen, and once your dish is cooking, wash dishes, store your extra ingredients, and clear counters. Take these small steps each time you prepare a meal to turn cooking from a chore into an enjoyable routine.

Partner with Family and Friends

Finally, involving your family and friends in meal preparation can be a fun and efficient way to save time in the kitchen and spend more time with those you love. Each week, assign age-appropriate tasks to each family member: younger children can wash vegetables and set the table, while older kids can handle chopping and cooking under supervision. If your family's busy schedule doesn't allow time to eat together regularly, you can still involve them in the meal preparation for the week. Ask your kids about their favorite foods or what global cuisine they want to explore that week.

As you prepare the meal, you can also take the opportunity to quiz family members on [safe food handling](#) practices. For example, quiz your family on the safe internal cooking temperature of poultry, fish, or shrimp or play true or false using this [food safe shopping and storage infographic](#). Involve everyone in these fun and educational activities to promote a healthier and safer kitchen environment for your family.

By planning ahead, picking smart, prepping in bulk, and partnering with loved ones, you can enjoy delicious, healthy meals with less stress and more time to spend with those you love this holiday season. Now that's a recipe for success!

