

# Keck Medicine Quarterly: Nutrition Edition

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A collaboration between the Clinical  
Nutrition and Food and Nutrition  
teams.

## Celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> National Nutrition Month®: Fuel for the Future

Every March we look forward to celebrating National Nutrition Month®. To honor this year's theme, we'll be highlighting different ways you can use nutrition to fuel for your day ahead and for your long-term future. Learn more about the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Nutrition Month® at [www.eatright.org/nnm](http://www.eatright.org/nnm).

### Nutrition and Healthy Aging

Nutrition plays a large and important role when it comes to healthy aging.<sup>1</sup> Let's take a moment to learn about some key nutrients that can help you fuel for the future.

#### Fiber

Fiber is found in many different foods including fruits, vegetables and whole grain products such as brown rice, whole wheat products and 100% corn products. Adequate fiber intake has been shown to have a protective effect against colon cancer.<sup>2</sup> Inadequate fiber intake can lead to uncomfortable digestive issues such as constipation and diverticulitis. Aim to have a minimum of 25-30 grams of fiber per day.<sup>2,3</sup>

#### Calcium and Vitamin D

Calcium and vitamin D play a significant role in helping to maintain bone health as we age.<sup>2</sup> Bone density typically

decreases with age. This causes an increased risk of bone fractures in the elderly population, which can limit mobility.<sup>2</sup>

The recommended intake of calcium for adults over the age of 50 is 1,200 mg per day.<sup>2</sup> Individuals may benefit from taking a 500 mg calcium supplement 1-2 times per day while also incorporating calcium-rich foods such as calcium-fortified products, milk, yogurt, cheese, almonds, canned sardines and dark leafy greens into their diet.

The vitamin D recommendation for adults over the age of 50 is 800-1,000 IU daily.<sup>2</sup> Individuals can help support adequate vitamin D levels by taking a daily 1,000 IU vitamin D supplement, incorporating vitamin D-fortified foods into their diet, and going for walks or spending more time outside with sun exposure. Learn more about another food source of vitamin D on page 3!

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Oats, a common breakfast food, are a whole grain loaded with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.



## Treat Yourself: Health Benefits of Oats in the Morning

Regularly eating a healthy breakfast not only provides vital nutrition for the day, but also has been linked to a lower risk of type 2 diabetes, obesity and heart disease.

Oats, a common breakfast food, are a whole grain loaded with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. They are also rich in fiber, particularly a type of soluble fiber called beta-glucan. A half cup of oats contains 4.5 g of dietary fiber as well as 6 g of plant-based protein.

Studies have shown many health benefits of oats. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized manufacturers to use the health claim that soluble fiber from whole oats can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

In addition, oats are shelf-stable, inexpensive and minimally processed. All of these things make oats a great part of a balanced meal.

How can you incorporate oats into your breakfast? There are many recipes that do not take much time and that don't even require cooking.

Give overnight oats a try! Simply add oats, milk of your choice and optional ingredients to a container and place in the refrigerator overnight. You can add your choice of seasonal fresh and/or frozen fruit, and even nuts for toppings. When breakfast time comes, you are ready to grab, eat and enjoy. This functional food will nourish your body and fuel your day ahead.

Check out our recipe for Strawberry Chia Crunch Overnight Oats on page 7.

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Sun-exposed mushrooms are a great option for people who want to eat more plant-based foods and fuel for the future.



## Mushrooms are Like People

Humans are not the only organisms that use sunlight to make vitamin D. Mushrooms use a similar biological process that makes them an excellent dietary source of vitamin D! When exposed to sunlight, mushrooms can convert naturally-contained ergosterol to ergocalciferol (vitamin D<sub>2</sub>). When we eat mushrooms exposed to sunlight, our bodies can use this vitamin D.<sup>1-3</sup>

### How to increase mushroom vitamin D levels at home

Find a clean space outside or by a window inside and place the mushrooms in the sun for at least 15 minutes or up to 2 hours. For more effective vitamin D conversion, slice them up before exposing to sunlight and eat within three days.<sup>2</sup> Placing the mushrooms under a UV lamp would also work on a cloudy day. One serving of mushrooms (such as 5-6 medium white button mushrooms) can provide about half of the daily recommended amount of vitamin D.<sup>1,2,4</sup> Mushrooms are a great option for people who want to eat more plant-based foods and fuel for the future. Another benefit of

getting your daily vitamin D recommendations by eating mushrooms rather than relying on exposing your skin to sunlight is to reduce chances of skin cancer and premature skin aging.

### Cooking with mushrooms

There are many different mushrooms to try including button, portabella, enoki, oyster and shiitake mushrooms. Mushrooms can contribute a “meaty” texture and flavor to foods. You can roast them, sauté them, toss them raw into a salad or mix them in with ground meat. This is a great way for those who are unsure about the taste or texture of mushrooms to get a plant-based vitamin D boost without making them the star of the dish. Kofta kebabs, albondigas, embutido and sloppy joes are some examples of ground meat dishes in which finely chopped mushrooms can be easily blended in.

When you add sunlight-exposed mushrooms to your meals you can know that you are getting an excellent source of vitamin D!

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Adequate protein intake, when paired with continued physical activity, has been shown to help maintain muscle mass and overall strength in older adults.

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### Protein

Sarcopenia is the gradual, involuntary loss of muscle mass, strength and function as we age.<sup>4</sup> Muscle mass decreases approximately 3-8% per decade after the age of 30, with rates increasing after the age of 60.<sup>4</sup> This makes it especially important to incorporate high-quality protein sources into your diet.

Examples of high-quality protein include animal proteins such as chicken, turkey, fish, eggs and lean red meats, as well as plant-based proteins such as lentils, legumes, nuts, seeds, quinoa and tofu.

Adults 65 years or older should aim to have approximately 0.45-0.57 grams of protein per pound of body weight.<sup>4,5</sup> For example, someone who is 150 pounds should aim to consume approximately 68-86 grams of high-quality protein per day.

Adequate protein intake, when paired with continued physical activity, has been shown

to help maintain muscle mass and overall strength in older adults.<sup>5</sup>

### Dietary Supplements

It is important to note that over-the-counter supplements are not closely regulated by the FDA. Always check with your registered dietitian or health care provider prior to starting a new supplement and choose reputable brands that are third-party tested.

Now that you know some of the key nutrients that play a role in healthy aging, get out there and make sure you are adequately fueling for the best possible future!

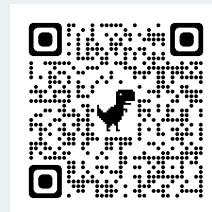
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# Recent Happenings & Coming Soon

## Join a Free, Virtual Diabetes Management Course

Do you have diabetes or prediabetes and wish to know more about living with it? Join a free 7-week virtual course offered to employees of Keck Medicine of USC beginning on March 8th. Class topics will include an overview of diabetes, nutrition, physical activity, medication management, complications and self-care. The course will be facilitated by Registered Dietitian, Brittany Gurney (see spotlight on page 6), with additional presentations from Occupational Therapy and Pharmacy. Register [at this link](#) or via the QR code today!



## Sustainability Update

Agave straws are coming soon to the Keck and Norris cafeterias. Also look out for wooden stir sticks at the coffee station, instead of plastic straws.

## Happy Registered Dietitian Day!



On March 8th, 2023, we will be celebrating Registered Dietitian/Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day! From the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, this is a day where dietitians are recognized “as the most valuable and credible source of timely scientifically-based food and nutrition information.” The dietitians at Keck Medicine of USC are proud to work alongside our phenomenal multidisciplinary colleagues as we provide evidence-based, compassionate care to our patients every day.

## National Nutrition Month® Booths on March 8th

Stop by the Keck and Norris cafeterias on March 8th between 11am-1pm for nutrition information and build-your-own trail mix stations in honor of National Nutrition Month®. Name your trail mix creation for a chance at some fun prizes!

## Payroll Deduct Coming Soon to the EVERYDAY App at Keck Hospital of USC's Cafeteria

You'll soon be able to use your payroll deduct to pay within the mobile app! Get ahead of the lines and buy online.



## Meet some of our team members!



**Brittany Gurney, MS, RD, CNSC**  
Lead Outpatient Dietitian  
Keck Medicine of USC

**How did you get into the field?**

I've been interested in nutrition, food science and many topics related to food since I can remember. Growing up around people in the medical field and educators, I was more exposed to the relationship with nutrition and well being, and it fascinated me.

**How long have you been on our team?** Since 2017. I was a clinical dietitian prior for about 4 years.

**What's your favorite dish to make?** I really enjoy baking — I'd say making cakes and cookies are my favorite. But I also enjoy making soups and roasts.

**What are your hobbies outside of work?** I really enjoy running, watching my kids be involved in their sports and activities, traveling and camping.



**Robin Machorro**  
Nutrition Assistant  
Keck Hospital of USC

**How did you get into the field?**

I got into the field by a family friend who works at Keck Hospital.

**How long have you been on our team?** I have been working here for 9 years.

**What's your favorite dish to make?** My favorite dish to make would have to be chicken teriyaki and steamed rice with broccoli.

**What are your hobbies outside of work?** Makeup, reading astrology books, going on random road trips and, of course, music!



**Minh Callado**  
Supervisor  
USC Norris Cancer Hospital

**How did you get into the field?**

I wanted to learn about nutrition and also liked to cook.

**How long have you been on our team?** I have been a part of the Food and Nutrition team at Norris for 9 years. Before this, I worked for 19 years in USC's Clinical Research Center.

**What's your favorite dish to make?** My favorite is flan.

**What are your hobbies outside of work?** Traveling and cooking.

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# Strawberry Chia Crunch Overnight Oats

From Sodexo

Yield: 6 servings

## Ingredients

*For the almond oatmeal base:*

- ½ cup vanilla yogurt
- 3 ½ tablespoons almond milk, unsweetened
- 5 ¼ tablespoons oats

*For the almond chia pudding:*

- 1 ¼ cup almond milk, unsweetened
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 5 tablespoons chia seeds

*For toppings:*

- ⅓ cup strawberries, diced
- 2 tablespoons granola

## Directions

1 To make the almond oatmeal base, add yogurt and almond milk in a small bowl. Whisk to combine. Add oats to the bowl and mix well to completely cover the oats with the almond milk and yogurt. Set aside in the fridge and allow the oats to soak for 6 to 18 hours.

2 To make the almond chia pudding, add almond milk and honey in a small bowl. Whisk to combine. Mix in chia seeds and set aside for 30 minutes in the fridge. After 30 minutes, stir mixture again and set aside in the fridge again to soak for at least 6 hours or overnight.

3 After the oatmeal base and chia pudding are ready to be used, combine both into a medium bowl.

4 Evenly portion out the mixture into six serving bowls (approximately 5 ounces each). Top with 1 tablespoon of strawberries and 1 teaspoon of granola.

5 Serve immediately for best taste, or cover and store in the fridge.

**NUTRITION PER SERVING:** 100 calories, 14g carbohydrates, 3g protein, 4g fat, 60mg sodium, 4g fiber

Other great overnight oat recipes to try:  
[Overnight Oatmeal with Berries](#)  
[Pumpkin & Chia Overnight Oats](#)

