

Nutrition411

Holiday 2010



A Personal Message From Your Registered Dietitian

It's easy to neglect your health during the busy holiday season. Eating on the run, skimping on sleep, and sampling all of the season's goodies can lead to weight gain and increased stress. Take a moment away from the rush of the season to enjoy this edition of *Nutrition 411*.



We'll provide a recipe so that you can make a healthier sweet potato dish this year, give you tips to keep your favorite holiday foods safe, and share some gift ideas for healthy kitchen tools. We've even included some ways to help

you ring in wellness for the New Year!

We wish you and yours a memorable and warm holiday season.

THE WHOLE BODY

Ring in Wellness for the New Year

It's the time of year for making resolutions. Studies have shown that one of the top resolutions among Americans is to lose weight and/or to eat more healthfully. Small changes to your daily routine can lead to big changes in the state of your health. Take these 2 weeks of little steps to get you started toward a healthier year.



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WEEK 1

Sunday: Eat 2 ounces (oz) of dark chocolate each week to help prevent heart disease.

Monday: Get 8 hours of sleep each night to help in the prevention of weight gain, diabetes, and heart disease. Go to bed early tonight!

Tuesday: Measure your food portions, and immediately put leftovers into the refrigerator.

Wednesday: Serve soup or salad before your main course to help you fill up and avoid overeating.

Thursday: Have 1 oz of nuts five times each week to help decrease the risk of developing coronary artery disease.

Friday: Try whole-grain pasta tonight for more fiber, vitamins, and minerals than enriched pasta. If you'd like, start by mixing part of your regular, enriched pasta with whole-grain pasta to help you get used to the taste and texture.

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Nutrition 411 is published by RD411.com.

Look for the 'RD'

Get your nutrition advice from a registered dietitian (RD). RDs are the real deal!

RD

HOW TO STUFF YOUR TURKEY

It's still OK to stuff your turkey, although many people have stopped doing so in recent years. The trick is to stuff it loosely, rather than packing it.

Following this advice:

- *Mix your stuffing right before placing it in the turkey, making sure it is moist*
- *Cook the turkey immediately after stuffing*
- *Consider preparing your stuffing in a separate casserole dish*
- *Do not remove stuffing immediately once the turkey is cooked—let the bird stand for 20 minutes before removing the stuffing and carving the turkey*

Ring in Wellness [CONT'D]

Saturday: Buy your produce weekly, and prepare it in advance whenever possible (cutting melon, chopping vegetables, etc). Keep your fruits and vegetables in a very visible place in the refrigerator, so that you'll reach for them first.

WEEK 2

Sunday: Track what you eat, the time of day, the people that you're with, and how you're feeling this week. Look for patterns and clues as to how you could improve. Rate your hunger on a scale of 1–10, and decide how much to eat based on this rating. A score of 4 or higher usually warrants a lite snack, with a 7 or higher calling for a full meal or a more substantial snack.

Monday: Get into the habit of always carrying snacks in your purse, briefcase, or glove compartment, or keep some in your work desk. Consider a snack mix made of dried fruits and nuts, vacuum-packed tuna, or individual peanut-butter packets with crackers or an apple.

Tuesday: Aim to consume 25 grams of fiber each day. If you currently fall short, work your way up slowly to avoid becoming constipated. Remember to drink plenty of fluids.

Wednesday: Try to have a blend of protein and carbohydrate at every meal and snack. Some healthy choices include reduced-fat cheese, peanut butter, nuts, lean meat and poultry, or an egg for protein; and any whole-wheat grain product or fruit for carbohydrate.

Thursday: Experiment with fresh herbs. Many contain as much or more antioxidant power than fruits and vegetables.

Friday: Plan to eat two vegetarian meals each week. Think of the possibilities—a hearty lentil stew, a spicy black-bean burger, a lite veggie wrap, or a seasoned portobello "burger."

Saturday: Don't worry about breaking the rules by having dinner leftovers for breakfast or a traditional breakfast food for dinner. Everyone's appetite is different. Also, don't concern yourself about gaining weight if you like to have your biggest meal in the evening. Studies have repeatedly shown that it doesn't matter what time you eat. It only matters how much you eat within a 24-hour period.



MAILBOX

Does cooking deplete vitamins and minerals? Should I only eat raw vegetables if I want to absorb all of the nutrients?

While some foods become less nutritious with cooking, other nutrients actually will become easier to absorb.

Look at these examples:

- Heating garlic increases its potential to decrease the risk of cancer
- Heating increases the availability of lycopene, an important antioxidant that helps prevent several forms of cancer (the richest source of lycopene is cooked tomatoes)
- Steaming broccoli increases its glucosinolates, which may help to prevent cancer
- Vitamin A and potassium are not lost during canning; in fact in some foods, such as canned pumpkin, the vitamin A content actually is higher than it is in fresh foods



Here are some other tips for cooking vegetables:

- Steaming, boiling, or baking are always better than frying vegetables
- As Dr Joel Fuhrman says: "Water-based cooking as in soups, steaming, and cooking in a pressure cooker results in very little loss of nutrients and a significant increase in the absorption of phytochemicals. To fear eating a steamed vegetable or vegetable/bean soup is entirely unfounded and without scientific support."
- Always slice, chop, or crush onions to increase the formation of sulfur compounds, which helps to lower blood cholesterol and prevent heart disease (it's best to allow cut onions to sit for 10 minutes before using them)

Food Safety for the Holidays

Here come the holidays! Are you ready? Read on for important information on how to ensure that you serve safe and delicious food this holiday season.

Store and thaw your food the right way

Follow these storage and thawing tips:

- Do not buy a fresh turkey more than 2 days in advance of when you want to use it—this applies to all poultry
- Keep fresh meats such as beef and pork in the refrigerator for no more than 3–5 days prior to cooking
- Adhere to “use-by” dates on the packaging of fully cooked hams
- Store uncooked hams in the refrigerator for up to 7 days
- Leave a frozen turkey in its original wrapping, and thaw it in the refrigerator
 - Figure that it will take 24 hours to thaw every 4–5 pounds (lb) of turkey
 - Keep thawed turkey in the refrigerator for up to 2 days
- Thaw a frozen turkey by submerging it in cold water and changing the water every 30 minutes (good method if you do not have enough time to thaw in refrigerator):
 - Allow 30 minutes to defrost for each 1 lb of turkey when using this method
 - Cook the bird immediately after thawing when using this method
- Use the microwave to thaw small turkeys:
 - Refer to your instruction manual to determine how many minutes it will take to thaw based on pounds and which power level to use

- Cook any food thawed in the microwave immediately
- Never thaw meat or poultry at room temperature

Check those temperatures

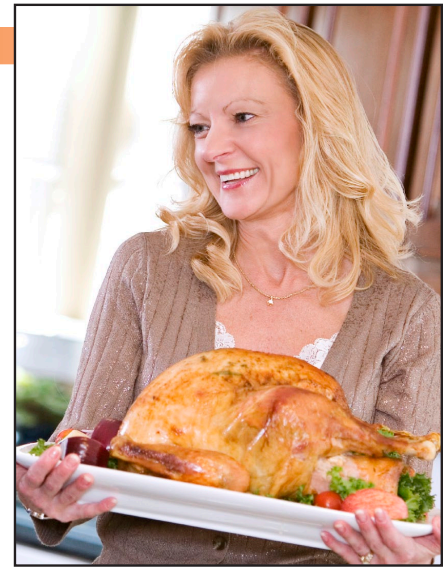
It is important to use a thermometer to assure that the proper temperatures are reached. Cook foods by following this temperature guide:

- Whole turkey or game birds to 165° F throughout (180° F in the thigh)
- Stuffing to 165° F, whether you choose to cook it inside the bird or in a separate dish
- Fresh pork to 160° F, including cook-before-eating ham
- Fully cooked hams to 140° F
- Cooked vegetables and fruits to 140° F or higher

Store leftovers correctly

Leftovers are great, but remember to follow these safety tips to keep them safe:

- Refrigerate turkey and stuffing within 2 hours after removing from the oven
- Reheat leftovers to 165° F, and serve within 3–4 days or freeze for later use
- Store turkey and stuffing in separate containers
- Use leftover gravy within 1–2 days, reheating it to a boil



SOAK THAT FAUCET SCREEN

The kitchen faucet is a perfect environment for bacteria to flourish. Once a week, remove the screen and soak it in a diluted bleach solution. Make sure to let the water run for a few minutes after replacing the screen.



GIFT IDEAS FOR THE COOK



Healthy Kitchen Tools

It's hard to create healthful foods without having the proper kitchen tools handy. Here are a few ideas to add to your gift list!

Wok: Stir-fry dishes are one of the fastest, healthiest foods to create, and a wok makes it even easier and tastier. Choose your favorite vegetables and a source of protein, use low-sodium soy sauce, make some rice, and relax—dinner is done!

Crock-Pot®: Using a Crock-Pot is an excellent way to prepare your own soups and stews, and to cook your lean meat to make it tender and juicy. You also can use it to make spoon breads, low-fat puddings, and casseroles. Many cookbooks are devoted to preparing foods with a Crock-Pot. A quick browse on the Internet also will yield dozens of recipes.

Immersion blender: Getting out the traditional blender, assembling it, and then taking it apart and cleaning it can seem like

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Healthy Kitchen Tools [CONT'D]

too much work for making a simple smoothie or a chilled soup. Using an immersion blender for these small jobs saves time and space.

Food processor: A good food processor makes almost every meal easier to prepare. It chops vegetables and fruits, shreds cheese, and mixes your ingredients. What doesn't this tool do?

Grill basket: This tool is useful when you want to grill vegetables and even fruit, but are tired of watching your meal literally fall through the cracks. This device will hold all of your food together, so that none is lost during the grilling process.

Salad spinner: A salad spinner makes cleaning lettuce a snap, which makes eating a salad seem like a much more appealing idea.



Cook's Corner

Are you looking for a healthier alternative to your usual sweet potato casserole? Look no further. This recipe will taste just like your favorite, but contains much fewer calories and less fat than the usual butter- and sugar-laden traditional holiday dish.



Pecan Streusel Sweet Potatoes

— MAKES 9 SERVINGS • SERVING SIZE: ½ CUP (C) —

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds sweet potatoes
½ C Splenda®
½ C evaporated nonfat or low-fat milk
¼ C reduced-fat margarine or lite butter
¾ teaspoon (tsp) ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground ginger
Cooking spray

Topping

½ C chopped pecans
¼ C light brown sugar
1 tablespoon (Tbsp) reduced-fat margarine or lite butter

DIRECTIONS

Rinse sweet potatoes (about four medium potatoes), pat dry, and pierce in several places with a fork. Place the potatoes on a paper towel in a microwave oven, spacing them at least 1" apart. Cook at high power for 6 minutes, turn the potatoes over, and cook for an additional 6–8 minutes, or until soft in the center. Let sit until cool enough to handle, then peel and cut into chunks. Place in a large bowl.

Add the Splenda, evaporated milk, margarine or butter (¼ C), cinnamon, and ginger. Beat with an electric mixer until smooth. Coat a 9" pie pan or a shallow 1½-quart casserole dish with

cooking spray. Spread the potato mixture evenly in the dish. Set aside.

Topping: To make the topping, place the pecans and brown sugar in a mini food processor and process until the pecans are finely to coarsely ground, depending on your preference. Add the margarine or butter (1 Tbsp) and process for a few seconds more, or until the mixture is moist and crumbly. Sprinkle the topping over the sweet potatoes.

Bake in a preheated 350° F oven for about 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are heated through and the topping is lightly browned. Serve hot.

Per servings: 173 calories, 25 grams (g) carbohydrate, 2.5 g fiber, 7.6 g fat, 1.3 g saturated fat, 0 milligrams (mg) cholesterol, 2.7 g protein, 80 mg sodium, 68 mg calcium, 309 mg potassium

Glycemic index: Moderate

Diabetic exchanges: 1½ carbohydrate, 1½ fat

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