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March Is National Nutrition Month

“Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day” is the theme of this year’s National Nutrition Month celebrated in March across America from home kitchens and school cafeterias to office building cafés and fine-dining restaurants. Sponsored annually by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, National Nutrition Month is an education and information campaign that stresses the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound physical exercise habits. This year’s “Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day” theme encourages the personal food preferences and healthy eating styles of people with diverse lifestyle, cultural and ethnic traditions.

Formerly the American Dietetic Association, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals dedicated to helping people enjoy healthy lives through their daily diets. The group’s website, www.eatright.org, offers the public free facts and tips about childhood obesity, healthy weight loss, nutrition for life, disease management and prevention, food safety, holiday nutrition, and a variety of other food and nutrition topics.

“We all owe it to ourselves at any age to fuel our minds and bodies with the best nutrition possible,” said Gene Lennon, Owner, Right at Home Santa Clara County. “In our work with seniors, we find that many elderly rely on microwavable, convenience foods that often contain extra fats, sugar and salt that complicate existing health conditions. Eating right doesn’t need to be complicated or expensive. Sometimes only a few adjustments are needed.”

To help people think about what goes on their plate or in a cup or bowl, the U.S. Department of Agriculture presents the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* with the five food groups that comprise a healthy diet. Online at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov, people can access dozens of resources for healthy eating, plus nutrition tips, sample menus and recipes. The MyPlate site also helps you determine how many calories you need each day and gives this example for people over age 51:

| Calories Per Day For: | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Activity Level | Women Aged 51+ | Men Aged 51+ |
| Sedentary (not active) | 1,600 | 2,000 |
| Moderately active | 1,800 | 2,200 to 2,400 |
| Active | 2,000 to 2,200 | 2,400 to 2,800 |

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends shifts in dietary nutrients as we grow older, including more of the following:

- **Calcium and Vitamin D** to help maintain strong bone health. Older adults should eat three servings of vitamin D-fortified low-fat or free-free milk or yogurt daily. Other sources of calcium-rich foods include dark green leafy vegetables, canned fish and fortified cereals and fruit juices.
- **Vitamin B12** is often low in people older than 50. Lean meat, fortified cereals and some fish and seafood are excellent sources of vitamin B12.
- **Potassium** is found in fruits, vegetables, and milk and yogurt products. To lower high blood pressure, seniors should increase potassium in their diets while reducing sodium or salt intake.
- **Fiber** found in whole-grain breads and cereals, beans, peas, fruits and vegetables is a natural way to stay regular, prevent Type 2 diabetes, control weight and lower one's risk for heart disease.
- **Healthier Fats** found in olive oil and peanut oil, for example, are considered polyunsaturated or monounsaturated vs. saturated and trans fats found in many commercially processed and baked foods.

Dieticians and nutrition experts stress not only the types of foods we eat but also the importance of safely storing and preparing foods to prevent illness. Proper hand-washing with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds can eliminate almost half of all food-borne illnesses. Storing foods in the refrigerator set cooler than 40° F also will reduce the risk of eating contaminated foods.

“Our caregivers assist seniors and disabled adults every day with menu planning, grocery shopping and preparing nutritious meals and find that some people need to follow specific dietary restrictions but just feel a bit lost,” Lennon explained. “Or sometimes all they need is someone to sit down with them and take the loneliness out of eating alone. National Nutrition Month is a helpful reminder that informed everyday food choices are not just essential to our physical health but to our emotional and social health, as well.”

About Right at Home

Founded in 1995, Right at Home, Inc. is an international franchise organization based in Omaha, Neb. Independently owned and operated franchise units offer in-home care and assistance to seniors and disabled adults who want to continue to live independently. Right at Home offices directly employ all caregiving staff. Each caregiver is thoroughly screened, trained, bonded and insured prior to entering a client's home. All ongoing care is monitored and supervised by the more than 250 local franchise offices located across 41 states nationwide and throughout the

world. For more information on Right at Home, visit [About Right at Home](#) or read the [Right at Home caregiving blog](#). Sign up for Right at Home's free adult caregiving e-newsletter, [Caring Right at Home](#).

About Right at Home of Santa Clara County

The Santa Clara County office of Right at Home is a locally owned and operated franchise office of Right at Home, Inc., serving the communities of San Jose, Campbell, Cupertino, Saratoga, Los Gatos, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, Mt. View. For more information, contact Right at Home of Santa Clara County at <http://www.rightathome.net/santaclara> ,408.496.0833 or by email at generah@sbcglobal.net