

Did You Know . . .

September 2013

September: "Fruits and Veggies — More Matters" Month

Fruits and vegetables are essential to maintaining your health. With a combination of essential vitamins and vital nutrients, you should be eating fruits and vegetables every day.

How Much Do You Need?

Some nutritionists suggest that you just can't eat too many fruits and vegetables. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) suggests that children, teenagers and adults should fill half of their plate with fruits and vegetables at all meals. For more details visit www.choosemyplate.gov.

Why Does it Matter?

Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables is not only important for maintaining weight and general health, but it actually helps prevent chronic diseases and conditions, including:



Cardiovascular Disease

Heart disease is the world's leading killer. All fruits and vegetables are good choices for the prevention of heart disease and stroke, but the best choices are green leafy vegetables and citrus fruits.

High Blood Pressure and High Cholesterol

High blood pressure is a primary risk factor for heart disease and stroke. How fruits and vegetables lower cholesterol is still a bit of a mystery. However, some experts think that the soluble fiber in them helps block the absorption of cholesterol from other foods.

Cancer

It appears that eating more fruit likely lowers the risk of cancers of the esophagus, stomach and lungs, and reduces the risk of cancers of the mouth, pharynx, colon-rectum, larynx, kidney and bladder.

Gastrointestinal Conditions

Indigestible fiber that comes from fruits and vegetables is important for preventing intestinal ailments. As fiber passes through the digestive system, it soaks up water and expands. This can calm irritable bowels and decrease pressure inside the intestinal tract.

Did you know...?

When you have the opportunity, it's a good idea to choose whole fruit over juice. Fruit juices have lost fiber from the fruit. It is better to eat the whole fruit because it contains the added fiber that helps you feel full.



Cataracts and Macular Degeneration

Usually related to aging, a cataract is the gradual clouding of the eye's lens. Macular degeneration is damage to the center of the retina. Dark green leafy vegetables contain two pigments (lutein and zeaxanthin) that aid in protecting the eye. And the Vitamin A found in carrots, cantaloupe and pumpkin aids in night vision.

Birth Defects

Neural tube defects (NTDs) are major defects of a baby's brain or spine. Folate (folic acid) is a B vitamin used in the body to make new cells. Most NTDs can be prevented if a woman has enough of this in her body before becoming pregnant. Folic acid is found in asparagus, cooked spinach and certain fortified breakfast cereals.

Other diseases and conditions that can be prevented are coronary artery disease and osteoporosis, as well as dental problems and skin infections. The next time you get hungry, consider a fruit or vegetable!

Lighten up Your Lunch

- Substitute vegetables such as lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, or onions for the cheese and or some of the meat in your sandwich, wrap, or burrito.
- Add a cup of chopped vegetables, such as broccoli, carrots, beans, or red peppers, in place of 2 ounces of the meat or 1 cup of noodles in your favorite broth-based soup.

The extra vegetables will help fill you up, so you won't miss those extra calories.

10-Minute Recipe: Apple-Tuna Sandwich

Mix two, 6-oz. cans of unsalted tuna in water with 1 medium chopped apple, 1 chopped celery stalk, ¼ cup low-fat plain yogurt, 1 tsp. mustard and 1 tsp. honey. Spread the mixture onto 3 whole wheat bread slices. Top each with lettuce, tomato and 1 more slice of bread. Serves 3.



For Generations

Men's and Women's Health — September Focus

September is also the month to focus on two important issues — prostate cancer awareness for men, and ovarian cancer awareness for women. For more information on both visit the American Cancer Society website, www.cancer.org.

About Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer (besides skin cancer) in American men. As men age, their risk of prostate cancer increases. All men should be aware of risk factors for developing prostate cancer. While the exact causes of this disease are unknown, research has found various factors that contribute to a person's likelihood of developing prostate cancer.

- Age – The risk increases greatly after age 50.
- Race – African-American men are twice as likely to develop prostate cancer as Caucasian men.
- Genetics – The chance of getting the disease is more than doubled if a man has one close relative with prostate cancer. The risk is even higher when more than one family member has developed prostate cancer, especially at a young age.

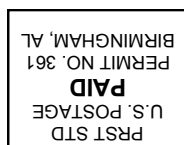
The American Cancer Society suggests that men age 50 and older speak to their doctor about prostate screenings. Consider initiating this talk at an earlier age if you are African-American or have a family history of prostate cancer. Like most other forms of cancer, early detection of prostate cancer is the key to saving lives. The survival rate for men whose cancer has not spread beyond the prostate is almost 100 percent.

About Ovarian Cancer

All women are at risk for ovarian cancer. One in 71 women will develop the disease in her lifetime. Women with certain risk factors may have a greater chance of developing ovarian cancer. These risk factors include:

- Family history of breast or ovarian cancer
- Personal history of cancer
- Women over the age of 55
- Women who were never pregnant
- Women on menopausal hormone replacement therapy

There is no screening test for ovarian cancer. A Pap test DOES NOT detect the disease. Symptoms are vague and increase over time but do exist. Symptoms may include swelling of the stomach, sudden weight gain or bloating, persistent pelvic or abdominal pain or pressure, trouble eating or feeling full quickly, and feeling the need to urinate urgently or often. These symptoms are common in women, are often caused by other less serious conditions, and may not mean there's ovarian cancer. If, however, these symptoms are new and persist daily for more than two or three weeks, a woman should ask her physician about ovarian cancer. Early detection increases survival rate. If caught early, there is more than a 90% survival rate. However, most cases are diagnosed in the later stages and the survival rate is low.



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