

From the Nutritionist

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Earth-Friendly Eating

With Earth Day right around the corner, many people are thinking about how their daily choices impact the environment. While it's common knowledge that using less paper and turning off lights is good for the Earth, not everyone understands the link between food and the environment. Here are some key ways that you can eat a more “green” diet, and ways ASC is helping:

CHOOSE MORE LOCAL FOOD — Crops intended for a local market are generally picked at their peak for best flavor, and a shorter time between the farm and your table means food that is higher in nutrients. Choosing local also helps to reduce the environmental impacts of shipping food across the country (or the

world), and supports your local economy. Farmers that use sustainable farming practices help protect the health of the local soil and water supply as well.

✓ **DID YOU KNOW?** Many foods grown or manufactured in New York are served each day in the dining halls — and even more during the monthly “Sustainable Meals” in Neubig and The Bistro.

EAT LESS PROCESSED FOOD — Highly processed foods take a lot of energy to produce, and often travel a long distance to the consumer, increasing pollution. Processed foods tend to be higher in sodium, sugar, and saturated fat, and lower in fiber and vitamins, so by reducing your intake of these foods you can improve your health as well. Choose more whole foods when possible.

✓ **DID YOU KNOW?** Many fresh and minimally processed foods are available in the dining halls each day.

EAT LESS MEAT — Industrially farmed meat has the greatest impact of any food product on the environment. The meat and poultry industries contribute significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions and consume large amounts of natural resources such as water and fossil fuels. Even if you don't go vegetarian, cutting meat out of a few meals per week can lessen your impact on the earth. Also, plant based diets have been shown in a number of studies to reduce the risk of many chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

✓ **DID YOU KNOW?** You can easily identify vegetarian and vegan foods in all of the dining halls with symbols on the menu boards.

DECREASE FOOD WASTE — It has been estimated that about 30% of food in the United States is wasted. Wasted food is a waste of money, and also a waste of all the resources used to produce the food. Reduce food waste by taking only as much food as you can eat (you can always go back for seconds), only buying as much as you can eat before it goes bad, and making use of leftovers.

✓ **DID YOU KNOW?** ASC uses several strategies in the dining facilities to reduce food waste.

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE — Reduce food packaging by buying food in bulk, use reusable water bottles, mugs, and grocery bags to reduce waste, and recycle what you can.

✓ **DID YOU KNOW?** If you bring a reusable mug or cup to any of the retail dining facilities you can get 15% off the cost of coffee or fountain drinks.

Andrea Hart, registered dietitian nutritionist and New York state-certified dietitian/nutritionist, is available for free, confidential, one-on-one counseling and as a speaker or facilitator for campus groups, panels or classes.