

National Nutrition Month Toolkit

March is National Nutrition Month!

During National Nutrition Month, the National Pasta Association and Share the Pasta are committed to amplifying the message of the benefits of pasta, including its nutritional value and versatility with various nutritious foods.

Share the Pasta will be sharing content throughout the month of March as it relates to nutrition information, healthy pasta meals, Mediterranean Diet information, pasta research, and more.

Looking for a Share the Pasta resource that's not included in the below? Reach out to Danielle Meyer at DMeyer@kellencompany.com!

Pasta Nutrition Blog and Tip Sheet

New Pasta Research Blog:

NEW RESEARCH FINDS THAT PEOPLE WHO EAT PASTA HAVE BETTER OVERALL QUALITY DIETS THAN THOSE WHO DON'T

Good news for pasta eaters! New research published in *Frontiers in Nutrition* this month, analyzing the diets of adults and children who eat pasta, has revealed good news about one of America's favorite foods. The research found that pasta consumption in both children and adults is associated with a better diet quality and better nutrient intakes than that of those adults and children who do not eat pasta. Furthermore, when evaluating weight parameters, no associations were observed in male adults and children. In adult women however, pasta-eaters showed a beneficial weight-related outcome. Pasta consumption in adult females was associated with reduced waist circumference, body weight and body mass index (BMI).

The research, "[Pasta Consumption is Linked to Greater Nutrient Intakes and Improved Diet Quality in American Children and Adults, and Beneficial Weight-Related Outcomes Only in Adult Females](#)" was conducted by Nutritional Strategies, Inc. on behalf of the National Pasta Association. The study examined associations between pasta consumption, shortfall nutrient intakes as defined by the 2015 Dietary Guidelines (2015 DG) and diet quality in comparison to non-pasta consumption in the U.S. population (children (ages 2-18) and adults (> 19 years). Pasta consumption was defined as all dry domestic and imported pasta/noodle varieties made with only wheat and no egg. From the analysis, researchers identified a number of key positive nutritional dietary patterns associated with those who eat pasta as part of their diet compared to those who don't eat pasta. They are:

- **Better overall diet quality (as measured by USDA's Healthy Eating Index-2010 scale)**
- **Greater intake of key shortfall nutrients**
 - **In adults these were: folate, iron, magnesium, and dietary fiber**

- **In children these were: folate, iron, magnesium, dietary fiber and vitamin E**
- **Lower daily intakes**
 - **Saturated fat and added sugars in adults**
 - **Saturated fat and total fat in children**
- **No differences were seen in total daily calories and sodium intake.**
- **No significant associations were seen with body weight, waist circumference and body mass index in children and adult males. In adult women (19 -50 years), pasta eating was associated with lower body weight and waist circumference.**

Pasta is a convenient, nutritious, easy-to-prepare meal for both young and old and pleases even the pickiest of eaters. It has long been celebrated as one of America's favorite foods and is advocated by nutritionists for its good nutrition.

"Pasta can be an effective building block for good nutrition throughout the lifecycle, as it serves as a perfect delivery system for fruits, vegetables, lean meats, fish and legumes," explains registered dietitian Diane Welland, Director of Nutrition Communications for the National Pasta Association. "Think of pasta as a canvas from which you can add almost any nutrient-dense, fiber-rich food you and your family like, to create memorable and delicious meals. This analysis underscores the nutritional importance of grains, such as pasta, as consistent with a healthy diet. It shows that pasta eaters have better quality diets than those who don't eat pasta."

Pasta Nutrition Tip Sheet

- The 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend consuming 45% to 65% of your total calories from carbohydrates.
- Pasta, a staple of the [Mediterranean Diet](#), is an excellent source of complex carbohydrates.
- Complex carbohydrates are the main source of energy for the body and are released slowly and steadily through the day.
- Pasta is a fat-free, low sodium food.
- A two-ounce serving of pasta is equivalent to one cup of cooked pasta. One cup of cooked pasta contains just 200 calories, in addition to valuable fiber, vitamins and minerals.
- Pasta has a low glycemic index (GI), which means it does not cause sugar in the blood to rise quickly. Thus foods with a low GI have a slower rate of digestion.

- The USDA Dietary Guidelines recommend that up to half of your intake of total grains come from whole grains.
- Pasta eaters have better quality diets than people who don't eat pasta. [New research](#) shows pasta consumption in both children and adults is associated with a better diet quality and better nutrient intakes than that of those adults and children who do not eat pasta.
- Pasta doesn't make you fat. [New research](#) shows pasta consumption was not associated with weight gain in male adults and children and in adult females was associated with reduced waist circumference, body weight and body mass index (BMI).
- White pasta is fortified with three major B vitamins (niacin, thiamin and riboflavin), iron and the B vitamin folic acid, which is critical in the prevention of some birth defects. In fact, enriched pasta contains six times more folic acid as its whole grain counterpart.
- Combine ½ cup of cooked pasta with ½ cup of cooked vegetables and ½ cup of beans or 3 oz of a lean protein and ¼ cup of your favorite sauce for a quick, easy, healthy pasta meal.
- The USDA Dietary Guidelines recommend that up to half of your intake of total grains come from whole grains.
- Whole grain pasta is higher in fiber and certain micronutrients than enriched pasta. It is also slightly lower in carbohydrates and calories than enriched pasta.
- Whole grain pasta can be made from whole wheat, brown rice, kamut, quinoa or any other whole grain.
- For healthy adults, the greatest health benefits come from consuming approximately one three-ounce serving of whole grains daily (or three one-ounce servings).

Find more nutrition information and facts at these helpful resources:

<https://sharethepasta.org/pasta-nutrition/the-truth-about-carbs/>

<https://sharethepasta.org/pasta-101/types-of-pasta/>

<https://sharethepasta.org/pasta-nutrition/the-mediterranean-diet/>

<https://sharethepasta.org/cooking-pasta/tips/portion-sizes/>

<https://sharethepasta.org/pasta-nutrition/pasta-and-your-weight/>

Social Posts and Graphics

Sample Social Media Posts:

- March is National Nutrition Month and pasta is the perfect addition to a healthy diet. Consider adding a load of fresh veggies to your next pasta meal and you are all set. Try this Lemon-Garlic Pasta with Asparagus: <http://bit.ly/3rMuK9c> #NationalNutritionMonth
- Here's a pasta nutrition fact in honor of #NationalNutritionMonth: Carbs are not a bad thing! In fact, your brain needs 130 grams a day of carbs to function properly. Plus, these nutrients produce serotonin, which helps to balance your emotions. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/3aUi7BT>
- Did you know? Collectively, the U.S. consumes 5.95 billion pounds of pasta per year. #NationalNutritionMonth
- Pasta tastes great and is healthy for you too! Read the latest pasta research which details how pasta eaters have a better diet quality than non-pasta eaters: <http://bit.ly/37vufZk/> #NationalNutritionMonth
- Pasta is a great option for vegetarian diets! Whip up this Vegetable and Herb Lasagna for dinner tonight to enjoy the flavors of eggplant and zucchini and feel great about what you're eating too! <https://bit.ly/2NuyqWP> #NationalNutritionMonth
- Looking for a vegan and dairy-free pasta meal to fit into your dietary needs? No problem – pasta is versatile! Enjoy this dairy-free penne alla vodka. <https://bit.ly/3qb1R5R> #NationalNutritionMonth
- #NationalNutritionMonth pasta fact: One cup of cooked pasta contains under 200 calories, in addition to fiber, vitamins and minerals. It also fills you up so you don't feel hungry while trying to lose weight. Learn more about pasta's low glycemic index and what that means for weight loss and maintenance: <http://bit.ly/2Zev0KJ>
- Pasta can be the perfect option for a healthy snack! Try these Pastina Pasta, Lemon and Dill Stuffed Cucumber Cups the next time you go to reach for the chips or cookies. <http://bit.ly/3rHh2UU> #NationalNutritionMonth
- The Mediterranean Diet is characterized by various plant-based foods, including fruits, vegetables, lentils, nuts, and yes, pasta! There are many health benefits associated with the Mediterranean Diet, including reduced risk of death from heart disease and cancer, and pasta serves as the perfect staple in it! Learn more: <http://bit.ly/3p9DmVr> #NationalNutritionMonth

Social posting tips:

- Be sure to use #NationalNutritionMonth in all relevant posts throughout the month of March.

- For Instagram, feel free to utilize other relevant hashtags like #pasta, #pastarecipe, #MediterraneanDiet #carbs #healthyrecipe, #noodles, #pastameal and #SharethePasta
- Note several other days in March are “National Food Days” that you can tie National Nutrition Month posts into. These include:
 - March 9: National Meatball Day
 - March 11: National “Eat Your Noodles” Day
 - March 13: National Chicken Noodle Soup Day
 - March 20: National Ravioli Day
- Feel free to use Share the Pasta’s recipes or substitute your own company’s recipes wherever you see fit.
- Tag @SharethePasta in your posts and NPA staff will re-share posts on Share the Pasta’s channels.

Healthy Recipes – [Images available here](#)

- [Healthy Stuffed Shells](#)
- [Kale and Asparagus Shrimp Scampi](#)
- [Lemony Grilled Calamari Ziti](#)
- [Healthy Chicken Parmigiana](#)
- [Linguine with Shrimp](#)
- [Warm Moroccan Spiced Couscous Salad](#)
- [Mushroom and Kale Pesto Pasta with Toasted Hazelnuts](#)
- [Sesame Noodles with Tofu and Vegetables](#)
- [All other recipes available on SharethePasta.org](#)

[Social Graphics – to download and share](#)

[Share the Pasta FAQ page](#)

Why Eating Pasta is Good for You Infographic:

- [Blog on Share the Pasta website](#)
- [Document to download and share](#)

National Pasta Month Template Press Release

Enjoy National Nutrition Month with Increased Consumption of Pasta and Whole Grains

The new 2020-2025 US Dietary Guidelines recommend making at least half of grain intake whole grains and pasta is the perfect way to do so.

[Insert City/State] – In December 2020, the USDA released the [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) (DGA). The guidelines are science-based recommendations designed to encourage Americans of all ages – birth to older age — to choose healthy dietary patterns that promote health and prevent disease. These guidelines come in handy during National Nutrition Month in March as [Insert Company Name] and [Share the Pasta](#) highlight the health benefits of grains and pasta.

Along with the importance of whole grains, the dietary guidelines highlight four overarching themes:

1. *Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage.*
2. *Customize and enjoy nutrient-dense food and beverage choices to reflect personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budgetary considerations.*
3. *Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages and stay within calorie limits.*
4. *Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages.*

When it comes to grain foods, the guidelines recommend making at least half of your grain intake whole grains. Whether whole grain or not, pasta is a healthy food that remains an important part of a wholesome nutritious diet and can easily fit into a healthy diet. In fact, pasta is cited in all three of the healthy dietary patterns mentioned in the guidelines – the US Healthy style, the Mediterranean-style and the Vegetarian-style diet.

Pasta also provides the perfect vehicle for helping you improve your diet while still enjoying every bite. Combining pasta with nutrient-dense foods like vegetables, beans and legumes, lean meats and low-fat cheeses is an excellent way to increase intake of these healthy foods. Consider healthy recipes from Share the Pasta like [Chicken Pasta Power Bowls with Avocado Dressing](#), [Lemon Garlic Pasta with Grilled Veggies](#) or [Vegetarian Pho](#) – the possibilities are endless. The new Dietary Guidelines recommend selecting healthy foods that you love, are good for you, and can also be easily incorporated into your everyday diet. What better way to do this than with pasta!

If you're looking for creative pasta recipes or more pasta nutrition to fit in your day-to-day life, visit www.sharethepasta.org and [Insert company website]. Share the recipes you create this month by using #NationalNutritionMonth and #SharethePasta.



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About the National Pasta Association (NPA):

NPA is the leading trade association for the U.S. pasta industry. NPA encourages the consumption of pasta by being the center of knowledge and promoting sound public policy to the consumer, the industry and the regulatory bodies because a sustainable pasta industry is vital to healthy diets.

www.sharethepasta.org

[Insert company boiler plate]

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