

...Healthier You

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"We often feel like there's so many things we need to change; eat better, exercise more, lose weight, lower cholesterol."

However, this can become overwhelming. Remember that progress, no matter how small or slow, is still progress," Leal said. When approaching weight loss, follow these simple lifestyle changes that can be easily incorporated into your daily routine:

- Eat a calorie-controlled diet
- Participate in physical activity (150 minutes of moderate-intensity each week is recommended for adults)
- Try behavior therapy (recognizing triggers for eating)

While exercising is a key component in being healthy, failure to eat a well-balanced and nutritious diet is often the limiting factor that keeps people from becoming the healthiest version of themselves. For weight loss, or improving any chronic disease, eating 2-3 servings of vegetables a day can make a tremendous impact. Add balance to your meals by making half of your plate fruits and vegetables while decreasing the amount of protein and starches, such as meat and potatoes. To help keep your eating habits on track, follow these simple steps from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

- Eat breakfast
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Fix healthy snacks
- Drink more water
- Reduce added sugars
- Cook homemade meals
- Explore new foods and flavors
- Experience with plant-based meals
- Eat slower

If you want to stay on the straight and narrow by eating healthy but are looking to mix up your mealtime routine with new recipes, visit AgriLife Extension's Dinner Tonight to choose from a variety of healthy meals like Flatbread Pizza, Mediterranean Chicken, Taco Boats, and even desserts like Banana Chia Bread, Pistachio Cake, and Unicorn Popsicles!

**Texas State Parks
Go Technicolor with
Wildflowers,
Blooming Plants**

Spectacular displays of blue, pink, red and yellow are blanketing the state, and Texas State Parks offer picturesque settings for family photos of this year's parade of wildflowers away from busy roadways.

Texas is home to nearly 6,000 species of plants, and recent rains are assured to accompany a colorful wildflower explosion from spring through late fall. More than 90 Texas State Parks offer some of the best and safest places to view and photograph nature's bounty of wildflowers, blooming shrubs and trees.

"Vibrant spring wildflower displays have been remarkable across the Texas landscape

recently," said Jason Singhurst, botanist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "With recent rains carpeting a large percentage of Texas, we are experiencing dazzling wildflower displays and should expect increasing wildflower concentration through April and into May."

Always remember to exercise caution when taking wildflower photos on busy roadways by using your emergency lights and being mindful of disturbing wildlife resting or hiding in that location, such as nesting birds, or undesirable encounters with venomous snakes and fire ants.

The TPWD Flickr page is regularly updated with wildflower sightings from state parks and wildlife management areas across the state, including Big Bend Ranch State Park, Government Canyon State Natural Area and Matador Wildlife Management Area.

Park visitors can share their wildflower pictures—and see what's blooming around the state—on TPWD Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts.

At present, every region of the state is showing different varieties of wildflowers, including:

Central Texas: The rolling upland hillsides, canyons, and creek and river bottoms are providing a colorful and teeming wildflower wave that is layered with bluebonnets, Engelmann's daisy, Texas star, blue sage, Indian blanket, Mexican hat, prairie fleabane, prairie verbena, greenthread, two-leaved senna, four-nerve daisy, Drummond's onion, green lily, old plainsman, golden eye phlox, white milkwort, wine cups, perfume balls, phlox, Missouri primrose, white heliotrope, antelope horn milkweed, sundrops, white rain lily, Drummond's skullcap, Blackfoot daisy, foxglove and Lindheimer's paintbrush. The Hill Country canyon woodland ground flora is draped with Texas silver puff, rock lettuce, false dayflower ('widow's tears'), plateau spiderwort, baby blue eyes, red columbine, Texas

milkweed, blue curls and roundleaf groundsel.

Coastal Texas prairies, barrier islands, and the South Texas 'Sand Sheet': An wide arrange of wildflowers are on display including prairie nymph, prairie clovers, betony-leaf mistflower, Indian blanket, silverleaf sunflower, seaside goldenrod, showy neveray, erect dayflower, Texas groundsel, woolly whites, longbract wild indigo, coralbean, Rio Grande greenthread, American snoutbean, coast germander, sand rose gentian, sand verbena, phlox, sea lavender, sea oxeye, sea rocket, Gulf Coast Camphor daisy, saltmarsh mallow, beach morning glory, and side-cluster milkweed.

East Texas: The Pineywoods' hardwood slopes and bottomland forest flora has been extraordinary with a plethora of wildflowers including trout lilies, trilliums, Solomon's seal, mayapple, partridge-berry, golden Alexanders, violets, purple meadow-rue, groundsel, Carolina vetch, wisteria, flowering dogwood, yellow jasmine, crossvine, jack-in-the-pulpits, Virginia sweetspire, hawthorns, white-flowered milkweed, azalea, fringe tree and silver bells. Wetlands are profuse with spider lily, bluestar, spring cress, Canada garlic, and blue iris. Upland and wetland pine savannas are dominated by old plainsmen, Carolina pucoo, yellow colic-root, candy root,

prairie snoutbean, Queen's delight, sundews, silky prairie clover, meadow pink, false dragonhead, downy phlox, rose vervain, spiderworts, Carolina larkspur, bull nettle, and toad flax. North Texas: The landscape is generous with Indian paintbrushes, brown eyed Susan, winecup, American basket flower, Barbara's buttons, American wild carrot, showy evening primrose, plantain, Texas prairie parsley, fleabane, prairie clovers, blue-eyed grass, buttercups, snakeherb, butterfly weed, false dragon-head, sundrops, beeblissom, Texas skeleton plant, larkspur, coneflowers, blue mealy sage, wild indigo and overwhelming numbers of green milkweeds.

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