

Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness

Less Sunshine May Call for More Vitamin D



New research on vitamin D, also known as the “sunshine vitamin,” suggests that adequate vitamin D intake may lower the risk of colon cancer, heart attacks, stroke, type 2 diabetes, falls, and some autoimmune diseases. Researchers from Wake Forest University have recently found that higher amounts of vitamin D are needed to preserve muscle strength and physical function.

The newly released RDA (recommended dietary allowance) for vitamin D suggests 600 IU for those under the age of 70 and 800 IU for those over the age of 70. Vitamin D can be obtained through exposure to sunlight and in the food that we eat. Fatty fish (tuna, salmon, sardines, mackerel, and cod liver oils) is one of the few types of food that naturally contains vitamin D. Milk has vitamin D added during processing, and contains 100 IU per cup; all milk (skim, 1%, 2% and whole) contain the same vitamin D. If you don't drink milk, choose orange juice fortified with vitamin D.

Exposing your hands, face, and arms to direct sun for 5-15 minutes three times a week allows your skin to synthesize adequate vitamin D. Despite the increased RDA, additional exposure to sunlight is not recommended and use of sunscreen is still encouraged; the new RDA for vitamin D was based on minimal sun exposure.

Individuals living in the upper one-third of the United States can have difficulty maintaining adequate vitamin D in the winter months, and most adults in those regions should consider a vitamin D supplement. Talk with your healthcare provider for specific guidance on vitamin D intake.



Quick Meals for Busy Families

Busy, dedicated families are stretched for time, yet want to be sure everyone is eating nutritiously.

• Check out our Spend Smart Eat Smart website at:

www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/activity/ for many excellent recipes, tips for healthy meals, interactive activities, and a blog.

• **Are you familiar with our Healthy Meals in a Hurry (HMH) book?** It contains recipes for 14 main dishes that are quick, easy, healthy, and inexpensive. This great cookbook is available for \$2.50 from your county ISU Extension Office or you can order it from our website at: www.extension.iastate.edu/store. Enter PM2035 in the search box.

• **Tacos are a quick, easy, and popular main dish.** Here's a recipe from the HMH book for a dry taco seasoning that only has 31 mg of sodium, compared to a typical, purchased package that contains over 2000 mg of sodium! (at right)



Taco Seasoning Mix

This recipe makes the equivalent of six (1.25 ounce) packages

Ingredients:

¼ cup dried minced onion
1 Tablespoon garlic powder
2 Tablespoons chili powder
1 Tablespoon dried oregano
1 Tablespoon cornstarch
1 Tablespoon ground cumin
1 Tablespoon crushed dried red pepper

Combine all ingredients; mix well. Place in storage container with a tight-fitting lid; seal tightly. Store in a cool, dry place for up to one year. Stir or shake well before each use.

To use as a substitute for commercially prepared taco seasoning mixes, measure 2 Tablespoons per pound of hot, cooked, ground meat. Then add 8 ounces (no added salt) tomato sauce to the cooked ground meat/seasoning mixture. Spoon meat mixture into taco shells and top with cheese, shredded salad greens, tomatoes, and other desired toppings.

Yield: 4 servings, 1 taco per serving.



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Healthy People. Environments. Economies.

Join "Live Healthy Iowa"

The "Live Healthy Iowa-100 Day Wellness Challenge" is a fun, easy and affordable way to engage in healthy behaviors. The challenge starts January 20 and ends April 29, and is a team-based program designed to promote positive changes leading to a healthier lifestyle.

How does it work?

Friends, families and co-workers



form teams that track weight loss and/or minutes of activity. Then, gather the team's e-mail addresses and T-shirt sizes. Choose a team name and team captain. Register the team online at: www.livehealthyiowa.org.

www.extension.iastate.edu

Start 2011 with New & Healthy Habits

Old habits die hard! Revise your vague goals such as "I want to lose weight" or "I want to exercise more" to more specific and realistic goals. Some examples include:

- **Eat breakfast every day.** (You will be less likely to snack later in the morning and early afternoon.)
- **Drink skim or 1% milk** instead of 2% or whole milk. (You will reduce your calories and grams of fat, yet still receive the same amount of calcium, protein, and vitamin D.)
- **Park the car farther out** in the parking lots of stores and malls. (Increase the number of steps you walk in a day.)
- **Get up one-half hour earlier** each day. (This can give you time to exercise, assemble healthy food in the crockpot, and make mornings less stressful.)
- **Try one new health-promoting food** each week. (Try eating more fish, which is high in omega-3 fatty acids; folate-rich foods such as green, leafy vegetables, dried beans, or breakfast cereal; or soluble fiber from oats and dried beans, which lower cholesterol.)
- **Put away the salt shaker.** (The new recommended maximum daily sodium intake is 1500 mg for everyone.)
- **Try one new physical activity** each month this winter... snowshoeing, cross country skiing, Wii®, or join a fitness center class such as spinning.



Remember to pick one goal and stick with it! Change one habit at a time. Each small step can lead to a healthier 2011.

The Power is Out! What Do I Do?!

Snowstorms and high winds often knock out electricity. If you're caught without power, remember to keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Don't put food out in the snow as the sun may cause warming.



When the power comes on, carefully check all items in the freezer. It is safe to refreeze foods that still contain ice crystals. Other foods safe to refreeze include breads, cakes, cookies, plain doughnuts, nuts, flour, or cereal. **DO NOT** refreeze any foods that may have thawed completely, especially meat, poultry, or seafood.

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To be prepared, download and print a copy of the publication "When the Home Freezer Stops" (PM 1367) at: www.extension.iastate.edu/store/. Enter PM 1367 in the search box. For additional information on various food safety topics, go to: www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsafety/consumers/