

Leyla Weighs In: Optimizing your kitchen



March is **National Nutrition Month** and an opportunity to bring you more information on nutrition and health.

It's a good time to take stock of your eating habits and see where there's room for improvement. Let's start with food prep. Look around the kitchen. Do you have everything you need to make cooking easy and pleasurable? Maybe your knives need sharpening or your cutting boards need to be replaced. Take an inventory of all your kitchen utensils and see what else you may need; maybe a better vegetable peeler, garlic crusher or colander is in order. Store these items where you actually prep your food.

How about appliances? Are you using a small food chopper when using a larger food processor could cut down significantly on your prep time? It may be time for an upgrade.

Take a look inside your refrigerator. Is everything organized so you can see exactly what's there? Any science projects lurking about in the back that you forgot about? When was the last time you checked the expiration dates on those jars of olives, capers, mayonnaise, mustard and horseradish sitting in the refrigerator door? While you're at it, clean out the produce compartment.

On to the pantry: let's tackle the spice rack. Anything missing or running low that

you know you'll be out of just as you're cooking your next meal? Check the expiration dates on those too. In fact, check the expiration dates on all canned and packaged goods in the cupboards. Make sure they're organized in way that they're visible and easy to reach.

There's a method to storing your dishes and glassware. Near the sink and dishwasher makes filling and emptying easier. Cups and mugs close to the beverage station (i.e., water dispenser, coffee maker, tea kettle) is ideal.

Stay tuned next week for more tips on eating well for National Nutrition Month.

To your health!