

Nutrition 411

Spring 2009



A Personal Message From Your Registered Dietitian

Spring is in the air! The days are getting longer, the leaves are turning green, and many of us are experiencing a surge of energy and renewed vigor. Spring brings its own promises and sense of purpose.



Now is the perfect time to “spring clean” your home, your diet, and your lifestyle. This year, let’s take advantage of all of the optimism that the season brings. We hope that

this edition of *Nutrition 411* will help you to find a way to focus all of the energy of spring into living a healthful and well life, physically and emotionally. Let’s get out there and smell those flowers!

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THE WHOLE BODY

Understanding Intuitive Eating

Intuitive eating is structured around the belief that people need to trust themselves enough to believe that they will eat what and how much food that they need. Very few people are able to handle a traditional diet as a temporary or flexible plan, and they instead become embroiled in an endless cycle of dieting, bingeing, and guilt.



Intuitive eating teaches you to listen to your inner signals of hunger and fullness, and to respond accordingly. The plan does not mean that you should eat whatever you want whenever your stomach starts to growl, though. You still must pay attention to proper nutrition. However, people are encouraged to not deny themselves. So, if you want ice cream

(cont’d on page 2)

SAVOR EVERY BITE

Chewing slowly and enjoying your food actually helps you digest your food better. You’ll also feel full faster. So take the time to savor every bite.

CRAVING SOMETHING SWEET?

When you go to the store, stock up on different fruits to keep your fruit bowl full.

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DRINK MORE WATER

As you increase the amount of fiber you're eating, don't forget to drink more water. Both fiber and water are important to the functioning of the digestive system.



Understanding Intuitive Eating (cont'd)

and nothing else will do, go ahead and have ½ cup, but savor every bite and eat it slowly.

The point is to stop telling yourself that you “can’t” or “shouldn’t” eat certain foods. It’s not about what you eat or when you eat, but how you feel about what you’re eating. Research has proven that the more times a person is exposed to a food, the less appealing it becomes over time. This is why people on traditional weight-loss diets find themselves obsessing with what they “can’t” have.

Start by observing when you’re eating. Are you eating in social situations as a way of keeping

busy? Are you eating at the movie theater, simply because it’s tradition for you? Are you eating as a way to expel nervous tension or to deal with boredom? These are all signs that you are not eating intuitively.

Pay attention to your hunger level. Rate your hunger on a scale of 1–10 every time that you eat, and if the number is low, try to figure out why you’re eating. You’re not a “good” or “bad” person because of what or how you eat, and it is not necessary to label foods as “good” or “bad” either.

EXTRA NUTRITION INSURANCE

Choosing Healthful Snacks

Snacking is great to help you feel more energetic. The trick to snacking is to only snack when you are truly hungry and to choose your snacks wisely. Most people need to eat something every 3 to 4 hours to keep their blood sugar levels steady. It takes 20 minutes for your brain to register that you are full after eating. This is why a small snack about 20 minutes before mealtime could lead to your eating less of the meal.

When trying to determine how many calories your snack should contain, consider when you will eat your next meal. If you will eat your next meal within 1 or 2 hours, you should aim for 50–100 calories. If you will eat your next meal in 2 hours or more, 150–200 calories is appropriate.

Consider the following nutritious and satisfying snacks:

- String cheese and whole-grain crackers
- Nonfat yogurt mixed with fresh fruit and granola
- Cereal and milk
- Cut-up fruit or vegetables with yogurt dip
- A whole-wheat pita filled with hummus
- Low-fat corn chips with salsa
- A fat-free tortilla filled with turkey, cheese, and vegetables
- Half of a bagel with peanut butter and banana slices
- Low-fat popcorn with grated Parmesan sprinkled on top



- Pretzels dipped in low-fat ranch dressing
- A small salad topped with grilled chicken
- Low-fat cottage cheese topped with diced pepper and tomato

Think of snacks as extra nutritional insurance. Very few people get all of the whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and dairy products that they should from their meals. Snacks are a way to make up for these deficits. Snacks that contain protein and/or fiber will keep you full for a longer period of time. No one can say, “My diet is really lacking in cookies; so, I better eat a few.”

Nutrigenomics—Cracking the Genetic Code

Nutrigenomics is the study of how the interactions between our diet and our genetic makeup impact our risk for developing certain diseases. This science looks at the relationship of our genetic and metabolic makeup to our response to various foods. The goal is to develop nutritional programs to prevent, delay, and treat diseases.

No ethnicity is immune to the repercussions of eating a poor diet. However, our ancestry can influence the likelihood, severity, chance of mortality, and response to treatment for various diseases.

Nutrigenomics

The study of nutrigenomics helps health care providers to more effectively personalize patient care. Dietitians, food scientists, epidemiologists, molecular biologists, physicians, geneticists, and statisticians are working toward cracking the genetic code as it relates to our nutritional well-being, but it still will take many years before patients are able to receive solid, evidence-based education based on their genetic makeup.

Mailbox

I understand that probiotics are good for gut health. Are there other benefits that I don't know about? Also, what are prebiotics?

More than 400 types of microorganisms are in your gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Some of these microorganisms are healthy, and others are unhealthy. The healthy bacteria in your gut help to digest food, and synthesize some vitamins and essential fatty acids.

Probiotics: These live microbes allow healthy bacteria to thrive. Probiotics also:

- Synthesize vitamins, particularly the B vitamins
- Improve immunity
- Decrease allergies, particularly in regard to skin reactions, such as dermatitis or eczema
- May decrease the risk of developing dental caries
- May speed recovery from bacterial vaginosis
- May lessen the problems associated with inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome
- Seem to help people with lactose intolerance digest dairy products more easily
- May improve cholesterol levels
- May decrease the risk of colon cancer
- Are probably useful for people suffering from diarrhea, when associated with antibiotic usage or acute illness

Probiotics are found in yogurt, cottage cheese, buttermilk, kefir, soy sauce, miso, tempeh, and fresh sauerkraut.



Prebiotics: These nondigestible substances feed the probiotics, so that they thrive in the GI tract. Not all probiotics consumed will survive, so it's important that prebiotics are consumed with them. Prebiotics release short-chain fatty acids, which decrease the pH of the colon and thereby enhance mineral absorption, particularly calcium, iron, and magnesium, possibly decreasing the risk of osteoporosis development. This decrease in pH also leads to the decreased survival of some "bad" bacteria. Prebiotics may decrease cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of colon cancer, as well.

Some forms of prebiotics aid in the relief of constipation. Different strains of probiotics and prebiotics provide different health benefits.

Prebiotics are found in chicory root, Jerusalem artichoke, wheat, barley, rye, flax, oatmeal, onion, garlic, leeks, legumes, asparagus, leafy greens, berries, bananas, and honey.

Look for the 'RD'

Get your nutrition advice from a registered dietitian (RD). RDs are the real deal!

RD

SMART SNACKING

When you're hungry between meals, choose a high-fiber snack, such as a small handful of fiber-rich nuts or whole-grain pretzels.

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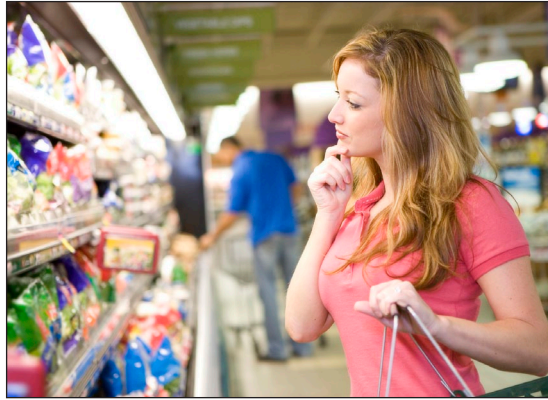
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DECODING THE GROCERY STORE

Are Organic Foods Better?

Certified organic animal foods are produced from animals that have not received any hormones or antibiotics. Organic plant foods are grown without chemical pesticides,



fertilizers made with manufactured components, bioengineering, or ionizing radiation. No national standards exist for organic seafood.

The content of organic and nonorganic foods are the same. The only differences are in the production and processing methods utilized. The American Dietetic Association states that the vitamin, mineral, and antioxidant levels in organic foods are no different from the nutritional qualities of conventional foods. A cookie is still a cookie nutritionally, whether it's an organic cookie or not, and individuals should use moderation when eating either kind of cookies.

The US Dept of Agriculture (USDA) organic food label is a green and white circle. This label guarantees that the food is at least 95% organic. Foods labeled "made with organic ingredients" must consist of at least 70% organic ingredients.



Cook's Corner

This issue, *Cook's Corner* features a new twist to the traditional chicken and rice casserole—brown rice. Whole grains, such as brown rice, offer many health benefits, including reduced risk of heart disease, certain cancers, and diabetes, and as a bonus, they may even help you to maintain a healthy weight.

Chicken and Brown Rice Casserole

Servings: Makes five servings
Serving Size: 1¼ cup (C)

2 C sliced fresh mushrooms
¾ C chopped yellow onion
3 C cooked brown rice
10¾-ounce (oz) can of condensed, lite cream-of-mushroom soup
¼ C plus 1 tablespoon (Tbsp) grated Parmesan cheese
2 C diced skinless roasted or rotisserie chicken breast
Olive oil cooking spray

Preheat the oven to 350° F.

Coat a large skillet with cooking spray and place over medium heat. Add the mushrooms and onion. Cover and cook for about 5 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. Remove the skillet from the heat and stir in the cooked rice, undiluted

soup, chicken, and 2 Tbsp of the Parmesan cheese.

Coat a 2-quart casserole dish with cooking spray and spread the rice mixture evenly in the dish. Sprinkle the remaining Parmesan cheese over the top and spray the top lightly with the cooking spray.

Bake uncovered for about 25 minutes, or until heated through and bubbly around the edges. Remove from the oven and let sit for 5 minutes. Serve hot.

Per serving: 302 calories, 35 grams (g) carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 6.3 g fat, 2.5 g saturated fat, 58 milligrams (mg) cholesterol, 25 g protein, 402 mg sodium, 162 mg calcium

GI rating: Moderate

Diabetic exchanges: 2 lean meat and 2 carbohydrate (starch)

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