



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## Spring into National Nutrition Month with ‘baby steps’

*By Chris Halagarda,  
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**FORT LEE, Va.** – If you’re like millions of other Americans, you probably want to lose the extra pounds that you’ve either put on this past winter or that you’ve been carrying for too long now. Well, March is National Nutrition Month: Now is as good a time as any to choose a healthy diet, lose weight and keep the weight off for good.

Don’t get too excited, however. Weight loss is one of the most difficult personal challenges a person can face. It’s a physical struggle as much as a mental and emotional struggle. And, if it isn’t hard enough, many people actually succeed at losing weight, only to put the lost weight back on. This temporary weight loss and weight gain is a vicious cycle called “yo-yo dieting” which can be frustrating, demoralizing and unhealthy.

With that being said, we do have information on “regular people,” like you, who have succeeded at losing weight; and they’ve been able to keep it off without taking dangerous supplements, participating in any extreme weight loss measures or revealing their entire life on a reality show. The National Weight Control Registry, <http://www.nwcr.ws/>, is a study that has looked at over 5,000 adults who have successfully lost 30 or more pounds and kept it off for more than a year. On average, the members have lost more than 66 pounds and kept it off for more than five years.

So, how have they succeeded at such a hard life challenge? Actually, they took “baby steps,” which added up to giant leaps. First, 98 percent of all 5,000 plus participants modified their food intake in some way. Most of the successful weight losers reported decreasing their overall calories, following a lower-fat diet and doing high levels of physical activity. More

specifically, 90 percent of the participants walked at least 60 minutes each day and cut back on their TV time to less than 10 hours of TV a week.

To keep the weight off, all the participants continued with a similar, but less-strict version of their original program. Another interesting fact that these participants followed was that more than three quarters of the successful losers (3,900 people out of 5,000) ate breakfast. Mom always said that breakfast was the most important meal of the day.

Obviously, breakfast is difficult for many people, because it interferes with sleep, getting the kids ready for school, feeding the dog and getting ready for work. Remember though, breakfast does not have to be a four-course meal with juice, cereal, toast, butter, sausage and eggs.

Breakfast needs to be just that, a BREAK from the overnight FAST. It's a meal or snack that provides nutrients which help your body and mind work effectively and efficiently. A good breakfast can be an apple with peanut butter, a cup of oatmeal with blueberries, a slice of whole wheat toast with peanut butter and banana slices, or something as simple as a granola bar, a cup of yogurt or a glass of low-fat milk.

Feel free to think outside the cereal box. Breakfast can be leftover whole-wheat pasta and low-fat meatballs from last night's dinner, or the rice and beans from yesterday's lunch or a turkey sandwich. Skip the high-fat choices offered at the drive-through window and head to the commissary to stock up on simple, yet inexpensive, breakfast foods. Remember, a healthy breakfast with a variety of colors will prime your body and mind for peak performance while reducing your chances of binge eating later in the day.

If you would like to learn more about National Nutrition Month or learn ways to help promote good nutrition at your home, school or workplace, visit <http://www.eatright.org/nnm/>.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

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**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of*

*commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth more than \$4,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*