

Words on Wellness

YOUR EXTENSION CONNECTION TO NUTRITION AND FITNESS



How to Get Your Vitamin D

Most Americans are not consuming enough vitamin D. A study by the Centers for Disease Control found some groups of Americans were deficient in vitamin D—a fat-soluble vitamin that is essential for human health. Vitamin D helps sustain bone health, but it may also prevent chronic disease (e.g., heart disease, diabetes) and cancer. It is made by the body when skin is exposed to sunlight and is found naturally in very few foods. Therefore, fortified foods are the primary way we can get enough vitamin D through the diet. It is recommended that people up to the age of 70 years consume 600 International Units (IU) and those over the age of 70 consume 800 IU of Vitamin D.

Vitamin D has been used in milk and soy beverages for some time. Recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved an increase to the amount of vitamin D that may be added as an optional ingredient to milk; to plant-based milk alternatives like rice, almond, and coconut beverages; and to plant-based yogurt alternatives. This new allowance by the FDA for increased amounts of vitamin D for milk and milk alternatives will be another valuable source of this important nutrient that is not always easy to obtain.

Source: [FDA.gov](https://www.fda.gov)

Loaded Potato Soup

Serving Size: 1 cup

Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 pounds potatoes (about 6), cooked
- 1 tablespoon tub margarine
- 1 medium onion (coarsely chopped) (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped (optional)
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) low sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup nonfat milk
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 slices (3 ounces) American cheese
- Optional garnishes: sliced green onion, bacon bits, shredded cheese

Instructions:

1. Remove skins and mash potatoes into small pieces to make about 3 cups. Set aside.
2. Melt margarine in a large saucepan over medium heat. Stir in onion and green pepper, if desired. Cook until the vegetables begin to soften (about 5 minutes).
3. Stir in the broth and heat to a boil. Stir in milk, potatoes, peas, and ground black pepper. Heat through, stirring occasionally.
4. Add the cheese slices. Cook and stir about 2 minutes until cheese melts. Add more milk if soup is thicker than you prefer.
5. Add garnishes, if desired, and serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving:

230 calories, 6g total fat, 2.5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 10mg cholesterol, 270mg sodium, 35g total carbohydrate, 5g fiber, 6g sugar, 10g protein

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



www.extension.iastate.edu

Slow Cookers: Be safe and smart as you use this great kitchen tool

There are many recipes on the internet that encourage putting frozen food directly into a slow cooker. This is not safe. The USDA does not recommend the direct from the freezer to slow cooker process because it provides an excellent opportunity for bacteria to grow as the food slowly makes its way through the temperature danger zone.

Instead, take the food out of the freezer at least one night before you want to prepare the meal and allow it to thaw in the refrigerator. If you are thawing large pieces of meat, one overnight might not be enough, so plan ahead.

As you are getting ready in the morning, put the food in the slow cooker on high to give it a jump start. Turn it to low before you leave the house. If you forget to turn it on, you will need to throw the food away when you get home because bacteria have had all day to multiply to a level that could make you and your family sick.

USDA “Kitchen Companion” available at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/shared/PDF/Kitchen_Companion.pdf.

Just Dance

Dancing is an excellent source of physical activity and provides many health benefits. Some of these benefits include the following:

- better heart health
- stronger muscles
- better balance and coordination
- stronger bones
- reduced stress
- more energy



The amount of calories burned depends on the type of dance. Ballroom dancing, for example, is a form of moderate exercise that burns about 260 calories an hour. On the other hand, Zumba is a form of aerobic exercise that can burn up to 500 calories an hour.

To get started, find classes at your local health club, community center, or dance school. If you don't have a partner, many classes will find you a partner. Dance DVDs are available for use at home by purchasing them or renting them from your local library. Your local cable provider may provide channels as well. Or better yet, turn up the music at home and dance it out.

Source: <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000809.htm>

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