

To Your Health

Soft Drinks:

Newest health food?

Some of the newest diet soft drinks on the market offer niacin, vitamin B6, vitamin B12, zinc and magnesium, and/or additional caffeine. When it comes to the vitamin content of these drinks, it's not ideal to get your daily dose from a soft drink, especially if doing so makes you think it is okay to eat less healthfully. B vitamins, zinc and magnesium can easily be obtained by eating meat, chicken, seafood, eggs, milk/milk products, whole grains, greens, beans, nuts, and seeds. Since these nutrients are widely found in our food, we don't need supplements of them, unless a doctor tells us we do.

Many soft drinks have caffeine. Do you need more? Too much caffeine may cause dehydration, nervousness, insomnia, stomach problems, and

abnormal heartbeat. On top of that, research has shown that exposure to soft drinks over time promotes loss of tooth enamel and formation of cavities.

The Bottom Line: So are these new soft drinks good for you? Are they bad for you? The answer lies somewhere in between. Consume soft drinks of any kind in moderation. Make sure you eat a variety of healthy foods and beverages each day from all of the food groups.

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research

Did You Know? The typical American today drinks 24 gallons of bottled water per year. That's 10 times the average bottled-water consumption of Americans in 1980.

Bottled or Tap Water?

Bottled water is convenient and nice for people who have trouble remembering to consume the recommended eight to ten glasses of water they need each day. In many cases though, "it's no better than the water in your tap." (According to the American Dietetic Association) Bottled water may not have the fluoride that is found in tap water. For most people, water is the best source of fluoride. Check the label on bottled water for added fluoride. Bottled water may contain more oxygen or vitamins. Eating a variety of foods makes it easy to consume enough vitamins. In addition, more vitamins won't improve athletic performance, unless you were vitamin-deficient to begin with. So fill an empty bottle with tap water, and drink up!

Source: www.eatright.org, the American Dietetic Association

Tips for "Grade A" Grilling

Summer may be the traditional "grilling season," but according to a survey by the American Dietetic Association nearly half of all Americans fire up the barbeque all year-round. Whether you're a weekend-only griller or an every-day griller, beef up your food safety with these tips.

Develop a taste for safety

Four out of five people say "taste" is their number 1 reason for grilling. Yet the majority do not consistently use a food thermometer to make sure burgers, chicken breasts and other grilled favorites are thoroughly cooked. Cooking to proper internal temperatures not only helps ensure the taste of your grilled dishes, it also helps ensure their safety.

Keep the upper hand

Twice as many men as women do not consistently wash their hands after handling raw meat or chicken. One in five cooks say they do not consistently use separate cutting boards or grilling utensils when handling raw meat and ready-to-eat foods. These shortcuts may save time, but they can leave you with a case of foodborne illness. Take precautions by washing cutting boards and utensils in hot, soapy water between uses. And always, always wash your hands!

Clean your machine

Before you fuel the fire or rake the coals, make sure your grill grate is clean by scrubbing it with hot, soapy water before each and every use.

Source: www.homefoodsafety.org, American Dietetic Assoc.

Let's Move!

...enjoy active summertime fun

Make family time *activity* time. Like many adults, children do not like exercise - but they love to play. By making plans for some active fun every day, you can improve everyone's fitness levels - and often improve their attitudes too.

Make plans for active fun - in the yard.

It's as easy as a basketball hoop, a Frisbee™, or sprinkler for splashing on a hot summer day. Instead of sending kids out to play by themselves, go with them and enjoy old-fashioned fun - like freeze tag, hide-and-seek, horseshoes, or badminton.

Make plans for active fun - in the neighborhood.

Plan a scavenger hunt with other families or set up a bicycle obstacle course with traffic cones. Trade dog walking duties with neighbors: one family in the morning, the other in the evening.

Make plans for active fun - at the park.

Our area is full of parks! Look for splash pools for young children, swimming pools, smooth paths for biking, walking or running; camping, fishing, canoeing.

Make plans for active fun - on road trips.

Take a break from sitting in the car and fit some active fun into a long trip. Pack a small bag of "rest stop toys" - like a soccer ball, Frisbee™, or other active play toys. A 15-minute break will help everybody be in a better mood and ready for more miles in the vehicle.

Source: *Eat Right Montana*, a coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles.