

# MARCH - IT'S NUTRITION MONTH

Food for Fitness and Fun - March 2004

Pick a **better** snack™ –  
(how easy is that!)

MARCH featured produce items for the Pick a **better** snack™ – the **color** way campaign includes:

- Cabbage
- Raisins
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Onions



To learn more about selection, storage and use – go to the Food for Fitness and Fun website at [www.extension.iastate.edu/food](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/food)

## RAISIN BANANA MINI MUFFINS

*This recipe is fun to prepare with young children as a cooking activity. Allow them to help operate the buttons on the blender and stir the mixture. They may also help to put it into the muffin pans. Enjoy the muffins with a glass of milk.*

2 very ripe, medium bananas, peeled (~ 2/3 cup)\*

1 egg, beaten

1/3 cup vegetable oil

1½ cups all-purpose flour

1 cup sugar

6 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon baking powder

½ cup raisins

Spray muffin pan with cooking spray. Preheat oven to 350°F. Put bananas into food processor or blender. Secure lid and blend until smooth. Add eggs and oil; cover and blend. In mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, salt, and baking powder. Add banana mixture, and stir until moistened. Stir in raisins. Spoon about 1 Tablespoon of batter into each muffin pan cup. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes. Cool muffins slightly before removing from pan.

Yield: About 2 dozen mini-muffins.

Per muffin: 55 calories, 1 gram protein, 2 grams fat, 9 grams carbohydrate, 43 mg sodium, 3 mg cholesterol.

Source: *Snacks for Healthy Kids, PM 1264, Iowa State University Extension, January 2004 and Dole Food Co., Inc.*

\* May substitute 6 oz. of banana baby food.



## MARCH IS PEANUT MONTH

Peanuts pack a lot of nutrition into a tiny package. They are a good source of inexpensive protein, with 7 grams in a one-ounce serving and 2 grams of fiber. Fear of fat keeps many people from making peanuts part of their diet, but many studies are showing that the monounsaturated fat in peanuts is a healthy choice especially since it comes with so much else that's good for you.

- Heart Health – Several studies have shown that including peanuts in the diet can help reduce the risk for heart disease by lowering both cholesterol and triglyceride levels. There are several things in peanuts that promote a healthy cardiovascular system – mono-unsaturated fat, vitamin E, folate and other biologically active substances that may help prevent blood clots from forming or keep cholesterol from being absorbed.
- Cancer prevention – peanuts contain beta-sitosterol, a substance which may protect against colon, prostate and breast cancer.
- Weight control – Even though peanuts are high in fat, recent studies have shown that people who snacked on peanuts and peanut butter naturally adjusted their caloric intake to compensate. The overall quality of their diet was better, too, because they ate less artery-clogging saturated fat. Other research has shown that those following a Mediterranean-style diet in which peanuts and peanut butter provided part of the fat were able to take off as much weight as people on a low-fat diet. Even better, they found the diet so satisfying that they were able to keep most of the weight off when the study was over.

### WAYS TO ENJOY PEANUTS:

- Add peanuts to steamed vegetables.
- Sprinkle chopped peanuts on fruit salads.
- Add to rice, couscous, barley, or kasha.
- Top a vegetable salad with chopped peanuts.
- Blend peanuts into your favorite smoothie.
- Sprinkle chopped peanuts on low-fat yogurt.
- A small handful of peanuts are a great snack!

Source: *Communicating Food for Health, March 2000 and 2002*

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## DRINKING FLAVORED MILK

Flavored dairy products, such as fruit-flavored yogurts, flavored milks and even puddings and ice cream, pack the same nutrient punch as regular dairy foods. Flavored dairy foods contain less added sugar than the sweetened fruit juices and soft drinks they typically replace and are a great way to help people get their three a day of dairy, which is important for strong bones.

A recent study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* concludes that children who consume more flavored dairy products than soda or sweetened beverages are more likely to get the key nutrients they need for growth and development, including calcium, and more likely to have better overall nutrition.

## MINERAL WATER = CALCIUM

If you need a source of calcium other than dairy products, you may want to consider mineral water. According to information from Tufts University Health and Nutrition Letter, January 2003, researchers based in Paris who studied the diets of 664 men and women found that calcium intakes were “markedly higher” among regular drinkers of mineral-rich water than among low-mineral or tap-water drinkers. Users of Contrex, highly mineralized water, averaged 300 milligrams more calcium per day – a cup of milk worth. The market for mineral water in the United States is small, so it may be difficult to find. In addition, the flavor may take some adjusting. And finally – it can be more expensive than other sources of calcium. But, if you need more calcium in your diet, it may be worth trying mineral water. Examples: Badoit=190 mg; Contrex=486 mg; Evian=80; Perrier=170; San Pellegrino=208; Vittel=202.

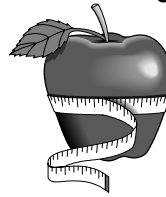
## GO FOR THE GREEN!



The wearing of green comes to mind with St. Patrick's Day. Why not consider adding a “green theme” to some of your menu with foods like – cabbage, Brussels sprouts, spinach, asparagus, leafy greens, avocado, green onions, potatoes or rice with parsley or a minty green dessert.

## BEVERAGE CALORIES: ARE THEY GOING TO WAIST?

An 8-ounce glass of orange juice in the morning, a couple of sodas throughout the day, a bottle of Gatorade at the gym, maybe a few bottles of your favorite beer at night – all of these add up to one thing: excess calories.



Could it be that hundreds of extra calories are mindlessly consumed in liquid form? Yes. According to research published in the *International Journal of Obesity*, calories from liquids, such as soft drinks, sports beverages or sweetened tea, don't seem to register as food. Thus, consuming soft drinks with your meal, instead of water or another calorie-free beverage could really make a difference for your weight over time.

Participants in a study at Purdue University were asked to consume 450 calories worth of jelly beans every day for four weeks and 450 calories worth of soda every day for another four weeks. On days they ate the jelly beans, the participants compensated by eating roughly 450 fewer calories from other foods. Therefore, they ingested no more calories than usual. But on days they drank the soda, the participants didn't compensate. They ended up eating roughly 450 more calories than usual. Purdue researcher Richard Mattes says, “Beverages are a huge contributor to obesity; they're major players that often get overlooked. Liquid calories don't trip our satiety mechanisms; they just don't register.”

It is best to be aware of how many sweetened drinks you are consuming during the day. If possible, try to make adjustments so you are consuming beverages without calories.

Also be aware of portion sizes, which can be very large. A king-sized soda at Burger King is 35 ounces – or just over one quart. 7-Eleven features a “Slurp and Gulp” combo drink that is a total of 54 ounces of soda and slurpee. That's almost 7 cups – a huge serving. Furthermore, many restaurants and movie theaters offer unlimited refills, and these can really add up.

Source: *Communicating Food for Health*, March 2004

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