

FOOD FOR FITNESS AND FUN

April 2005

With the release of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, many of us are going to need some creative ways to add more fruits, vegetables, beans and legumes to our diet. I'll try to get you started with several ideas this month in addition to assuring you that you CAN afford to eat a healthy diet. Enjoy! Jan Temple

MAX MAC AND CHEESE SERVES 4

This handy recipe makes a cheesy side dish that is lower in fat and sodium than many commercial preparations. Carrots added to the sauce make a nice orange color.

- 8 oz dry macaroni
- 1 cup skim milk
- ½ can (¾ cup) carrots, drained (or 1 cup cooked)
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- ½ cup light shredded cheddar cheese
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- Black pepper to taste



1) Cook macaroni according to package directions; drain in colander. 2) Puree milk, carrots, cheeses and seasoning together in blender until smooth. 3) Pour this sauce into a microwaveable casserole dish and add noodles. 4) Stir well and microwave on full power for 3-4 minutes or until mixture is thick. Serve hot. Leftovers? Add a little skim milk prior to reheating in the microwave.

Each serving (1 cup): 323 calories, 6 g fat, (3.5 saturated), 16 mg cholesterol, 297 mg sodium, 49 g carb, 2.5 g fiber, 16 g protein. *Source: Communicating Food for Health, April 2003*

BEVERAGE COSTS

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans document shows that most of the added sugar in our diets comes from soda and juice drinks. Following is a price comparison of a gallon of common beverages relative to a gallon of gasoline:

Gas \$2.08	Capri Sun Pouches \$3.74
Milk \$2.55	Gatorade \$4.83
Pepsi \$3.51	Propel \$5.79
Orange juice \$3.39	Snapple \$5.99
Arizona Tea \$3.55	Juice Boxes \$6.54

The Dietary Guidelines caution that individuals who consume food or beverages high in added sugars tend to consume more calories leading to weight gain than those who consume food or beverages low in added sugars. (Prices in Iowa City, IA, April 2005.)

Source: Communicating Food for Health, April 2005

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SECRETS TO FASTER MEALS

Do you want to: Eat healthier and have your family do the same? Spend less time in the kitchen? Stretch your food dollars so you can buy more with less? If you answered yes to any question, read on. Following are ways you can eat healthier while spending less time and money on food preparation.

How can you do it? Simple. Rarely eat out and cook almost everything at home. Cook in large batches and freeze the extra for leftovers in small, portion-sized packages. Here are the steps:

- 1. Clean and organize your freezer.** If you are going to start cooking ahead, you need to make room. Try cleaning your freezer once a month.
- 2. Purchase clear, freezable, microwaveable containers and bags** for storing your food.
- 3. Make large batches of favorite recipes** whenever you cook and freeze them in small portions to fit your family's needs. Label and date packages. You may try freezing sandwiches, cooked beans, cooked rice, lasagna, spaghetti, pasta, soups and stir-fry dishes. Not all foods will freeze successfully; you may need to experiment.

You don't have to have a cooking marathon and make all of these in one day, and you don't have to cook to freeze. You simply cook to prepare a meal, and then freeze the extra. It's a work in progress.

- 4. Cook quickly and efficiently.** Cool hot dishes in shallow containers in the refrigerator or in ice water so you don't risk a foodborne illness.
- 5. Reheat items quickly in the microwave.** Usually you just need to add a little water and cover items with a lid or plastic wrap. Items in plastic bags should be transferred to a microwave safe container before reheating.

If you are preparing items which are based on beans and whole grains, they will cost less than entrees based on meat. Eating at home rather than eating out saves time and money. You will save time because you won't be traveling to a restaurant and spending time waiting to be seated, served and presented with a check. Food prepared at home is often lower in sodium and fat than restaurant meals or frozen prepared items from grocery stores.

Source: Communicating Food for Health, April 2002

INVISIBLE FOOD

A little kitchen savvy will go a long way in helping you successfully sneak in some extra nutrition.

- An inexpensive hand-held blender makes it easy to puree foods in a pot on the stove.
- Foods with dark, tomato-based sauces are great for hiding ingredients.
- Chocolate is great for disguising other flavors.
- Spicy foods can hide many flavors so chili or BBQ sauce is great for sneaking in vegetables.

Source: *Communicating Food for Health*, April 2001

SWEET POTATO BROWNIES SERVES 16

- ½ cup trans-fat free margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup Splenda sweetener
- 5 egg whites
- ½ Tablespoon vanilla extract
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup oatmeal
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 cup mashed, cooked sweet potato (without skin)
- ¼ cup chopped pecans



1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking pan. 2. Cream the margarine and sugar. Add the egg whites one by one. Scrape the bowl well. 3) Add the rest of the ingredients except the pecans. Mix well. Spread batter in pan. Top with pecans and bake until the brownies are firm in center, about 30 minutes.

Each 2-ounce brownie: 169 calories, 7 g fat, (1g saturated), 0 mg cholesterol, 99 mg sodium, 23 g carb, 1.5 g fiber, 3 g protein. Source: *Communicating Food for Health*, April 2002

BBQ BEAN DIP YIELD 6-1/4 CUP SERVINGS

- 2 cups cooked pinto beans, drained
- ½ cup tomato sauce, no-added salt
- 2 Tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 Tablespoon molasses
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 Tablespoons vinegar



Place all ingredients into a food processor or blender and blend until smooth. Serve immediately or chill until ready to serve.

Each serving (2.5 Tablespoons): 73 calories, .5 g fat, (0 g saturated), 0 mg cholesterol, 8.5 mg sodium, 14 g carb, 4 g fiber, 4 g protein. Source: *Communicating Food for Health*, April 2002

EAT YOUR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES FOR 64¢ A DAY

When you see a pint of blackberries priced at \$3.69, you might think that eating the recommended 5 servings of vegetables and fruits a day is too expensive. But a USDA study shows that affordable produce is just as nutritious and cancer-fighting as the pricey items.

Surveys show that most Americans know that eating 5 or more servings of vegetables and fruits daily plays a vital role in good health. Yet more than 75 percent of consumers are not eating nearly that number of servings according to the Produce for Better Health Foundation.

Reality Check: Cost and Servings Are Small

People list two main reasons for not eating enough vegetables and fruits: High cost and five servings sounds like too much. BUT a closer examination reveals that eating plenty of produce – whether fresh, frozen or canned – is really very affordable.

In a price analysis of 85 different vegetables and 69 kinds of fruit, the USDA reported that it would cost consumers 64 cents a day to eat 3 servings of fruits and 4 servings of vegetables. And most fresh produce (63 percent of fruits and 57 percent of vegetables) is actually less expensive than frozen or canned. For more details about the study, visit www.ers.usda.gov/data/fruitvegetablecosts

Tricks to avoiding spoilage:

- Wait until just before using to wash produce.
- Refrigerate produce that is most perishable in perforated plastic bags. Vegetables: Asparagus, corn, cucumbers, dark leafy greens (including spinach), green beans, lettuce, mushrooms, peas, scallions, squash and sweet bell peppers. (Fresh tomatoes should be stored at room temperature and eaten when ripe.) Fruits: Berries, grapes, cantaloupes, cherries, nectarines, and ripened peaches and plums.
- This longer lasting produce may be refrigerated 1-2 weeks: root vegetables (parsnips, turnips, carrots, radishes, and potatoes) garlic, onions, mangoes, unripe melons, and citrus fruit.
- Buy canned vegetables and fruits.
- Use legumes.

Source: *Am. Institute of Cancer Research*, Spring 2005

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