March is **National Nutrition Month**. One of the most common questions I receive from patients with diabetes is, “What can I eat!?” Many people with uncontrolled diabetes, high cholesterol, hypertension and other chronic diseases have high levels of inflammation in their bodies that occur over time when the immune system tries to repair cells. The best foods to incorporate into a healthy diet not only reduce inflammation but promote blood sugar control. Dietary carbohydrate has the greatest impact on blood sugar compared to dietary protein and fat. Our bodies need carbohydrates for cellular energy but we need to consume the right carbohydrates in the correct portions to maximize nutritional benefit and blood sugar control. Carbohydrates that support blood sugar control are naturally high in antioxidants, phytochemicals and fiber, particularly soluble fiber, which slows the absorption of glucose from food in the stomach. Combining these foods with lean proteins and heart healthy fats at each meal or snack furthers blood sugar control and chronic disease prevention. Many patients get caught up worrying about foods they need to eliminate or avoid. Instead shine attention on the foods you can eat and how to incorporate these foods into an everyday meal plan. In celebration of **National Nutrition Month**, here are four tips on what foods to incorporate into your diet to reduce inflammation and promote blood sugar control. A dietitian can help you personalize your meal plan!

**Fruits and Vegetables.** Aim for deep green, orange, yellow, red and purple. Incorporate. Replace chips and crackers for sliced cucumbers, carrots and celery; add fruit to cereal or yogurt; substitute butter head or romaine lettuce for tortilla wraps and hamburger buns; replace sour cream or cheese dips with guacamole or salsa; roast a variety of vegetables on the weekend and use for lunches and dinners throughout the week. Canned or frozen are also convenient options, make sure fruit is not canned in heavy syrup.

**Carbohydrates Rich in Soluble Fiber.** Fruits and vegetables are high in soluble fiber, but whole grains products, oats and bean/lentils and nuts are also great sources. Add whole oats to bulk-up chili, baked goods or enjoy as cereal; toss beans and lentils in salads, soups, tacos and stir-fry’s; add almonds, sunflower seeds and flaxseeds to yogurt, salads, cereals and home-made trail-mix. When reading labels at the grocery store look for items that have at least 5 grams of fiber per serving.

**Healthy Fats, Particularly Omega-3 Fatty Acids.** Fatty fish, such as salmon, have omega-3 fatty acids, which support heart health by reducing cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure. Wild salmon has more omega-3 than farmed salmon. Have tuna fish for lunch and exchange meat one night for tilapia or another white fish. Not a fan of fish? Try ground flaxseed, chia seeds, walnuts, soybeans or omega-3 fortified eggs. Other heart healthy fats include avocado, canola and olive oil and all nuts and seeds.

**Lean Meats.** Our body needs protein for rebuilding and repairing muscle, among many other functions. Consume a good source of protein with every meal and choose the leanest cuts, which contain less fat and saturated fat. Good options include; skin-less chicken, fish, turkey, venison, bison and any “loin” such as pork loin or tenderloin. If you do not consume meat other lean options include; Greek yogurt, egg and egg whites, tofu, beans/lentils, whey protein, low-fat milk and cheese, cottage cheese, nuts and seeds.

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