



SCHOLARS
STRATEGY NETWORK

Mind Your Dietary Influences and Support Others' Nutrition During National Nutrition Month

Jacob J. Russell, University of Maine

Improving your diet is complicated by all that influences what you eat. You can want to eat a healthy snack but choose an unhealthy one after being influenced by someone close to you, an advertisement, or simply how hard it can be to know about and acquire healthy food. This month, **National Nutrition Month**, is the right time to learn about these dietary influences and take action to better your nutrition and that of others.

Unhealthy diets contribute to **obesity** and chronic disease, both of which are on the rise in the United States, with the national obesity rate increasing from 30.5 percent (1999) to 41.9 percent (2017). Maine had the **highest obesity rate** in New England as of 2019, due in part to its rurality making it difficult to get healthy food. **Feeding America** states that 1 in 10 people and 1 in 7 children in Maine face hunger. Food insecurity is the first issue to look at when addressing community nutrition.