

Cooperative Extension

Can Social Media Impact Our Nutritional Habits?

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The way of the world is social media and today there is no question of whether or not people are going to use social media, it's a question of what types of social media one will use. There are many different forms of social media used by businesses, government and the general public. Parents want the best health for their children and having the ability to access some form of social media may promote better nutritional habits and overall health.

Today social media is the common way of giving and receiving information. In fact, in 2013 it has been reported that 1 in 4 people worldwide used social media. The total number of people using social networks increased from 1.47 billion in 2012 to 1.73 billion in 2013, which is an 18% increase. It is also predicted that by the year 2017, the global social network audience will total 2.55 billion people with the leading social network being Facebook with a reported 1.1 billion registered users. Twitter sits 5th in the rankings with 232 million registered users. There are many others as well. These statistics provide insight as to how many people are using various types of social media.



Social media can be used for personal communication and general information. Businesses, government and schools also use it for marketing, education and communication. This type of access affords consumers up-to-date information and allows individuals to browse sites anytime of the day or night worldwide.

Have you ever found yourself aimlessly looking through Pinterest to plan your next meal or to find the next weight loss diet? Statistics show, that 89 minutes per month are spent on Pinterest compared to that of 21 minutes spent on Twitter, 17 minutes on LinkedIn, and 3 minutes on Google. According to these statistics, it is likely that sites such as, Pinterest, Twitter and LinkedIn can sway attitudes, beliefs and habits. But, is the information reliable?

Knowing where to access accurate, science-based information is key to having a healthy lifestyle. Not all nutrition information found on blogs is accurate, giving the consumer science-based nutrition advice, which may lead to inaccurate or misleading information. It is important for consumers to understand nutritional science based on evidence, such as the information distributed by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics or the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Try using government social media sites, such as the USDA website which includes Supertracker and Choose MyPlate to plan healthy meals or plan for weight loss. Science-based social media sites will provide



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Need to Lose Weight? There's a (FREE) App for That!

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It is no secret that a large number of Americans suffer with being overweight or obese. The complex relationship of a person's behavior, the environment, and an individual's genes all play a role in how much a person weighs. Along with other factors, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) puts the concept simply- an overall energy imbalance may cause a person to be overweight or obese. In other words, it can be a result of eating too much food while not burning enough energy with physical activity or exercise. Within the technologically driven and advanced society of the United States, there are thousands of apps to aid any interested consumer with weight loss. The apps help the users keep track of what they eat every day and many have options to add in exercise. However not all apps are created equal! Here is a list of some of the top-rated weight loss apps (available for both iPhone and Android users) that keep the users accountable for the food they eat and the exercise they complete. Though many of the apps are similar, it all comes down to trying a few of them out and deciding which one is the easiest to use and which one has been reviewed by a registered dietitian (RD)!

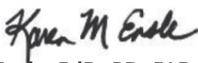
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MyFitness Pal

This app is a "community based" calorie counter and allows the user to keep track of which foods are eaten throughout the day along with the exercise they complete. You can communicate with other users as a form of support. It has a scanning option to log the food with a barcode and a large database with nutrition information.

**has been reviewed by an RD from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics with a rating of 4.5 stars.*



MyNetDiary

This app is very similar to MyFitness Pal and other calorie counter apps. As a user you enter your personal information to receive a specific calorie limit to lose weight, gain weight or maintain your weight. It helps you see the progress you are making in charts and uses your set calorie goals to motivate you.

**has been reviewed by an RD from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics with a rating of 3 stars*



eaTipster

This app is useful if you are just trying to make small changes in your daily behaviors. Rather than entering all the food you eat, this app has a new "healthy eating tip" once every day with suggestions of how you can make it work for you. It was created by the Dietitians of Canada so you can feel confident the tips are provided by nutrition experts!

**has been reviewed by an RD from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics with a rating of 4.5 stars.*



Lose it!

This app lets you log in and keep track of all the food you eat throughout the day. It has a large database and allows you to scan any food label bar code. It is easy to use and is similar to other apps such as MyFitnessPal and MyNetDiary.

**has been reviewed by an RD from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics with a rating of 3 stars*



Picrition

This app allows you to snap a photo of the foods you eat throughout the day and write a one line description of the food. It does not have a database that gives the amount of calories in the food, but it does help you keep track of what you eat by allowing you to see all of your meals and snacks. Other users on the app can then give the food you ate a rating- "bad, ok, or good"- and based on that you can gain points for the day. Be advised that the "health conscious community" rating your food does not necessarily have nutrition credentials.

Hydration: Quick tips to stay healthy in the heat!

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No matter where you go, it is not uncommon to see Americans carrying a bottle of water. Water is the second most popular drink after soda. Most of us don't really think of water as a nutrient, when we really should. Without it, there would be disastrous effects on our body and mind. Water is essential to so many of our bodily fluids that include digestion, absorption, circulation, and transportation of nutrients along with maintenance of body temperature.

Hydration is very important to our bodies- we are about 70% water, you know! From vigorous exercisers to occasional sunbathers, it is important to drink plenty of fluids, especially water, to stay healthy throughout the warmer months. Don't forget, it is important to drink even when you are in the water. Whether at the beach or in the pool, you may not feel like you are sweating because you're already wet. This is an important time to remember to re-hydrate! Dehydration can occur when people become more physically active, and often times they are not sweating excessively or it is not particularly hot out. Before beginning activity or entering the heat, it is important to start off well-hydrated with about 8-20 ounces, and to keep replacing fluids throughout the day. Listed below are six tips to stay well hydrated as the weather heats up:

- **1-2-3, drink till you pee!** That's right; urine color is a great indicator of hydration status. Try to use the bathroom not only when you first wake up, but again before leaving your home for activity. Pale yellow or clear urine is indicative of good hydration.
- **During physical activity,** try drinking 16-24 ounces per hour.
- **Replace the amount you sweat.** For every pound lost when sweating, drink 16-24 ounces of fluid.
- **For those participating in moderate to intense physical activity for an hour or longer,** a sports drink may be a good option. Sports drinks contain carbohydrates as well as electrolytes which are depleted during long periods of activity.
- **If water isn't your drink of choice,** try seltzer water or fresh brewed iced tea in place of sugary sodas or juices. Both options contain 0 calories and no sugar. Need some flavor? Add a little splash of your favorite juice or sports drink to plain seltzer for flavorful fizz, or fresh-squeezed lemon to unsweetened iced tea.
- **You don't only have to drink your fluids-** they can be eaten, too! Try snacking on foods like grapefruit (90% water), broccoli (89% water), low-fat yogurt (85% water), and watermelon (91% water). These delicious foods can aid in hydration goals as well as provide our bodies with important vitamins and nutrients.

In your efforts to remain hydrated in the warmer months, be aware of the potential warning signs of dehydration. Some signs are more obvious than others, but it is important to recognize and prevent dehydration before it occurs.

Remember- when in doubt, drink it down! Staying adequately hydrated is key to a healthy and fun spring and summer. Choose healthy hydration options like water, sports drinks, seltzer water, unsweetened iced tea- even some tasty foods! Avoid drinks high in sugar, like sodas and juices.

file:///C:/Users/training/Downloads/NFS_Exercise_Hydration.pdf
<http://www.eatright.org/public/slideshow.aspx?id=6442470873&terms=summer%20hydration#4>
<http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=7084>

Some of the earliest signs of dehydration include:

- Feeling thirsty
- Pale or reddened skin
- Feeling tired in a short period of time
- Increased pulse and respiratory rate
- Increased body temperature
- Decreased ability to perform
- Activity feeling more difficult than it really is

Later signs of dehydration include:

- Dizziness
- Increased weakness
- Very labored breathing
- Feeling of faintness



Helpful hint!
One gulp= 1 ounce

Shades of Green

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Leafy green vegetables are popular in salads, but there are so many other ways to enjoy them! They can be roasted in the oven to make a crispy snack. Use them to boost the flavor of soups, omelets, and pasta dishes. Think about tossing them in your next smoothie or stir fry. Or, sauté them with garlic and oil—just add a can of drained cannellini beans and you have a one-dish meal ready in minutes. You can even add greens to sauces for a great color pop!

Food markets are offering an ever-growing array of greens. Jazz up your meals by trying new ones—have you ever had beet greens, radish greens, or dandelion leaves? Use this guide to build “green up” your knowledge—then choose one to try this week. When you are ready to prepare them, it always is a good idea to wash them to remove any residual soil and debris.

As you are savoring them, think about how delicious they are and how much they are doing for your health. Dark leafy greens are rich in B vitamins, vitamins A, K, and C as well as iron and fiber— a great bang for your nutritional buck. Enjoy!

Leafy Green		Quick Facts and Flavors
	Spinach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet green with earthy undertones. • Try adding spinach to a smoothie, stir-fry, or pizza, or try puréeing it and then adding it to a sauce like mac and cheese.
	Chard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild flavor. • Try grilling or sautéing with your favorite spices. • Chard comes in a wide variety of colors— try Rainbow Chard to add a splash of color to your meal!
	Beet Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet and slightly tangy green. • Try adding puréed beet greens to soups for a silky addition. • They make a great addition to omelets and pasta!
	Kale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zesty in flavor and holds up well to cooking. • Try making kale chips by tossing leaves lighting in oil and seasonings and roasting in the oven until crisp, or try adding it to soups for extra texture and flavor!
	Arugula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zippy peppery flavor. • Try it in a salad, on a pizza, or with a soft cheese such as Montrachet or Feta. • It has a small thin leaf, which leaves little preparation for you; just wash them and you are good to go!
	Radish Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mild peppery flavor. • Tame their slightly rough texture by adding them to soup or sautéing with garlic and hot pepper flakes.
	Mustard Greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spicy flavor with a bite. • Try adding mustard greens to soups or serving them in a salad. • Adding some acidity to these greens reduces their bite— try a splash of vinegar or squeeze of lemon juice.

Follow the “Rule of Three”

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People make hundreds of decisions, large and small, every day. Many involve our health and personal finances. On the health side, we decide what and when to eat, how much sleep to get, and whether to engage in recommended amounts of physical activity. On the personal finance side, we make countless spending decisions as well as decisions about the mode of payment (e.g., cash, debit card, and credit card). Other financial decisions include how much money to save and invest, where to save and invest, hiring a tax preparer (or not), and the purchase of insurance, financial planning, and legal services.

Small routine decisions normally require little thought, especially if they are made frequently and/or involve nominal amounts of money. Examples include buying the same brand of 2% milk each week at the supermarket or having 5% of your weekly pay set aside automatically in a 401(k) retirement savings plan. When we purchase the same products or automate investment deposits, no additional decision-making is needed. We can simply “set it and forget it.”

At other times, however, we make major decisions involving our health and finances. Examples include choosing a hospital and/or doctors to address a major medical condition (e.g., breast cancer), selecting contractors for home improvements, and picking 401(k) plan mutual funds. In cases like these, where we have little prior decision-making experience and large sums of money are on the line, it pays to do some research and compare several alternatives.

The “**Rule of Three**” is an easy tool for making major health and financial decisions. It gets its name because you, literally, establish a personal rule to always compare at least three different products or service providers for “big ticket” items. When doing a “Rule of Three” comparison, price should not be the only consideration, however. Other key factors include a product or service provider’s experience, product or service features, convenience, comments and referrals from other people, courtesy provided by salespeople, and a vendor’s consumer complaint history. Taken together, along with cost estimates, all of this information can inform a wise purchasing decision.

Here is an example. Last year, I decided to replace all the windows in my house. Following the “Rule of Three,” I obtained three price quotes. The first quote was almost \$8,000 higher than the third quote and the salesperson was pushy. Online reviews of the first vendor were also poor. Vendor #2 was priced in the middle of the three but the cost estimates were not clearly explained. It also had average ratings. Vendor #3 clearly explained its pricing methodology and had the lowest price quote, highest ratings, best product, and a pleasant salesperson. It was an easy decision. Had I stopped with Vendor #1, I could have spent far more than I needed to.



The next time you make a big decision that affects your health and/or finances, follow the “**Rule of Three.**”

First, identify comparable products or services from at least three different sources (e.g., online or at stores).

Second, determine the most important features that you are looking for in a purchase.

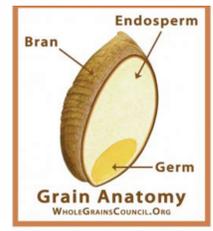
Third, compare the key features of competing vendors.

Lastly, determine which product or service is best for you based on the “Rule of Three” comparison. A worksheet for recording product or service features can be downloaded from <http://www.slideshare.net/BarbaraONeill/rule-of-three-worksheet-for-comparison-shopping>. When it comes to making “big ticket” purchases, knowledge is power! Follow the “Rule of Three” to make wise decisions.



Use your Brain, Choose Whole Grains

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What are grains? The grain food group is made up of two subgroups; whole grains and refined grains. So what makes them different? Whole grains contain 100% of the grain kernel meaning all of the bran, germ and endosperm with all the naturally occurring nutrients. On the other hand, refined grains have had the bran and germ removed. Although this process called milling extends the shelf life of the food product, it also removes dietary fiber, iron and many other vitamins that are beneficial to one's health. Often, refined grains are enriched, adding B vitamins and iron back into the product after processing.

But why are these vitamins and minerals so important? B vitamins including thiamin, riboflavin and niacin are essential for metabolism and a healthy nervous system. The B-vitamin folate, helps the body form red blood cells. Folate is especially important before and during pregnancy to reduce the risk of neural tube defects and spina bifida during the earliest stages of fetal development. In fact, it is recommended that all women of childbearing age take a 0.4 mg. folate supplement daily (which is labeled as folic acid in vitamin supplements) since the effects of folate deficiency occur in the earliest days and weeks of fetal development. This is even before a woman knows she is pregnant. Minerals such as iron, magnesium and selenium are also added back into refined grains. Iron is used in the body to carry oxygen in the blood while magnesium is used in building bones and releasing energy from muscle. Finally, selenium protects cells and supports a healthy immune system.

Whole grains are beneficial to our health because of their naturally occurring B vitamins and minerals discussed above plus their source of fiber. Fiber is a key component of a healthy diet that may help lower blood cholesterol levels, help reduce the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and obesity due to its ability to aid in weight maintenance and weight loss. In addition, fiber provides a feeling of fullness and allows for proper bowel functioning, reducing the possibility of constipation.

How do you know if a food product is a whole grain?

One way to identify a whole grain food product is by reading the ingredients on the package. If the first ingredient listed contains the word "whole", for example "whole wheat flour", then it is a whole grain. Another way to identify whole grains is by looking for the Whole Grain Stamp. The Whole Grain Stamp was created by the Whole Grains Council and has been rapidly spreading throughout the food product industry. The stamp makes it easy to identify the amount of whole grains in the product and whether or not the product is 100% whole grain which means all of its grain ingredients are whole grains. If a product bears the Basic Stamp, it contains at least 8g, the equivalent of a half serving of whole grain, but may also contain some refined grain.

Tips to Add Whole Grains in Your Diet:

- Substitute white bread or white rice with whole grain or whole wheat bread or brown rice.
- Replace sugary cold cereals with oatmeal or other whole grain cereals.
- Try 100% Whole Grain crackers or popcorn for snacks.
- Choose granola bars made with whole grains or look for food products with the Whole Grain Stamp.
- When cooking use whole wheat bread crumbs.
- Substitute white flour with whole wheat flours when making cookies, muffins pancakes or waffles.
- Watch out for misleading food labels that do not indicate whole grain products but use the words "multi-grain", "100% wheat", "12 grain" or "bran".

Whole Grains

- Oatmeal
- Brown Rice
- Whole Wheat Flour
- Quinoa
- Whole Wheat Cereal Flakes
- Popcorn
- Millet
- Buckwheat
- Bulgur
- Amaranth
- Whole Grain Barley
- Whole Rye
- Whole Wheat bread
- Whole Wheat pasta
- Wild Rice
- Whole Wheat Tortillas or Pitas
- Farro

Refined Grains

- White bread
- White flour
- White rice
- Cornbread
- Corn tortillas
- Grits
- Pretzels
- Noodles
- Pasta
- Corn Flakes
- Plain Bagels
- Crumb Cakes
- Chocolate Chip Muffins

Nutrition Navigation 101

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In this day and age the Internet is full of nutrition and health information that is easily accessible from virtually any electronic device. Some of this information is good and some of it is blatantly misleading and questionable. Therefore you should always use your best judgment when reading information on the web. When searching for reliable health and nutrition information, ask yourself the following questions:

- **Who or what organization is providing the information?** For example, is it a governmental agency, academic institution, not-for-profit organization, or a privately owned company?
- **Is the source reputable?** In general, website addresses ending in “.org” are sponsored by not-for-profit organizations; those ending in “.gov” are sponsored by governmental agencies; and those ending in “.edu” are sponsored by academic institutions. Most not-for-profit and governmental web sites do not contain advertising and access to the site is usually free.
- **Is the information provided based on facts or biased by an individual opinion?** In other words, is the information or health claim backed up by scientific evidence?
- **Is the organization or author trying to sell you a product?** In general, the primary purpose of many “.com” sites is marketing or selling a product or service.
- **How long ago was the information posted?** For many subjects, including nutrition, you need current information. The publication date allows you to judge, if the provided information is up-to-date.
- **Has anyone reviewed the information, for example, a Registered Dietitian or medical expert?**
- **Does it simply sound too good to be true?** And if so, it probably is.

To get you started, we put together a roundup of several reliable, accurate, and research-based websites that provide nutrition information for consumers. Some links are more informative and others are fun and resourceful.

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics www.eatright.org The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics helps you find accurate information to support your healthful lifestyle. The website also provides the “find a registered dietitian” service.

Kids Eat Right: <http://www.eatright.org/kids/> Scientifically-based health and nutrition information you can trust to help your child grow healthy.

Fruits and Veggies More Matters: <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/> This website offers expert advice, nutrition and storage information, shopping tips, healthy menus and recipes as well as ways to save money using fruits and veggies.

USDA Food & Nutrition Information Center: <https://fnic.nal.usda.gov/> This website provides credible, accurate, and practical resources for nutrition and health professionals, educators, government personnel and consumers.

ChooseMyPlate: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> ChooseMyPlate website provides the public, particularly school children, with the practical ‘how-tos’ to put the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendations of getting more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy foods into their own diets.

Nutrition: <http://www.nutrition.gov/> This source provides online access to government information on foods and nutrition for consumers.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/index.html> This website provides a wide spectrum of nutrition and health related topics.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010: <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAs2010-PolicyDocument.htm> This publication provides evidence-based nutrition information and advice for people age 2 and older. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans serve as the basis for Federal food and nutrition education programs.

Harvard School of Public Health – The Nutrition Source: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/> This source provides evidence-based diet & nutrition information for clinicians, health professionals and the public.

Mayo Clinic Nutrition & Healthy Eating: <http://www.mayoclinic.org> This website offers nutrition basics and advice based on the latest research findings.

American Heart Association: www.heart.org This website provides information for patients, caregivers, volunteers, consumers and healthcare professionals as part of the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association’s mission to help reduce disability and death from heart disease and stroke.

American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org/ This website provides objective and credible information on diabetes management and prevention.

American Institute for Cancer Research: www.aicr.org This source provides free information to help cancer patients and their caregivers understand cancer treatment options, and find the resources available to help overcome this disease.



information that is reliable and not just an individual's opinion. There are many blogs, tweets and website exchanges within social media types that are not from the research base and should be questioned by consumers who want quick information. The media type may be innovative, BUT not reliable. Make sure the author(s) have the appropriate education and qualifications to share information on apps, blogs and websites. If social media does not meet these requirements, then search for sites or apps that can be considered peer-reviewed and accurate. Social media needs to be more than just quick and efficient.



SuperTracker



Promoting Science Based Nutritional Advice

Choose *MyPlate* and *Supertracker*, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), www.choosemyplate.gov; *The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, www.eatright.org and the *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed)* <http://snap.nal.usda.gov/>