



My Journey to Help Others Live Fresh

By Lanette Kovachi, MS, RDN

My goal when I became a registered dietitian was to help people understand the connection between food and health. Am I a crazy health food nut? Nope, not at all, just a food nut! I love all kinds of food and love knowing about their benefits, and their shortcomings too. I know that eating healthy is learning about how to balance all those delicious food choices, without depriving yourself either. I wanted to teach people how so many chronic diseases can be treated and prevented just with simple changes in their diet, and how you can look and feel better just by eating more nutrient-dense foods, like fruits, veggies and whole grains.

For my first several years as a dietitian, I provided one-on-one nutrition counseling in hospitals and through private practice. In 2000, I saw Subway® was searching for a registered dietitian, the first thing I thought was that it was really impressive that a restaurant chain recognized the importance of having a credentialed nutrition professional on their team. I thought this would be a great way for me to use my nutrition expertise to promote balanced eating through a restaurant chain that not only served customers in every state of the US, but in every corner of the world. It was also a restaurant chain that I knew wanted to provide “better for you choices” and was an alternative to the typical greasy fast-food meal. In fact, it was a restaurant chain that from the very beginning offered the building blocks of nutritious foods: grains, lean meats and veggies. Fast forward to over 15 years later and here I am, still the dietitian for the largest restaurant chain in the world. Through my years here I’ve seen that the Subway® brand and its talented team of food professionals never lose sight of the importance of providing wholesome, balanced choices to their customers. Take a look at a few of the wonderful things Subway® has accomplished:

- Evolving the kids’ meal to be one of the most nutritionally-balanced in the restaurant industry, certified by the American Heart Association
- Reducing sodium across the entire menu to more sensible levels
- Increasing the whole grain level of the bread (one 6-inch 9-Grain Wheat bread contains 24 g, that’s 50% of the daily recommended values.)
- Fortifying bread with essential nutrients like calcium and vitamin D (one 6-inch bread contains the equivalent calcium and vitamin D as an 8 oz. glass of milk!)
- Removing all artificial trans-fat back in 2008, long before it was even on FDA’s radar to remove
- Promoting fruit and vegetable consumption in both adults and children (did you know you can get up to two servings of veggies on a 6” sub and five servings in a salad?).
- Adding nutrient dense ingredients to the menu like spinach, avocado and apples

Most recently we’ve taken the steps to take out ingredients that are just not really needed in the food. Things like artificial flavors, colors and preservatives; also caramel color, high fructose corn syrup, and many other ingredients. We are moving towards simpler ingredients because it is important to Subway® customers. And you know what? It is also important to me! I like to feel good about what I’m eating, what I give to my kids and I’m always going to feel better with an ingredient list that has less artificial stuff in it. There is never a time that we stop looking for ways to make our food even better for our customers. In a world where there are a dizzying array of food choices – the Subway® team is constantly working to offer food choices that you can feel good about eating, and that are also good for you! I’m very proud to be a part of a restaurant chain that is dedicated, continuously and constantly innovating and striving to meet the tastes and needs of their guests, helping them to live fresh every day.