

# FOOD FOR FITNESS AND FUN

September - 2008

September is a busy month of recognition and celebration. It has been declared chicken month, cholesterol education month, food safety month, mushroom month, potato month, rice month, whole grain month and honey month in addition to acknowledging "Eat Dinner Together Week (Sept. 21-27)". I'll do my best to weave several of these events into this newsletter. Enjoy! Jan Temple

## HEALTHY, INEXPENSIVE SNACKS FOR AFTER SCHOOL OR ANYTIME

Instead of being 'evil', snacks really are a very good thing. For active children, they can be essential since their smaller stomach capacity can't hold enough food if only allowed three meals each day. Adults may also find that snacks help them have better control of their weight. So what food IS a wise, affordable choice for snacking?

Try to choose fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low fat dairy products. Here are some purchasing tips:

- Choose fresh fruit in season to save on your grocery bill. Frozen fruit or canned fruit in juice or light syrup can be a good buy especially if you choose the store brand or a generic. The fruit is every bit as nutritious; the pieces just may not be quite as perfectly shaped as the national brand. Less expensive fruit packed in heavy syrup can be drained and rinsed.
- Fruit juice makes a good snack or a great beverage with other snack foods. Just remember you will get more nutritional benefit from eating the whole fruit rather than just drinking the juice. Further, it helps control total calories when you eat the fruit rather than just drink the juice. Example: orange juice provides 110 calories for an 8 ounce serving and a whole orange provides 62 calories.
- Explore new varieties of fresh fruit. I recently found an apple variety that was new to me - Jazz™. It has a tangy sweetness and great crunch. I have learned that it is from New Zealand and is a cross of Gala and Braeburn varieties. You can find it in local grocery stores.



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- Fresh vegetables are a healthy, crunchy snack. For convenience, many of us have turned to mini cut carrots. With rising food prices you may want to purchase whole carrots.



Food	Amount Purchased	1/2 Cup Servings	Cost	Serving Cost
Whole Carrots	2 pounds	12	\$1.29	\$.11
Mini Cut Carrots	1 pound	8	\$1.29	\$.16

- Popcorn is a great snack for your health and that of your pocketbook. Information in this chart is based on 2 Tablespoons uncooked popcorn kernels that should yield about 1 ounce (a grain serving) or 3 cups. Prices from Iowa City, IA-August 2008.



Product*	Calories	Sodium	Fat	Cost/ serving
Snappy Popcorn	73	7 mg	1.0 g	\$.03
Jolly Time Better Butter - MW	140	220 mg	9.0 g	\$.16
Jolly Time Healthy Pop (94% Fat Free) - MW	90	210 mg	2.0 g	\$.24
Smart Balance -MW	120	290 mg	4.5 g	\$.27
Jolly Time Low Sodium, 100 Calorie 94% FFMW	90	95 mg	2.0 g	\$.45
Fastco® Cheese Flavor Popped Popcorn-3 cups	225	390	15.0	\$.26

\*No endorsement of companies or their products mentioned is intended, nor criticism implied of similar companies or their products not mentioned.



Air popped popcorn is the healthiest and most inexpensive choice. Unfortunately, many complain that it has no flavor, or they can't get the butter and salt to stick to it. Try the following as a compromise to save money and calories

Product	Serving	Calories	Sodium	Fat	Cost/ Serving
Homemade Mix	14 (1 cup)	95	178	.8	\$.13
Cheerios® Snack Mix	7 (3/4 cup)	120	330	3.5	\$.36

### POPCORN TRAIL MIX – 14-1 CUP SERVINGS

6 cups air popped popcorn	2 cups chocolate Chex®
2 cups toasted oat cereal	2 cups pretzel twists
2 cups honey flavored shredded wheat	Optional – 1 cup peanuts

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl or bag. To control portions, divide into servings and place in individual bags or sealable bowls.

One cup serving: 95 calories, .8 g fat, .1 g sat fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 178 mg sodium, 20 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 2.3 g protein.

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# SAY "YES" TO FAMILY MEALS

National Eat Dinner Together Week will be celebrated September 21 to 27. Following are highlights of some research that underscores just how important it is to place a high priority on eating together.



- In a research project coordinated by Dr. Blake Bowden of Cincinnati Children's Hospital, 527 teenagers were studied to determine what family and lifestyle characteristics were related to good mental health and adjustment. He found that kids who ate dinner with their families at least five times per week were the least likely to take drugs, feel depressed or get into trouble.
  - ✓ The more often young people eat with families – the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use illegal drugs.
  - ✓ Teens who eat dinner with parents 2 times a week or less are 4 times more likely to smoke cigarettes, 3 times more likely to smoke marijuana and 2 times as likely to drink as those who eat with parents 6 or 7 times a week.
  - ✓ Teens who eat frequent family dinners are less likely to have sex at young ages, to get into fights, are at lower risk for thoughts of suicide and are likelier to do better in school.
  - ✓ Teens who have frequent family dinners are more likely to be emotionally content, work hard at school and have positive peer relationships.
- A study by Dr. Catherine Snow at Harvard's Graduate School of Education followed 65 families over 15 years, looking at how mealtime conversations play a critical role in language acquisition in young children. This is related to later reading and academic **performance**. Mealtime conversations were as important if not more important than reading to children.
- A University of Illinois study of 120 boys and girls age 7 – 11 found that children who did well in school and on achievement tests were those who generally spent large amounts of time eating meals with their families.

- Dianne Neumark-Sztainer and her colleagues at the University of Minnesota found a dramatic relationship between family meal patterns and dietary intake in adolescents. Their study, published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, involved nearly 5,000 middle and high school students of diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. They found that family meals were associated with improved intakes of fruits, vegetables, grains, calcium-rich foods, protein, iron, fiber, and vitamins A, C, E, B<sub>6</sub> and folate. They were associated with a lower intake of soft-drinks. **Why?** As a child grows, children learn good nutrition and positive eating habits and social skills by the examples set (or not set) by their parents at the family table. There's something about putting a meal on the table to be shared with others that motivates healthier food choices. Healthy habits could happen without a shared family meal, but it seems less likely.

## SWEET & SOUR CHICKEN 6 SERVINGS

*Make sure to wash your hands and avoid cross contamination while you Celebrate Eat Dinner Together Week, Rice Month, and Chicken Month. Refrigerate any leftovers promptly.*

2 cups cooked brown rice	1 pound chicken tenders
1/4 cup seasoned rice vinegar	4 cloves garlic
2 Tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce	2 teaspoons finely grated or minced ginger
2 Tbsp cornstarch	1 cup reduced sodium beef broth
2 Tbsp apricot preserves	6 cups chopped fresh or frozen vegetables
2 Tbsp canola oil	

1. Combine vinegar, soy sauce, cornstarch and apricot preserves in a bowl. Set aside.
2. Heat 1 Tablespoon oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook until white, about 5 minutes.
3. Add 1 tablespoon oil, garlic and ginger to the pan and cook 30 seconds.
4. Add broth and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add vegetables, reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook until the vegetables are tender crisp, ~4 minutes. Whisk the reserved sauce; add to the pan. Bring sauce to a boil. Serve over rice.



*Each 1.5 cup serving: 304 calories, 6 g fat, .5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 43 mg cholesterol, 254 mg sodium, 35 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 26 g protein.*

*Source: Communicating Food for Healthy, September 2007*

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Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.

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