



# ECHC

## Elmore County Health Coalition

**Healthy Eating for National Nutrition Month!- March 2026**

March is "National Nutrition Month<sup>®</sup>" and this year the National Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is encouraging folks to "Discover the Power of Nutrition" by learning more about making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits. This month is all about discovering how food and beverage choices power your day, learning how to access healthy foods in your area, and building healthy food practices into your day to help you feel like the most powerful you!

This message is especially timely as March is also Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Changes in food policy and legislation during the 1980s significantly increased the availability of processed and packaged foods, leading to a sharp rise in their consumption over the past 45 years. While these foods are often affordable, convenient, and shelf-stable, frequent consumption without balance may contribute to negative health outcomes.

Of particular concern is the recent increase in colorectal cancer diagnoses among younger individuals under the age of 50. This trend is alarming as many healthcare providers currently recommend beginning routine colorectal cancer screenings at age 45. These developments underscore the importance of nutrition and digestive health across the lifespan.

Balancing nutritious food choices with affordability and accessibility can feel overwhelming. However, small, intentional changes can make a meaningful difference. Below are a few simple tips to support digestive health and reduce reliance on heavily processed foods:

- Choose minimally processed foods whenever possible. A helpful guideline is to select foods that do not require a nutrition label or extensive packaging, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Prioritize high-fiber foods. Fiber supports healthy digestion by promoting regular bowel movements and helping move waste through the body. It also plays a role in hormone regulation. Examples of high-fiber foods include berries, apples, broccoli, beans, and potatoes with the skin.
- Plan healthy snacks at home. If you're craving a late-night snack, skip food delivery and drive thru and prepare something quick and nourishing at home instead. Try the easy *Energy Bites* recipe below for a convenient, balanced option.

By making thoughtful food choices and focusing on whole, fiber-rich foods, you can support digestive health and harness the power of nutrition—this month and beyond.

### Energy Bites

1 can (15 oz) garbanzo beans, drained and well-rinsed

1 cup oats

½ cup nut butter

2T honey

2T milk

1 tsp vanilla extract

Pinch of salt

\*\* Add chia seeds or flax meal for added fiber and plant-based omega 3 fatty acids

#### Directions

- Place all ingredients into a blender and blend until well combined.
- Roll the mixture into small bite-sized balls.
- Refrigerate for 20–30 minutes for the best texture, though they can be eaten immediately.



<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
10 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2 Tbsp</b>
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>80</b>
<small>% Daily Value*</small>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 4g	<b>5%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 55mg	<b>2%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 9g	<b>3%</b>
Dietary Fiber 2g	<b>7%</b>
Total Sugars 3g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	<b>4%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	<b>6%</b>
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 6.1mg	0%
Iron 0.21mg	2%
Potassium 68mg	2%

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

If you are looking for places to access healthy foods, find the Elmore County Food Locator Cards here or on the Elmore County Health Coalition webpage under the Resources tab, or reach out to us at [echc@cdh.idaho.gov](mailto:echc@cdh.idaho.gov) or 208-327-8547 to learn more.

