

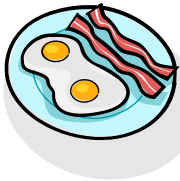
EXTRACTS OF THYME

January/February 2011

Healthy breakfast still the best way to start the day

New research shows that skipping breakfast can cause children and adolescents to fall short of recommended intakes of important nutrients. Dr. Theresa Nicklas, professor of pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine and a researcher at the USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center at BCM, and her colleagues analyzed data from the 1999-2006 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey to determine whether skipping breakfast and eating certain types of breakfast relate to nutrient intake, nutrient adequacy and weight status in children and adolescents. The report appeared in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.

The investigators divided the children between the ages of 9 and 13 years and



adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 years into three groups:

breakfast skippers, ready-to-eat or boxed cereal consumers and other breakfast consumers. Among those surveyed, 20 percent of children and

32 percent of adolescents were breakfast skippers, while 36 percent of children and 25 percent of adolescents consumed ready-to-eat cereal for breakfast and 44 percent of children and 43 percent of adolescents consumed other breakfast types.



Over the course of each day, those who consumed ready-to-eat cereal had lower intakes of total fat and cholesterol and higher intakes of total carbohydrate, dietary fiber and micronutrients than those who skipped breakfast or consumed other types of breakfast.

Both children and adolescents who skipped breakfast had higher body mass index scores and higher waist circumference than those who ate ready-to-eat cereal or other types of breakfast. The prevalence of obesity was higher in breakfast skippers and other breakfast consumers than those who ate ready-to-eat cereals.

"This reinforces the importance of eating a healthy breakfast in the morning," said Nicklas. "It provides nutrients and may contribute to weight management."

Source: NUTRITION & YOUR CHILD - Volume 4, 2010

Vegetarian Diets

Many people worry that when they stop eating meat and fish, they might be in danger of some nutritional deficiency, when in fact, someone eating a vegetarian diet can obtain all the nutrients they need from that diet. Research over the years has indicated that vegetarian diets are, in many ways, healthier than that of a typical meat eater. The problem exists when those considering a vegetarian lifestyle are unaware of their food options or the nutrients they need to remain healthy. Being a vegetarian is more than simply not eating meat, it is a new eating lifestyle leading to a healthier mind and body.



The vegetarian diet mainly includes grains, legumes (dried beans and peas), fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds. There are numerous types of vegetarians. They range from those who eat milk, eggs, fish and poultry but no flesh or organs from mammals, to those who eat no animal products of any kind (Vegans). People choose a vegetarian life style for varied reasons from health benefits to ethical, environmental, or economical concerns. Studies have indicated that vegetarians have a lower rate of coronary heart disease and certain types of cancer. The rate of high blood pressure is usually lower in vegetarians. Researchers have found that the risk of type II diabetes is lower.

Vegetarians should obtain the following nutrients necessary for optimum health. Plant products are a sufficient protein source found by combining a variety of legumes, grains, and vegetables which contain protein. Vegetarians can obtain vitamin B12, which is also necessary, from veggie burgers, fortified soy beverages, nutritional yeast, and



fortified cereals. Sunshine, fortified cereals and soy beverages provide the vitamin D. Milk products provide calcium. Tofu is processed with calcium, fortified soy beverages, broccoli, seeds, nuts, some greens (kale, mustard greens, and collards), bok choy, fortified orange juice, and breakfast cereals are all sources of calcium.

Two other nutrients of note, iron and zinc, should also be consumed. Vegetarian's diet is usually higher in iron, but the iron from non-meat forms (tofu, green leafy vegetables, dried fruit, legumes whole grains, fortified cereals and breads) is not readily absorbed. Vegetarians need to have sources of vitamin C in their diets to help in the absorption of iron. Vegetarian diets tend to be lower in zinc and the zinc which is available from plant foods is not absorbed as well. Vegetarians must strive to meet or exceed the recommended allowances for this nutrient by consuming a variety of foods such as whole-wheat bread, whole grains, legumes, tofu, and nuts.

Vegetarians should choose a diet that is moderate in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar, and sodium to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The healthful vegetarian diet should include a variety of foods such as whole grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes and perhaps dairy products and eggs. Vegans, who consume no animal products of any kind, should supplement their diets with a regular source of B-12 and, if sun exposure is limited, a source of vitamin D.

Black Bean Burgers

Serves 2

- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained
- 1/4 cup diced and sautéed onions
- 2 slices multigrain bread, finely crumbled
- 1/2 teaspoon each of garlic powder, black pepper, and onion powder (optional)

- 1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)
- 1/2 cup cracker crumbs

In a large bowl, mash the drained black beans. Add the sautéed onions, crumbled bread, and spices. Mix thoroughly. Add about 1/4 cup of cracker crumbs (or just enough to be able to form patties from the mixture). Using your hands, form the mixture into 1/2-inch thick patties. For a breaded burger, gently coat each patty with more cracker crumbs.

Spray skillet with cooking spray, fry both sides of the patties. Serve with lettuce, tomatoes, avocado, and any other condiments on buns or over a bed or rice.

Planning Your Vegetable Garden

Chris Mandeville



Believe it or not, winter is the best time to start thinking about your garden. Vegetable gardening is a low cost, healthy activity. If you are new to vegetable gardening and aren't sure how much time will be required, think small. Start off with a small area and just a few vegetable plants.

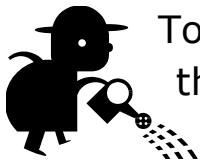
Some guidelines to remember when gardening are: careful plant selection, garden location, soil, and maintenance requirements.



The first thing to think about when planning your garden is what type of vegetables do you want to grow? Vegetable plants generally prefer either cool or warm weather. Cool weather vegetables have a low tolerance for heat and grow in early spring or late fall. Cool weather vegetables include lettuce, spinach, carrots, and snap peas. Warm weather vegetables grow from late spring to early fall, and include tomatoes, peppers, squash, and beans.

After you have determined which vegetables to plant, your garden location must be selected. The location should receive at least 6 hours of direct sunlight to allow the plants to grow well. The garden location should be on level ground to allow for proper drainage. Otherwise, the soil will become too dry or too wet.

To prepare the garden, the soil should be tilled. If the garden location has grass, then remove the grass before tilling. Tilling will loosen up the soil and allow for air flow. Adding compost while tilling, will provide essential nutrients to the soil. For a nominal fee, you can have your soil tested to determine how healthy it is.



To maintain your garden during the summer, be sure to water the plants once or twice a week. Your plants should receive about an inch of water a week. It is best to water the plants first thing in the morning. Avoid watering the plants during mid day, because the water will evaporate before it can reach the roots. Be sure to soak the soil at the base of the plants. This allows the roots to absorb the water before it evaporates.

Try to make walking around your garden a part of your daily routine. This will allow you to examine your plants to see how well they are growing and discover any problems early.

Start planning your garden now and in a couple of months you'll be walking into your garden and picking fresh vegetables. Imagine how delicious those home grown vegetables will taste.

To find out more information about gardening, call the Home and Garden Information Center at 1-800-342-2507 or visit www.hgic.umd.edu.

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How to Protect Your Health While Eating Fish

To reduce the amount of chemical contaminants in all fish you catch, you should:

➤ Gut the fish.

Remove the belly flap, skin, and dark meat of your fish prior to eating (see figure in the next column). If PCBs or similar chemicals are present, they will be concentrated in these fatty portions of the fish.

➤ Broil, grill, or bake your fish on a rack so that fat (which is where chemicals like PCBs concentrate) can drip away from your dinner.

Avoid using batter or breading when cooking the fish, because they hold fat drippings, which may contain the chemicals of concern.

➤ Eat smaller fish, as long as they are within the legal size limit. Larger fish have lived longer than smaller fish and will therefore contain more chemicals.

Vary the kinds of fish you eat. Contaminants tend to build up in predators and bottom feeding fish.

➤ The advisory recommendations are based on evenly spaced (e.g. 4 meals per month) consumption patterns over time. This does not mean that you can safely consume a higher number of meals in one month if you only catch and eat fish 4 months out of the year. If you are a seasonal angler (e.g. summer), freeze a portion of your catch for consumption at a later date to reduce the amount of chemicals consumed over a specific time period.

➤ The consumption recommendations are for total allowable consumption in a month. It is not on a "per fish species basis".

➤ Example:

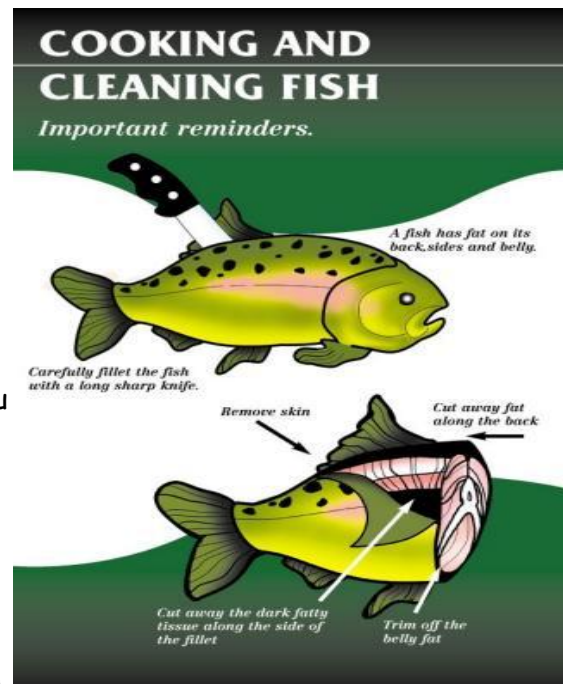
- Channel Catfish - 2/month
- White Perch - 4 month

➤ This means that you can either eat 2 catfish meals OR 4 white perch meals OR a combination (1 catfish meal and 2 white perch meals).

➤ You **SHOULD NOT** eat 2 catfish meals AND 4 white perch meals.

➤ Note: Mercury binds to the edible muscle (fillet meat) of the fish. You cannot reduce your exposure to mercury through preparation or cooking modifications.

➤ When consuming crabs caught in areas with an existing fish advisory, you can minimize your



exposure to contaminants by discarding the “mustard” (otherwise known as green gland or hepatopancreas) of the crab.



Let's Talk Family Conversation Starters

Strong families are based on good communication. Each month we will provide some good conversation starters for you to use with your children or the children in your care. These starters can help to begin a discussion and are much more effective than asking “how was your day?” The idea is to increase communication while getting to know each other better and sharing family values at the same time.

Some ideas for January/February:

- Happy New Year, have you made your resolution? Are you following your resolution?
- Four out of ten Americans say that they are doing what they can to achieve a healthy diet. What is your family doing?
- What is your favorite color and why?
- What do you like most about winter?
- Do you think it is important to keep your room clean even when you are not expecting guests?
- If you were stranded on a desert island, who would you like to be stranded with?

Source: The Ohio State University Extension

Terry Serio
Food Supplement Nutrition Education
University of Maryland Extension Carroll County Office
700 Agriculture Center
Westminster, MD 21157
410-386-2760 / 888-326-9645
tserio@umail.umd.edu

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Chicken/Turkey Potpie

2 cups of cooked chicken/turkey cut into chunks
1-1lb bag of mixed vegetables
2 potatoes washed and cut into chunks
1 can of low-fat cream of mushroom soup
1 can of water
1 pizza crust mix



1. Put chicken, veggies, potatoes, soup and water into a bowl.
2. Mix well
3. Pour mixture into baking dish
4. Roll out pizza crust mix and lay on top of mixture
5. Pinch edges
6. Cover with foil
7. Bake for 50 minutes at 350°F
8. Take off foil bake for 10 minutes more
9. Cool 10 minutes and serve