Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS

Go Green for Healthy Eyes

What we eat affects the health of our eyes. Dark green leafy vegetables are rich in the antioxidants lutein (pronounced loo-teen) and zeaxanthin (pronounced zee-uh-zan-thin). The Age-Related Eye Disease Study 2 (AREDS2) found that lutein and zeaxanthin, lowered the risk of developing age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) by about 25%.

AMD is the leading cause of vision loss in older adulthood. It affects nearly 10 million Americans. Both lutein and zeaxanthin are stored in the macula of the human eye. They help filter light and protect and maintain healthy eye cells.

Since the body does not naturally make the lutein and zeaxanthin, it's important that our diets provide it. Lutein and zeaxanthin are carotenoids, the substances that give fruits and vegetables their deep green, yellow, and orange colors. Thus eating a variety of dark green, yellow and orange foods will help. Try to include these lutein-rich foods in your daily meal plans:

- Kale
- Collard greens
- Yellow sweet corn
- Spinach
- Swiss chard
- Green Peas
- Winter squash (e.g., butternut, acorn)
- Arugula
- Brussel Sprouts
- Broccoli
- Pumpkin
- Egg yolks
- Sweet potatoes
- Carrots

Adapted from American Optometric Association (www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/caring-for-your-vision/diet-and-nutrition/lutein)

Vegetable Pasta Soup

Serving Size: 1 1/2 cups | Serves: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon oil (canola or vegetable)
- 4 cups vegetables (like onions, carrots, and zucchini) (chopped or sliced)
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes with green chilies
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) low sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 cups water
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning or dried basil
- 2 cups small whole wheat pasta (shell or macaroni)
- 6 cups fresh spinach leaves* (about 1/2 pound)

Instructions:

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat until hot. Add onions and carrots. Cook until the vegetables are softened. Stir often. This should take about 3 minutes.
2. Stir in zucchini and canned tomatoes. Cook 3-4 minutes.
3. Stir in the broth, water, salt, and Italian seasoning or dried basil. Bring to a boil.
4. Stir in the pasta and spinach. Return to a boil.
5. Cook until the pasta is tender using the time on the package for a guide.

Nutrient information per serving:

130 calories, 2.5g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0g trans-fat, 20mg cholesterol, 370mg sodium, 23g total carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 5g sugar, 4g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu.

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Counties served:

Region 2:	Region 3:
Emmet	Cerro Gordo
Hancock	Floyd
Kossuth	Franklin
Palo Alto	Mitchell
Winnebago	Worth

Holiday Food Safety Hacks

Food is a big part of holiday celebrations. Follow these safe food handling tips to prevent unwelcome foodborne illness from ruining your holidays!

- Safely thaw food in the refrigerator, in the microwave or in a cool water bath (change water every 30 minutes).
- Wash hands thoroughly in warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before, during and after food preparation.
- Use hot, soapy water to wash countertops, cutting boards, refrigerator door handles and utensils.
- Use two cutting boards, one to prepare raw meats and one to prepare fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Use separate spoons and forks to taste, stir and serve food.
- Place leftovers in the refrigerator within two hours of serving.

Adapted from 10 Holiday Home Food Safety Tips (www.eatright.org/homefoodsafety/safety-tips/holidays/10-holiday-home-food-safety-tips)

Make Fitness Fun Again

Are you bored with your current fitness routine? If so, try these ideas to make fitness fun again.

- Download a fitness app that works as your own personal trainer.
- Go to your local library and check out some fitness DVDs or go online and find free videos to move along to.
- Make it a social time by inviting a friend or coworker to exercise with you.
- Make a playlist that excites you and gets you moving faster.
- Buy some new workout clothes that make you happy and excited to wear them.
- Try new classes at a local gym, recreation center or community center.

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