

NUTRITION NEWS

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Happy Summer!



Summer is finally in full swing! And so are the local farmers' markets! By now, you're aware of the benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables. Some of these benefits 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 healthy 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 in 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:

Shoulder Rolls

- Stand tall, arms by your sides.
- Raise your shoulders toward your ears, gently shift them forward, then down and back and up toward the ears again.
- Complete several circles in this direction and then switch, doing the same number on both sides. Finish with your shoulder away from your ears and slightly back.

Probiotics have garnered a lot of attention in the news over the past few years. The potential health benefits of consuming probiotics regularly has expanded tremendously over the past few decades with newer research offering promising results. Yogurt with live and active cultures has primarily been the focus as the source of these probiotics. Did you know that certain varieties of cheese can also contain probiotics? Some of these cheeses can provide probiotics at levels comparable, or even great than, yogurt.

According to the World Health Organization, the definition of probiotics is as follows: “live microorganisms which, when administered in adequate numbers, confer a health benefit on the host.” Probiotic bacteria are normal inhabitants of the human colon. They work by improving the balance of intestinal microflora and improving defenses against harmful pathogens. Additional health benefits include enhanced immune response, reduction of serum cholesterol, vitamin synthesis, anticarcinogenic activity, and antibacterial activity.

Probiotics have been found in cheeses that have been aged, but not heated (or pasteurized) afterwards. This includes both hard and soft cheeses, such as Swiss, Provolone, Gouda, cheddar, and Edam. Some cottage cheese, as well as Parmesan and feta cheese may also contain probiotics.

There may be a problem with the probiotics found in cheese, however. To offer health benefits, the probiotics have to remain viable in the food product above a certain threshold. Most probiotic foods that are already on the market (such as fermented milk and yogurt) are fresh products that are

generally consumed within a few days or weeks of being manufactured. In contrast, hard cheeses (such as cheddar) have long ripening times of up to two years. Previous studies have shown that probiotic bacteria do survive well in both cheddar and Gouda cheeses, which is promising. It’s also worth noting that there are cheeses that have probiotics added after processing, such as Babybel Plus Probiotic.

Lastly, processed cheese is a food product that is made from cheese and unfermented dairy ingredients mixed with emulsifiers. There may be additional ingredients as well, including vegetable oil, salt, food coloring, or sugar. Because they’re made from unfermented dairy ingredients, these products generally contain no probiotics.

In summary, the best sources of probiotics are in products that contain “live and active cultures.” While there may be some probiotics in other cheeses, your best bet is sticking with yogurt or cottage cheese!



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've 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 urination, 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 300 ml of water each day! That is the equivalent of 11 fluid ounces or almost a cup and a half of fluid daily!



Spinach Casserole with Cottage Cheese

2 cups seashell pasta
1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
1 (16 ounce) package cottage cheese
1 slice day old bread, toasted
3 tbs melted butter
Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to boil. Add pasta and cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until al dente; drain.

In a 2 quart casserole dish combine cooked pasta, spinach, and cottage cheese; mix well.
In a small bowl crumble the toast and add melted butter. Sprinkle over spinach mixture.
Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes, or until heated through.



HEAP

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

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Summertime Mango Drink

2 mangoes, cut into cubes
1 cup ice cubes
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tbs white sugar
1 2/3 cups milk

Combine the first four ingredients in a blender. Pour in the milk. Blend until liquefied.



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