



WellnessWorks@ Stephens Insurance

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newsletter

... SEPTEMBER 2010 ...

QUICK TAKES

HEALTHY FOOD SHOPPING STRATEGIES

A smart shopping strategy can help you put healthy foods on your table even when the budget is tight. The key points to keep in mind are:

Make a shopping list and stick to it: Be sure to include staples that you are running low on and the ingredients you need for the upcoming week's meals.

Shop for in-season produce: If you are unsure what's in season, ask your produce manager for advice on seasonality and good value.

Frozen fruits and veggies can be a healthful bargain: Freezing produce immediately after harvest preserves high levels of vitamins and nutrients.

Try store brands: Grocery retailers have been expanding into healthy options.



Prepared Meals at the Supermarket

More and more people are using the supermarket as a place to pick up prepared meals. A survey by the Food Marketing Institute found that 27 percent of people said they got most of their take-out from supermarkets, compared with 35 percent from fast-food restaurants and 18 percent from full-service eateries. But often prepared meals do not stack up nutritionally to home-cooked meals.

Like many meals prepared outside the home, they can be high in fat and sodium, and are less likely to come with vegetables. The not-so-surprising results of the 2009 *Shopping for Health* survey found that some of the key reasons consumers find it hard to eat healthy foods are busy schedules, difficulty finding healthy fast-foods and the higher cost of healthy foods.

Putting quick, healthy, economical options on your dinner table is not as hard as you may think. Here are some strategies to get started at your supermarket.

Start with a rotisserie chicken

A rotisserie chicken is an affordable (\$7 to \$8), versatile source of lean protein that can be a great start to a variety of quick meals. Here are a few meals you can pull together in no time:

Meal 1 - Simple Roast Chicken Dinner: Serve some simple sides with a rotisserie chicken for a quick and healthy meal. Grab a baked potato or sweet potato and pair this with a bag of steamed veggies of choice.

Meal 2 - Asian Chicken Salad: Shred rotisserie chicken and mix with a bag of broccoli slaw, sliced almonds and light Asian sesame dressing. Serve with a fresh baguette.

Meal 3 - Chicken Soft Tacos: Mix picante sauce, lime juice, chili powder, shredded chicken and shredded lettuce and toss until evenly coated. Scoop into soft tortillas and top with shredded low-fat cheese and fat-free sour cream if desired.

Go see the seafood counter

Many Americans shy away from preparing seafood. More than twice as much fish is ordered at restaurants than is prepared at home. Cooking most seafood is simple and quick. It can be costly, but most supermarkets run weekly specials that make it more affordable. Give this virtually fat-free protein source a try.

Meal 1 - Catch of the Day: Select whichever fish is on sale such as cod, tilapia or salmon and pick your cooking method. Some of the quickest are broiling, steaming or sautéing in a pan. Buy a bag of prewashed baby spinach and a box of quick cooking whole-wheat couscous, which only tacks on an extra 10 minutes to your meal prep.

Meal 2 - Shrimp Caesar salad: You can often find good deals on bags of frozen cooked shrimp at the supermarket. Defrost them in small batches by running them under cold water. These can be tossed with prepared Caesar salad mix for a super speedy meal. You could also make your own with torn romaine lettuce, seasoned croutons, Parmesan cheese, cherry tomatoes and light Caesar dressing. Serve with a whole-grain roll.

Meal 3 - Go for sushi: Both low in fat and high in healthy omega-3 fatty acids, sushi is one of your best bets when running into your local grocer for dinner. If you don't like the thought of raw fish, most groceries stock a selection of cooked fish sushi or even veggie-only sushi.

Prepared Meals at the Supermarket (cont.)

Create a sensational salad

Supermarket salad bars vary from store to store. While generally getting a salad is a healthy choice, you do have to watch your toppings and dressings. Try these tips on getting the convenience of the salad bar while saving some money.

Pick your salad bar standbys

Some favorites are dark leafy greens like romaine lettuce and baby spinach, and colorful raw veggies like cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes, broccoli and bell peppers.

Watch the fat!

Beware of mayonnaise-laden salads and high-fat cheeses. Steer towards lean proteins like egg whites, flaked tuna, grilled chicken, tofu, cottage cheese and beans.

BYO protein

Keep in mind that salad bars are typically one cost per pound (approx. \$5 per pound). If you want to lower the cost of your salad, purchase the heavy items like beans, tuna and cottage cheese separately.

Meal 1 - Greek Garbanzo Bean Salad: Grab a can of garbanzo beans and a package of feta cheese. Next, visit the salad bar for cucumbers, tomatoes, red onion and olives. Combine the ingredients with low-fat Italian salad dressing, lemon juice, garlic and grinding of fresh pepper.

Meal 2 - Nicoise-style Tuna Salad With White Beans & Olives: Pick up a can of tuna, white beans and sliced olives as well as a steamer bag of green beans and some hard-boiled eggs and red onions from the salad bar. Toss these ingredients with olive oil and lemon juice.

Meal 3 - Cuban Grilled Chicken Salad: Toss romaine lettuce with onion, avocado and colorful bell peppers. Top salad with black beans, pineapple chunks, and sliced grilled chicken. Whisk together olive oil, lime juice, garlic, salt and pepper, and drizzle over salad.

Soup it up

To create a quick, hearty and healthy soup, start with a lower-sodium canned soup (about \$2 per can) and add frozen diced vegetables, cooked macaroni or quick-cooking brown rice, and leftover diced cooked chicken, turkey or beans.

Meal 1 - Curried Lentil and Chicken Sausage Soup: Begin with a can of lentil soup and add curry powder, cumin, precooked chicken sausage and a bunch of fresh spinach. Serve with hearty fresh bread.

Meal 2 - Black Bean Soup: Begin with a can of black bean soup and top with plain nonfat Greek yogurt, fresh chopped tomatoes, shredded cheddar cheese and toasted corn tortilla strips.

Meal 3 - Split Pea, Cauliflower and Ham Soup: Begin with a can of split pea soup. Add half of a bag of frozen steamed chopped cauliflower and thick sliced deli ham (honey or low sodium) cut into cubes.

When you have more time at the supermarket, shop with an eye toward fast and nutritious options that you can put together when you are short on time. The more meals you make on your own, the better. But you can find healthy prepared options.

Source: Inverness Medical

Chicken and Tortellini Stew Takes about 30 minutes | Makes 6 servings

Ingredients

2 teaspoons olive
1 onion, chopped
1 red or green bell pepper, cut into short, thin slices
3 carrots, sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 32-oz package low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
2 cups water
1 1/3 cups (4 oz/120 ml) dried cheese-and-spinach tortellini
1 small zucchini, cut in half lengthwise and sliced into thin half-circles
6 white mushrooms, sliced
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme or oregano
about 2 cups diced chicken (from a rotisserie chicken)
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Grated fresh Parmesan, optional

Preparation

1. In a large, deep skillet or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, bell pepper, carrots and garlic and cook until they begin to soften, about 7 minutes.
2. Add the broth and water to the pan and bring to a gentle boil. Add the tortellini, zucchini, mushrooms and thyme or oregano. Once the broth comes back to a boil, cook for 10 minutes.
3. Stir chicken and cook until heated through. Stir in the fresh parsley. Taste the stew and add salt and pepper as desired. Ladle into bowls and garnish with a little Parmesan.



Nutritional info

per serving
195 Calories
7g Fat
2g Saturated fat
0g Trans fat
17g Protein
15g Carbohydrate
2g Fiber
210mg Sodium
57mg Calcium

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... AUGUST 2010 ...

QUICK TAKES

MEDICAL INFORMATION

When it comes to medical information, you can't always believe what you hear or read. Here are some tips to ensure you are getting reliable health information on the Internet:

- Reliable health-related sites should make it easy for you to find out who's responsible for the site's content and who funds the site.
- Look for current information. Dependable websites are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- Government agencies, non-profit health foundations and associations, and medical colleges are among the most trustworthy sources.
- Be wary of sites that sell health-promoting products. If a product sounds too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true.
- Your online wellness program offers a searchable database of trustworthy health information.



Be Smart About Your Health Care

In today's society, health care is a product. And when shopping for any product, you want to get the best value for your money. Take these steps to make sure you're receiving the best care without spending more than you need to:

Use your doctor wisely!

Even though your doctor is the one with the medical training and expertise, only you can give accurate information about your body, your symptoms and health habits. To get quality treatment, you have to do more than just show up for your appointment. You need to take an active role in maximizing your health. Here are some tips on how to get the most value from a visit to the doctor:

- **Speak openly with your doctor:** Don't wait until you are asked. Be ready to describe all your symptoms and your medical history. Sometimes this may mean sharing personal information; be completely open with your doctor, even if it makes you uncomfortable.
- **Be prepared:** Make a list of things you need to ask or tell your doctor before your appointment. If possible, bring other information such as X-rays, test results and medical records.
- **Get your screenings:** Make sure your doctor schedules you for screenings that are appropriate for you.

Do your own research

Sometimes it helps to look for information on your own. Learning more about a condition you have, or that you may be at risk for, may help you take steps to prevent it. Just make sure that you rely on sources that are backed by science and up-to-date — particularly when using the Internet. If you have questions about something you read or heard, ask your doctor.

Be smart about medications

Making good decisions about the drugs you buy and how you take them is a key part of being a smart health care consumer. Here are some guidelines:

- **Buy generics:** Most drugs have both a generic brand and a name-brand version. The difference? Just the name and the price! The FDA strictly regulates generic drugs so they are just as safe and just as effective as brand-name drugs. But they can save you from 30 percent to 60 percent.
- **Use mail-order pharmacies:** If you use a medication over a long period of time, ordering prescription drugs by mail can save you between 10 percent and 15 percent of what you normally pay. Plan ahead, though, as the mail can take some time.
- **Follow the instructions:** 30 percent to 50 percent of those who take over-the-counter drugs do not use them as directed. When taking any drugs, follow the instructions carefully. Never take medicine for longer or in a higher dosage than suggested on the bottle — this can be very dangerous. If you feel the prescribed dose is not effective, see your doctor right away.

Debunking Health Myths

Some are silly, some are serious, all are wildly overstated at best.

Silly Myth: *An apple a day keeps the doctor away.*

Reality: Apples aren't miracle cures, but there really are lots of good reasons to eat one or more a day. Apples contain boron, a trace mineral that increases calcium absorption, which may help prevent osteoporosis. They also have soluble fiber, which can help lower cholesterol.

Serious Myth: *Cancer is America's No. 1 killer.*

Reality: More Americans die of heart disease than from cancer. The good news is that heart trouble, even more than cancer, can often be avoided with lifestyle changes. Cut back on red meat, quit smoking, exercise regularly and maintain an appropriate weight for your height, and you'll significantly reduce your risks.

Silly Myth: *Don't swallow chewing gum; it sticks to your stomach.*

Reality: Gum is not digestible, but it does not linger in the stomach. For adults, the effects of swallowing gum have not been studied; it's not high on any list of scientific concern. However, one report raised concern that some small children who suffered blockages in the intestines and esophagus frequently swallowed gum. Consult your pediatrician to decide if and when it's appropriate to let your child chew it.

Serious Myth: *To get the benefits from antioxidants, you need to take supplements.*

Reality: Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables of various colors and you'll get plenty of antioxidants. Bright red strawberries, green asparagus and yellow peppers all deliver loads of them, and they're tastier than supplements of vitamins C and E.

Silly Myth: *Reading in dim light — or sitting too close to the TV — will ruin your eyesight.*

Reality: While they both may make your eyes feel tired, permanent damage is not being caused. Your eyes include muscles, and like any muscle, overuse can cause fatigue. Doing either of these behaviors may make your eyes feel tired by straining the muscles, but permanent damage is not being caused.



Serious Myth: *I can greatly improve my diet just by cutting out red meat.*

Reality: Not so fast. A "junk-food" diet without red meat is still junk. If you switch from burgers every night to pizza every night, you're just changing the source of your saturated fat from meat to dairy. The best way to improve your diet is to eat more fruits and vegetables and favor lean proteins such as fish and chicken breast. If you eat red meat, choose leaner cuts.

Silly Myth: *Eating certain special foods will boost your metabolism and burn fat.*

Reality: There are no magical fat-burning foods. Neither a crateful of grapefruit nor a gallon of cabbage soup will turn you into a more efficient fat burner. To lose excess pounds, you need to decrease your caloric intake and increase the calories you burn through physical activity.

- Source: Inverness Medical

Vegetable Gumbo Makes 12 servings

It's no myth that eating a wide assortment of fruits and vegetables is good for your health. People who eat greater amounts of fruits and vegetables have a lower risk of heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and some cancers.

Ingredients

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 Vidalia or other sweet onion, chopped
3 ribs celery, tough strings peeled, sliced
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
1 14.5-ounce can diced no-salt-added tomatoes with juices
4 cups fresh or frozen corn kernels
3 cups fresh or frozen sliced okra
2 medium boiling potatoes, peeled and cubed
4 cups (32 ounces) low-sodium vegetable broth (optional)
Salt and freshly-ground black pepper to taste
Hot sauce to taste

Preparation

1. Heat oil in a large pot over low heat. Add onions and celery, cover and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 15 seconds.
2. Stir in tomatoes, corn, okra and potatoes. Add broth plus 2 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer. Cook until potatoes are soft and gumbo has thickened, about 30 minutes.
3. Season to taste with salt, pepper and hot sauce.

Make ahead tip:

The gumbo may be prepared in advance and stored in the refrigerator for up to three days or in the freezer for one month.



Nutritional info

per serving
82 calories
1 g fat
.3 g saturated fat
3 g protein
19 g carbohydrate
3.4g fiber
110 mg sodium



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QUICK TAKES

EXERCISE SAFETY IN HOT WEATHER

Overheating and dehydration can be an issue when exercising outdoors on hot and humid days. To minimize the danger:

- **Wear light-colored, lightweight and loose-fitting clothing**
- **Take frequent breaks in the shade where available**
- **Increase your water intake**
- **Scale back the intensity and duration of your activity**

It is important to recognize the signs of heat-related illness and learn how to respond appropriately. Signs of heat-related illness include profuse sweating, fatigue, thirst, muscle cramp, headache and light-headedness. If you, or someone else, experience these symptoms, get out of the sun, drink cool fluids, spray yourself with water and rest. If the symptoms worsen, call 911.



Setting Up a Home Gym

For many of us, joining a gym is not a practical option. If you're short on time, don't have the money for membership fees or just aren't interested in working out in public, the gym might not be for you.

Creating your own home gym might be the answer. For a small investment, you can transform a small area of your home into an exercise space with many of the exercise benefits of a commercial gym.



Picking the Spot

The first step is to find a place in your home or apartment where you can have some privacy and won't be distracted. It should be large enough that you can stretch out in all directions without touching anything; also try to keep it separate from any sharp edges in case you slip. If you have hardwood or slippery floors you may want to use a small rug or yoga mat to work out on. It may be helpful to have a flight of stairs and/or a television set nearby (we'll get to that below).

What will you do in your new gym? An exercise plan should cover the three main components of physical fitness: cardiovascular, strength and flexibility.

Cardiovascular Training

Cardiovascular exercise may be the most important part of your fitness program. Getting your blood pumping is vital to improving heart and lung function, and plays a critical role in weight management. Exercise bikes can be a great way to get cardiovascular exercise at home. While new ones can be costly, it is possible to get bargains for used bikes online or at yard sales; your local gym may sell them as well. Another home option for cardiovascular exercise is to try workout videos. Kickboxing anyone?

Or you can keep it simple by doing jumping jacks or step-ups at the bottom of a flight of stairs. A low-tech workout still provides all the health benefits. No matter what you choose, your goal should be to work up to at least 20 minutes of cardiovascular exercise each day.

Strength Training

There are a wide range of options for creating a strength training routine in your home. A lot of exercises can be performed without any equipment, such as push-ups, body-weight squats and more. If you want to get more out of your home strength exercises, you can purchase equipment to use as resistance. Barbell weights are compact enough to be used in the smallest home gym and can be used in a variety of ways to boost your strength exercises.

Flexibility Training

This is an easy one. Flexibility routines from simple stretching to advanced yoga can be done almost anywhere. The benefits are clear: Flexibility training keeps us limber, increases circulation and improves the functionality of our muscles and joints. Stretching, yoga and tai chi are all great ways to work on your flexibility at home.

Does Variety in Exercise Matter?

It's fine to do a favorite activity over and over. But without some variety, you may be shortchanging yourself.

Exercisers who find one activity they love and do it again and again often wonder if they're missing out on anything by not mixing up their routines.

In some respects, variety is irrelevant. If you're exercising primarily to control your weight, for example, your goal is to burn more calories than you take in – how you do it is up to you. Burning 100 calories will contribute to your goal whether it's by running or by washing your car.

Beware of Boredom

But engaging in different exercises has advantages. The more you do, the greater the odds you'll find a way to exercise and not get bored. Switching between exercises also may reduce the risk of injuries from repeated stress on the same parts of the body.

Finally, regular participation in a variety of activities means that regardless of changing seasons, locales, availability of exercise buddies, etc., you're likely to find a way to keep exercising.

Different activities, different benefits

But the best argument for variety is the need to balance activities that offer different physical benefits – primarily, aerobic fitness and musculoskeletal fitness.

You'll build aerobic fitness by walking briskly, jogging, cycling, swimming and playing sports with at least moderate intensity, such as tennis, basketball and soccer. Aerobic fitness reduces risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer and obesity.

Musculoskeletal fitness comes from resistance-training activities such as weight lifting and stretching. Its benefits are centered on enhanced performance, but it may also reduce the risk of some chronic diseases.

Aerobic and musculoskeletal fitness each help combat the loss of function that often accompanies aging. A fit, active way of life increases not only longevity, but also *quality* of life. You've heard it before, but it's true: Exercise adds years to your life and life to your years.

Stay Balanced

It is advised that exercisers engage in at least one aerobic activity and do some resistance exercise for musculoskeletal fitness, along with stretching to maintain joint flexibility. If there's one routine you like to do again and again in each category, that's OK. If you like to do different aerobic and musculoskeletal exercises at different times, all the better.

What really counts is to find the exercise program you like enough to stick with over time. Keep it up, and you'll reap the incredible benefits that come from a fit, active way of life.



Southwest Summer Stir Fry Makes 4 servings

Take advantage of sweet corn when it's in season. This easy recipe can be easily doubled for a larger gathering.

Ingredients

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 small zucchini, diced
1 green or red bell pepper, diced
1 small onion, diced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 1/2 cups (7 1/2 oz/225 g) fresh corn kernels
(cut from 3 ears corn)
1 large vine-ripened tomato, peeled, seeded and diced
1 teaspoon honey
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon Tabasco, Texas Pete or other hot sauce
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro or parsley
2 tablespoons chopped dry-roasted peanuts, optional

Preparation

1. In a wok or large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add zucchini, green peppers and onions and cook, stirring, until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Stir in cumin. Add corn and cook until it is just tender, about 3 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, honey, salt and hot sauce and cook for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat. Stir in cilantro or parsley and sprinkle with peanuts, if using.



Nutritional info / serving

per serving
120 calories
3.2 g fat
0.4 g saturated fat
3.0 g protein
29 g carbohydrate
3.6 g fiber
191 mg sodium

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... JUNE 2010 ...

QUICK TAKES

BREAKFAST TIPS

Looking for some quick, healthy breakfast ideas? Try one of these:

- Scoop low-fat, calcium-fortified cottage cheese into a cantaloupe or honeydew melon half.
- Stuff a 6-inch whole-wheat pita with scrambled egg whites (or egg substitute) and salsa. Serve with 1/2 pink grapefruit or other fresh fruit.
- Layer fat-free yogurt and berries over one prepared whole-grain waffle (from frozen).
- Melt one slice (1 oz.) low-fat Swiss or cheddar cheese over sliced tomato on a whole-wheat English muffin. Enjoy 1 medium fresh fruit of your choice on the side.



Healthy Upgrades for Breakfast

It's 7 a.m. -- do you know what's in your breakfast? Many of us start the day with a sugary cereal or a muffin full of bad fats or a calorie-laden bagel too plump to even fit in the toaster.

But with a few small changes, you can make big-time improvements. Your goal at breakfast should be to get calcium, dietary fiber and vitamin C -- nutrients that can be harder to find at other meals.

Here's a look at some common breakfast items and how you can upgrade them without much hassle.

Breakfast at the Table

OJ Plus! For an effortless upgrade from regular orange juice, switch to 100 percent juice fortified with calcium and vitamin D. You'll get 35 percent of your daily calcium and 120 percent of your daily vitamin C in an 8-ounce glass.

Bold Choices for Cold Cereals! When you're choosing a cold cereal, remember to get your fiber! A bowl of corn flakes or rice crisps might sound healthy, but there's only 1 gram of dietary fiber in a cup. Easy-to-find upgrades include General Mills Wheat Chex (5 grams fiber), Post Shredded Wheat and Bran (8 grams fiber), Kashi GoLEAN (10 grams fiber) or Uncle Sam's Cereal (10 grams fiber). If you can't quit your favorite low-fiber brand, try combining it with a high-fiber option. You might enjoy the taste! Also, be sure to have your cereal with nonfat or low-fat milk instead of whole milk, or try soy milk. With all packaged cereals, look to the Nutrition Facts panel printed on the back, not the health claims displayed on the front.



Some Like It Hot! Hot oatmeal is a great way to get heart-healthy soluble fiber into your diet. Instant brands are convenient, but beware of variety packs that are loaded with added sugar. Quick oatmeal has a little more soluble fiber and cooks in just one minute. Prepare 1 cup cooked and top with fresh or dried fruits as you wish, and you'll easily meet your soluble fiber quota for the day.

Leggo Your Eggos! Many frozen waffles use refined wheat flour (with only 3 grams fiber for two waffles) and have unhealthy trans fat. There are better options out there for waffle-lovers. Go with Van's 97 percent fat-free or multigrain varieties to avoid the trans fat and get 5 grams fiber per serving. Another trans-fat free option is Kashi-GoLEAN waffles with 6 grams fiber and a few extra grams of protein.

Are Eggs Healthy? Sure, as long as you don't load them up with fat! Eggs can be a great way to get some cheap high-quality protein into your diet, providing 5.5 grams of protein in one egg for only 68 calories. Although eggs do have a significant amount of cholesterol, research has shown that dietary cholesterol has only a small effect on blood cholesterol. Unfortunately, frying them in butter and adding cheese will add lots of saturated fat. Scramble in a good nonstick skillet and throw in some leftover veggies to add some more nutrients and fiber.

Healthy Upgrades for Breakfast

Running Out the Door

Nutrition Bar Buyers Beware!

Despite the healthy-sounding name, many breakfast bars are nutritionally no better than white bread and jelly. Quaker Oatmeal Breakfast Squares do offer 3 grams fiber but they're somewhat high in sugar and contain partially hydrogenated oils. Grab an Odwalla Bar (4 grams fiber) or a Luna bar (3 grams fiber) for a significant nutrition upgrade. If you prefer something warm, pop an Amy's Breakfast burrito in the microwave: it has 5 grams fiber and will meet 20 percent of your daily iron needs.



I Can't Believe How Many Calories Are In My Yogurt!

An 8-ounce container of sweetened, fruit-on-the-bottom, full-fat yogurt has about 240 calories and 4 grams of fat. Try this easy upgrade: Stir 1/2 cup fresh or frozen unsweetened berries and 2 tablespoons almonds or other nuts into 1 cup plain nonfat yogurt. You'll eliminate the saturated fat, and be able to enjoy good fruit flavor along with 3 grams of fiber.

Buying On the Outside

The Early Morning Drive-thru

Fast-food franchises offer speed and convenience. And, while they're not always cheap depending on what you choose, they can offer good value. Fast-food restaurants have made efforts in recent years to offer some more nutritious options. Unfortunately, many people are still tempted by the higher-fat, higher-calorie choices.

If you know you'll be picking up a to-go breakfast, check out the restaurant's website the night before. Look for lower-calorie breakfast menu items with no more than 15 grams total fat and less than 800 mg sodium.

And don't make a fast-food breakfast your daily routine.

Coffee Calorie Count

Do you start your morning with a stop at the coffee shop? Remember that whole milk or cream will add unwanted fat and calories. A 16-ounce latte made with whole milk has 260 calories and 14 grams of fat. (Remember too, that every packet of sugar you stir in adds another 16 calories.) To save 100 calories and cut the fat altogether, insist on fat-free milk for your next coffee. Over the course of the workweek, you'll consume 500 fewer calories and will still be getting 50 percent of your daily calcium.

Homemade Granola Makes 5 cups for 10 1/2-cup servings

Tired of spending \$6 for a 10-ounce bag of granola? Why not make your own? It's easy and it puts you in control of the ingredients. The trick is to use old-fashioned -- not quick or instant -- rolled oats and to bake the granola slowly in a low oven. This homemade granola will keep for two weeks when stored in an airtight container.

Ingredients

2/3 cup toasted wheat germ
2/3 cup sliced almonds
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 cup pure maple syrup
1/4 cup apple or orange juice
1 tablespoon canola oil
A pinch of salt
2/3 cup raisins and/or dried cranberries
1 tablespoon sugar

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 275 degrees. Line a large baking sheet with sides with parchment paper.
2. Combine oats, wheat germ, almonds and cinnamon in a mixing bowl. In a small saucepan, heat maple syrup, juice, oil and salt briefly until steaming. Drizzle the liquid over the oat mixture and stir to combine. Working with a handful at a time, squeeze some of the cereal to form small clusters.
3. Spread the granola on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for 30 minutes, stirring the mixture once or twice. Add dried fruit and sugar and bake about 15 minutes longer, until the granola is golden brown.
4. Let the granola cool completely before storing in an airtight container.



Nutritional info / serving

per 1/2-cup serving
Calories: 215
Protein: 8 g
Total Fat: 6.4 g
Sat Fat: 1.2 g
Trans Fat: 0 g
Carbohydrate: 32 g
Fiber: 4.5 g
Sodium: 16 mg

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... MAY 2010 ...

QUICK TAKES



OSTEOPOROSIS

- Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones have become so fragile and weak that they can fracture under even mild stress. If it's a hip or the spine, permanent disability may result.
- 24 million Americans have this "brittle-bone" disease, but diet, exercise and healthy habits can lower the risk.
- Getting adequate calcium and vitamin D throughout life may decrease the risk.
- Weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, stimulates bone growth and prevents bone loss throughout life.
- Smoking and excessive dieting also increase risk.

Boosting Your Calcium

Calcium plays an important role in building your bones and keeping them strong. It's also key for nerve and muscle function and in blood clotting. Most Americans don't get enough calcium in their diets. When you don't consume enough, your body will take calcium from your bones for all its needs.

The recommended daily intake of calcium for adults between 19 and 50 is 1,000 mg. Adults over the age of 50 should get 1,200mg of calcium daily.

To make sure you're getting enough calcium, aim for three calcium-rich foods or beverages every day: nonfat milk or yogurt, tofu, calcium-fortified soymilk or calcium-fortified orange juice.

The first step is to familiarize yourself with the calcium content of common foods using the chart below, then check out the calcium-rich menus.

How to Get Enough Calcium	
FOOD	CALCIUM (MG)
Nonfat yogurt, 1 cup	450
Sardines (with bones), 3 oz.	370
Shrimp, cooked, 3 oz.	320
Low-fat (1 percent) or nonfat milk, 1 cup	300
Calcium-fortified orange juice, 1 cup	300
Calcium-fortified soy milk, 1 cup	300
Tofu, firm, 1 cup	260
Calcium-fortified cottage cheese, 1/2 cup	200
Collard greens, kale or broccoli, 1 cup, cooked	100
Pinto beans, canned, 1 cup	90
Chickpeas, canned, 1 cup	78
Almonds, 1 oz.	75

How to Plan a Calcium-Rich Menu

Here's an example of a day's meals that adds up to approximately 1,300mg:

Breakfast

8 oz. low-fat milk, fortified soy milk, or yogurt (300-450mg) ; 2 oz. calcium-fortified cereal (250mg) **Breakfast subtotal:** At least 550mg. Other choices: 8 oz. fortified orange or grapefruit juice (300mg); 1/2 cup cottage cheese (200mg) with fruit; egg-white omelet with 1 oz. fat-free or low-fat shredded cheese (200-270mg)

Lunch

1 slice low-fat Swiss cheese (270mg) added to any sandwich, or, pita topped with 1 oz. low-fat or fat-free mozzarella cheese (207mg) and 1/2 cup cooked spinach (140mg). **Lunch subtotal:** At least 270mg. **Running total:** at least 820mg.

Dinner

1 cup diced tofu (processed with calcium sulfate) (260mg), stir-fried with 1/2 cup bok choy (80mg), 1 cup broccoli (72mg), and red pepper strips served over rice; or 3 oz. canned pink salmon (180mg), baked potato, and 1/2 cup any cooked greens (mustard, collard, kale, Swiss chard - about 100mg); **Dinner subtotal:** At least 280mg. **Running total:** 1,100mg.

Snacks/Desserts

3/4 cup pudding made with low-fat milk or calcium-fortified soy milk (200mg); or 8 oz. low-fat chocolate milk (290mg) **Snacks subtotal:** At least 200mg. **Grand total:** At least 1,300mg.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D plays an important role in bone health by helping your body to absorb calcium.

Our bodies make vitamin D from UV rays from the sun with just 15 minutes of sun exposure during the summer and winter months in southern climates.



However, from November to February, in latitudes at or above 42 degrees (Boston, Chicago, Portland, Ore.), sunlight is too weak for adequate vitamin D production so it becomes important to get vitamin D through your diet.

The following are good food sources of vitamin D:

- Fortified low-fat or fat-free milk
- Fortified breakfast cereals
- Fish, especially fatty fish

The National Osteoporosis Foundation recommends that adults age 19-50 get 400-800 International Units (IU) of vitamin D a day. People over age 50 are recommended to get 800-1,000 IU.

Physical Activity

Strength training preserves bone. After age 35, women lose approximately half a percent of their bone mass each year. That rate doubles, and may even quadruple, after menopause.

Bone loss at this rate can lead to osteoporosis -- in fact, one of every two women over age 50 will suffer a bone fracture as a result of osteoporosis. But a study at Tufts University's Center on Aging found that women who participated in strength training not only stopped losing bone density, but actually *gained* bone mass over a year's time. Those who skipped strength training lost about 2 percent of their bone density during the same period. More than two dozen other studies support these results.

Weight-bearing exercises will also help your bones stay strong. Jogging, walking, dancing and using the elliptical machine are all examples of weight-bearing exercise where your body is working against gravity to hold you up.

Salmon Patties Makes: 4 servings

These are definitely not your grandmother's salmon patties. Lime juice, soy sauce and sesame oil add a Southeast Asian flair and water chestnuts contribute a delightful crunch. You can count on the canned salmon to supply 180 mg of calcium. Serve with stir-fried bok choy or Swiss chard for even more calcium.

Ingredients

1 ½ cups (3 oz/120 g) fresh breadcrumbs
two 7 ½ -ounce (225-g) cans salmon, drained
8 -ounce (240-g) can water chestnuts, drained and chopped
1/3 cup (1 oz/30 g) finely chopped green onion
¼ cup (1/4 oz/7 g) coarsely chopped fresh cilantro or parsley
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
2 teaspoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
½ teaspoon sesame oil
1 large egg
1 large egg white
No-stick cooking spray

Preparation

1. In a medium bowl, combine breadcrumbs, salmon, water chestnuts, green onions, cilantro, lime juice, soy sauce, sesame oil, egg and egg white. Cover and chill for 30 minutes.
2. Divide the chilled salmon mixture into 8 equal portions, shaping each into a 1/2-inch-thick (1.25-cm-thick) patty.
3. Spray a large, heavy skillet with cooking spray and place over medium heat. When the skillet is hot, add patties and cook for 4 to 5 minutes on each side or until lightly browned and cooked through.



Nutritional info / serving

253 calories
9 g fat
1.5 g saturated fat
22 g protein
22 g carbohydrate
4 g fiber
776 mg sodium

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QUICK TAKES



GET ACTIVE AND CUT DOWN ON FUEL USE

- **Walk or bike instead of driving at every opportunity** – some local errands can likely be accomplished without the use of a car.
- **Take public transportation** – not only will this cut down on your gas use, but walking to and from the bus or train station will add activity to your daily routine.
- **Get involved in your community** – advocate for bike paths and safe areas for biking, or volunteer to clean up parks and bike paths.
- **Start gardening** – fresh produce from your own garden will save on fuel use. Also, you'll burn calories while tending to your garden.

Keep It Natural

If you're concerned about your health, a stroll through the supermarket can be daunting. You might have heard that "processed" foods are bad for you, while "natural" or "whole" foods may help reduce risk for disease. Read on to find out how to make informed choices.

What Are Processed Foods?

Many nutritious foods are "processed" in some way. For example, whole oats are rolled into flat discs of oatmeal without losing any nutritional components or having any artificial ingredients added.

But a great number of processed foods have been stripped of their natural nutrients. "The danger of processing is when it's taking out everything beneficial about the food," explains Stephen Pratt, MD, author of "SuperFoods RX: Fourteen Foods That Will Change Your Life." For instance, turning whole wheat into white flour "leaves the calories and takes away pretty much everything else."

Natural Foods: Fight Disease in Your Kitchen

But you don't have to read every ingredient list to improve your diet. "If you don't want to bother thinking about it," says Annemarie Colbin Ph.D., founder of the Natural Gourmet Cooking School and author of *Food and Healing*, "shop the perimeter of the supermarket." This means cutting back on the bottled salad dressings, boxes of chips, crackers, and cookies that cram the center aisles. Cooking your food from scratch is a great way to control the ingredients in what you eat — if you have the time.

Organic Foods: Does It Make a Difference?

The U.S. organic market has been growing at a rate of more than 20 percent a year according to data research group Datamonitor. Why are people going organic? Many feel that there are risks associated with pesticides on produce, hormones or antibiotics in meat, and genetically modified foods, known as GMOs. In the U.S., only foods that are labeled organic are legally required to be free of genetic engineering.

Whole Foods and the Big Picture

Finally, remember that stress can also be a toxic additive to your diet! It's important to be attentive to what you put in your body, but obsessing about health risks with every mouthful is no way to enjoy a meal. "If you have to open a can or a box, or eat something that you don't know where it comes from because somebody serves it to you, just bless the food and be grateful," suggests Colbin.

Take Action!

Ready to start incorporating more natural foods into your diet? Here are five simple ways to get started:

- Do the bulk of your food shopping around the perimeter of the supermarket.
- Check labels on packaged foods and avoid products with hydrogenated oils.
- Choose organic foods when they're available (and affordable).
- Make variety a priority! Choose a new fruit or vegetable to try each week.
- Don't worry! Make healthy choices when you can but don't give yourself stress over every bite.

Why Organic?

So you've seen organic foods in your local supermarket, you know they're supposed to be good for you (organic sounds healthy), but you get sticker shock when you look at the prices. How do you decide whether buying organic should be a priority for you and your family? The first step is to get informed. Read on for answers to some of the top questions about organic foods.

When a food is labeled "organic," what does that really mean?

Until 1999, there were no formal rules governing the term "organic" in the United States. At that time the U.S. Department of Agriculture defined strict guidelines about the production of organic foods, known as the Organic Rule. Here's an overview of the some of the basics:

- Organic farmers are required to use materials and practices that enhance the ecological balance of natural systems.
- Organic foods must be produced using no genetically engineered seeds or crops, sewage sludge, long-lasting pesticides, herbicides or fungicides, or synthetic fertilizers.
- Land used for organic crops must not have been treated with chemicals for three years.
- For livestock, farmers must provide organically-grown feed, fresh air and outdoor access, and use no antibiotics or growth hormones.
- Organic food processors cannot use irradiation, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or synthetic preservatives in processing the food.
- To carry the official USDA organic seal, products must contain at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients, and the name of the certifying agent must appear on packages

What kinds of foods are available as organic?

Most people envision the produce aisle at the health food store when they think of organic products, but today's organic choices include meat, poultry, dairy products, breads, cereals, pastas, frozen foods, canned goods, baby food, chocolate, wine and even pet foods.

Is organic food better for me?

While there are no scientific studies showing that eating organic food is healthier than eating foods produced using conventional methods, it is important to remember that organic foods are spared exposure to potentially harmful insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers.

Is organic farming better for the environment?

Yes. Organic farming does not use environmentally harmful chemicals that may contaminate rain and groundwater. Organic farming maintains healthy, fertile topsoil with rich biological matter that does not erode into lakes and streams.

Why do organic foods cost so much?

Organic farmers must comply with strict organic certification standards, which means more labor and paperwork at every step of the process. Large-scale conventional food producers save money by producing huge quantities and shipping in bulk, which organic farmers can't do. Also, organic foods are not treated with synthetic preservatives that make transport easier and prolong shelf life.

So how do I decide whether to buy organic?

In the end, the decision about whether to buy organic foods is a personal one. You need to weigh the lower costs and convenience of shopping for conventional foods to the possible health benefits (and environmental impact) of buying organic.

Asparagus with Orange Zest Takes: Under 30 minutes | Makes: 2-3 servings

Ingredients

1 pound (480 g) thin asparagus spears, tough stems trimmed
1 large orange, scrubbed
1 large shallot or small onion, sliced



Preparation

1. Choose a skillet just wide enough to hold the asparagus and set over high heat. Add water to fill 1/2 inch deep.
2. With a paring knife or a vegetable peeler, remove 2 or 3 strips of orange peel and add to the skillet. Slice the orange in half and squeeze the juice into the skillet. Add the sliced shallots as well.
3. When the liquid comes to a boil, add asparagus spears and cook until just tender, about 2 minutes.
4. Drain and season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

Nutritional info / serving

47 calories
0.5 g fat
0.1 g saturated fat
4.0 g protein
9.0 g carbohydrate
2.4g fiber
16 mg sodium

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QUICK TAKES



KEEPING YOUR MOUTH HEALTHY

Oral diseases affect many Americans every year. Tooth decay and gum disease are painful conditions that may result in tooth loss, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, oral cancers are the cause of about 7,000 deaths a year. Most oral diseases can be prevented with proper care. The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends the following for good oral hygiene:

- n Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste
- n Clean between teeth daily with floss or an interdental cleaner
- n Eat a balanced diet and limit between-meal snacks
- n Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams

Oral Hygiene Q&A

When we think about staying healthy, oral health isn't usually something that comes first to mind. Yet good oral health habits should be a part of your daily life. Your mouth, teeth and gums not only affect your smile, but your ability to talk, taste, chew and swallow. Let's look at some of the top questions on oral health.

What kind of tooth brush is best?

With so many shapes and sizes of tooth brushes it can be hard to know what type to choose. If you are shopping for a manual toothbrush, find one whose size and shape will fit comfortably in your hand and your mouth. You want to find one that will allow you to reach all of your teeth easily. A toothbrush with soft bristles is best for plaque removal. Some people may find a powered tooth brush more effective. Similar to a manual toothbrush, the most important factor is one that fits comfortably in your mouth.

Should I brush or floss first?

According to the American Dental Association, it does not matter if you brush or floss first. It's more important that you do both and do a thorough job.

What causes bad breath?

Bad breath or halitosis can be embarrassing. Bad breath can be caused by a number of things. The foods you eat, such as onions and garlic, or the use of tobacco products can cause bad breath. Another common cause is dry mouth. Bad breath can also be a sign of medical disorder.

Where can I find low-cost dental care?

Dental care can be expensive if you don't have dental insurance. Many states offer dental assistance programs. You can contact your state dental society to see if there are any in your area. Another option for lower cost dental care is to go to a local dental school clinic for your dental needs. Often times these clinics offer low-cost services with reduced or partial payment needed.



What are the benefits of using mouthwash?

Antibacterial mouthwashes can help reduce the amount of plaque causing bacteria in the mouth. This can help in preventing tooth decay and gum disease. Fluoride mouth rinses may also provide additional benefits in the fight against tooth decay.

Mouthwashes may also have ingredients in them to help fight bad breath. Astringent salts and odor neutralizers are common ingredients that are found in mouth wash.

Your dentist can help you determine if you need to use a mouthwash, and what kind may be best for you.

More Dental Q&A

How often should dental X-rays be taken?

Dental x-rays are taken to help your dentist discover tooth decay, infections and signs of gum disease. The frequency of your dental X-rays will depend on your individual health and medical history. If it is your first visit to the dentist, he or she will probably recommend taking x-rays. In general for adults who have no tooth decay or are not at high risk, the American Dental Association recommends X-rays every 24 to 36 months, and for people with a history of tooth decay or at high risk for tooth decay X-rays should be taken every 6-18 months.

How do I choose a tooth whitening product?

The first step is to talk to your dentist about tooth whitening. He or she can tell you what will be most effective for you. In-office procedures are those that a dentist will do for you in his or her office. A bleaching agent is applied to the teeth and then a special light is applied to enhance the effects. One treatment usually takes about 30 minutes to an hour and it may take more than one application to reach the desired whiteness. There are a number of at-home options for tooth whitening as well. Some you need to purchase through your dentist while others you can buy over the counter. Bleaching solutions actually bleach your tooth's enamel and they come in different concentrations and have different lengths of time that they need to be used for. Whitening toothpastes are also available. All toothpaste can help to whiten teeth by removing surface stains. Whitening toothpastes have additional polishing agents to provide more whitening.

What are wisdom teeth, and why do they so often need to be pulled?

Wisdom teeth are the last teeth in your mouth to erupt. Often times, they cause problems as they develop. When the jaw is not big enough to accommodate the growth of wisdom teeth, they can become impacted or unable to come up or are misaligned. Impacted wisdom teeth usually will need to be removed. Talk to your dentist about your wisdom teeth. If they need to be removed, your dentist may refer you to an oral surgeon.

What is fluoride and why is it in my water?

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found in water and soil. Back in the early 1940s it was discovered that people whose drinking water was higher in fluoride had lower levels of tooth decay. Studies show that fluoride can prevent and even reverse tooth decay. Most communities in the United States began adding fluoride to their drinking water, which has successfully reduced the rate of tooth disease.

My teeth are sensitive. What does this mean?

Do your teeth hurt when you eat something very cold or very hot? Does brushing and flossing cause you discomfort? Sensitive teeth can be caused by a number of things. Cracked teeth, tooth decay, worn enamel and gum disease can all cause sensitive teeth. If your teeth are sensitive you should visit your dentist. Depending on the cause, your dentist can recommend things that may help. Special toothpastes may help at home, and your dentist may have treatments that can be done in the office to help.

Wilted Spinich Salad Takes: About 30 mintues | Makes: 3-4 servings

Ingredients

2 large navel oranges
10 ounces fresh baby spinach leaves, stemmed, washed and dried
1 small red onion, chopped
2 tablespoons snipped fresh chives or sliced green onions
3 tablespoons orange marmalade
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons olive oil
¼ teaspoon dried thyme
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons chopped toasted pecans, optional

Preparation

1. Remove orange peel (including white pith) with a serrated knife. Working over a bowl to catch the juice, cut the orange segments from the membranes. Squeeze any juice from the membranes into the bowl as well.
2. Combine spinach, orange segments and chives or green onions in a salad bowl.
3. In a small saucepan, combine marmalade, vinegar, oil, thyme, salt and pepper. Heat over medium-low heat until the mixture begins to simmer. Pour over spinach and toss quickly. Sprinkle with pecans, if using. Serve immediately



Nutritional info / serving

118 calories
2.6 g fat
0.4 g saturated fat
3 g protein
23 g carbohydrate
4 g _ber
319 mg sodium