

# NUTRITION NEWS

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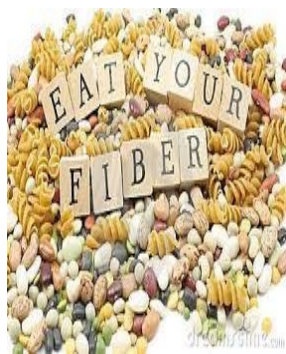
## Dog Days of Summer



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Summer is finally in full swing! And so are the local farmers' markets! By now, you're aware of the benefits of fruits and vegetables. These include increased fiber intake,

additional vitamins, and additional minerals. The farmers' markets make these nutritious options affordable and accessible!



Remember that adding fiber can help your health in a number of different ways. It plays a role in cardiovascular health by keeping your cholesterol at health levels. Some fiber can prevent fat and cholesterol absorption, which explains its role in promoting cardiovascular health.

Fiber can also help you maintain a healthy weight. Many high fiber foods are low and calories and nutrient rich. Dietary fiber also includes a type of carbohydrate that

our bodies cannot digest. The fiber in this food stays in your stomach longer, which can make you feel fuller for a longer period of time and decrease your overall caloric intake.

Did you know that fiber can even play a role in maintaining a healthy blood sugar level? Because fiber may slow how quickly sugar enters your bloodstream, it can also prevent unhealthy blood sugar spikes that diabetics sometimes encounter.

Keep in mind that foods that are heavily processed or refined tend to be lower in fiber, as the processing removes much of the bran from the grain. Enriched foods have some of the B vitamins and iron replaced after processing, but the fiber is not replaced.

Whole foods (as opposed to fiber supplements such as Metamucil or Benefiber) are also more beneficial.

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### Monthly Exercise

1. Sit on floor or bed and put legs together. Reach for your toes.



Remember to increase your fluid intake when increasing fiber intake.

Fruits and vegetables are the foundation of the Mediterranean Diet. A recently published article discusses some criticisms of this diet. Are these criticisms valid?

The Mediterranean Diet was named the “Best Overall Diet” in 2019 by U.S. News and World Report. In addition to a reduced risk of chronic

diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and certain cancers, researchers have found that people that follow a Mediterranean diet

have a reduced risk of anxiety and depression, improved quality of life in adults with Type I diabetes, and a lower risk of Crohn’s disease. So what are the critics suggesting??

The first criticism is that the Mediterranean diet isn’t affordable. This is in part due to the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables. With the farmers’ markets booming, now is the perfect time to try to incorporate ore fresh produce. Animal products tend to be ore expensive and since the Mediterranean diet doesn’t put a great deal of emphasis on animal products, the cost should be reasonable and feasible for most Americans.

The second criticism is that liquid oils, even olive oil, are unhealthy. While it’s true that olive oil is pure fat, it does have nutritional value. Olive oil is rich in monounsaturated



fatty acids, which contribute to heart health. It’s also important to acknowledge that we are not drinking a glass of olive oil. We may use it to roast or sauté vegetables, but in small amounts, olive oil can be beneficial to your health.

Lastly, there is a criticism that says that the Mediterranean diet is all about pasta, and we shouldn’t eat pasta. While pasta is a staple in some countries that follow this diet, it isn’t the only starch used. Among those countries that do use it, most of them cook their pasta al dente, which means it is still firm when you bite into it. When pasta is cooked al dente, it has a relatively low glycemic index (meaning it won’t raise your blood sugar as dramatically as other higher glycemic index foods). And any food in moderation is not off limits!

Here’s a brief recap of the guidelines for a Mediterranean diet. Focus on vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, legumes, potatoes, whole grains, breads, herbs, spices, fish, seafood, and extra virgin olive oil. Eat poultry, eggs, cheese, and yogurt in moderation. Try to avoid sugar sweetened beverages, added sugars, processed meat, refined grains, refined oils, and other highly processed foods.

Water is the preferred beverage on the Mediterranean diet. This diet does include, however, moderate amounts of red wine. The recommended amount is about one glass a day. Coffee and tea are also acceptable.

Lastly, it is important to mention that there really is no need to count calories or track macronutrients (such as protein, fat, and carbs) on the Mediterranean diet. This simple approach

works because of the foods that are emphasized while consuming this diet.

Heat and humidity bring an increase in the number of cases of dehydration that are seen every day in hospitals around the country. It is extra important in the hot weather to remember to stay adequately hydrated. It's also important to remember that thirst is not always a good indicator of whether you have had enough to drink or not.

Most healthy adults need around 2000 ml of fluid every day. That is the equivalent of eight 8-ounce glasses of fluid a day. Keep in mind that it isn't only limited to water. It can be milk, juice, iced tea— even Jell-O! Anything that would turn into a liquid at room temperature is considered a fluid. Because of this rule, soups, ice cream, and popsicles can also be counted toward meeting your fluid goal.

As we age, our sense of thirst decreases. But our need for fluid remains fairly stable. Therefore, it is important to be conscious of how much fluid you take in in a day. Even before dehydration sets in, being “dry” can cause a number of problems. It can create bowel issues and can cause headaches. More severe dehydration can also cause an intense nausea, which in turn may make it difficult to take in liquids by mouth. You can see how easily you can be caught up in a vicious cycle!

Other signs and symptoms to be aware of include dark colored urine, less frequent urinations, fatigue, dizziness, and confusion. Your risk of dehydration also increases when you have a fever. It can also increase during times of excessive sweating, such as during or after an intense exercise regime. Having uncontrolled diabetes or kidney disease also puts you at increased risk of dehydration.

There are some easy ways to increase your fluid intake, especially during the summer. As we already mentioned, fruits and vegetables are abundant at this time of year in upstate New York. Try making your own flavored waters with the different produce options that are available. Adding sparkling water or seltzer can make a light and refreshing spritzer to beat the heat with. It can be as simple as putting fresh fruit in a large canister of water and leaving it in the refrigerator. Try strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, or even cucumbers for starters. Different combinations are endless!

You can also pick up an infuser. This is a special cup that has a container for fresh fruit that will be leaked into the water, creating a flavored drink. Generally, the longer the fruit or vegetables soak in the water, the stronger the flavor.

Even if you don't like flavored water, increasing your intake of fresh fruits and vegetables will increase your fluid intake. Some foods are more beneficial than others— for instance, cucumbers and watermelon are greater than 90% water! As a rule of thumb, eating a well balanced diet including fruits and vegetables can add an additional 300 to 400 ml of water each day. That is equivalent to 11 fluid ounces or almost a cup and a half of fluid each day !



**Mediterranean Chicken Medley with Eggplant and Feta**

- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 tbs garlic powder
- 1 tbs paprika
- 1 pinch salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 2 pounds skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- 3 tbs olive oil
- 1 tbs butter
- 1 eggplant, chopped
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 zucchini, chopped

- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 2 tbs dill paste
- 1/2 cup crumbled Feta cheese
- Diced dill to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine flour, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, salt, and black pepper in a shallow bowl. Reserve 1 tbs of the mixture for later use. Dip sliced chicken into the flour mixture to coat both sides. Place on a plate. Heat 3 tbs olive oil and butter in a skillet over medium high heat. Add eggplant and onion and cook until soft and browned, 5 to 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper; transfer to a baking dish. Cook zucchini and bell pepper in the same skillet over medium high heat until softened, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and transfer to the baking dish with the eggplant. Add additional oil to the skillet and brown the chicken. Transfer to the baking dish. Pour tomatoes into the skillet and add reserved flour mixture and dill paste. Bring to

a boil, remove from heat, and pour into the baking dish. Top with Feta cheese. Bake in the preheated oven until bubbly, 30 to 40 minutes. Sprinkle with fresh dill.



**HEAP**

If you received HEAP last year but have not yet received an application for this year, please call our Office at 867-1195.

If you did not receive HEAP last year but want to apply this year, please call our Office at 867-1195.

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