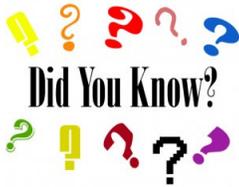


Wellness Corner Connection

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KEEP SUMMER HEALTHY



Did You Know?

Laughing lowers levels of stress hormones and strengthens the immune system.

Your body uses 300 muscles to balance itself while standing still.

The benefits of exercise are more than just for weight management. Exercise also combats stress, promotes better sleep, and activates the immune system.

Research has shown that when people exercise by walking, they walk 30% longer if they walk to music.

Drinking water before and after a spa treatment reduces soreness and helps to flush the body of toxins released from the muscles.



Shape Up Your Eating Habits



Want to shape up your eating habits over the summer? With an abundance of fruits and vegetables, there is no time like the present.



Even though summertime cooks outs could bring some temptations that could hit your waistline, there are so many delicious and healthy variations you can bring to your traditional meals that will not only keep your pallet satisfied but also keep you from adding a notch on your belt.

Maybe you've decided to cut back a little on the hot dogs, peel the fatty skin off your barbecued chicken and limit mayo-laden macaroni and potato salads. Will this be enough to shape up your summertime eating habits? Cutting back on high-fat meats and mayo-drenched salads is a good place to start. But along with limiting certain foods, it's just as important to think about what to add to your meal plan. To make healthy eating habits stick, it's better to think more about enjoying your food and less about what to avoid. Here are some ideas to whet your appetite that won't expand your waistline.

Make simple substitutions

- Breaking an unhealthy food habit doesn't mean you have to make radical changes or follow complicated recipes.
- Exchange artery-clogging creamy sauces and dressings with marinades or dressings made with olive oil or canola oil (heart-healthy fats) and herbs.
- Instead of serving a classic potato salad with creamy mayo, try steaming new potatoes and drizzling them with olive oil, garlic powder and chopped chives.
- Look for chicken or turkey sausages to grill instead of pork. They taste delicious and often offer great savings on fat and calories.
- Use wholesome barley or quinoa for a grain-based salad instead of pasta or potatoes. Add lots of raw, cut-up veggies, such as red peppers, carrots, red onion and celery.
- Go for sorbets and fruits instead of heavy cakes if you crave dessert.
- Drink plenty of water in lieu of sports drinks and sodas.
- Downsize what you put on your plate. Fill two-thirds of it with fruits, vegetables and grains, and one-third with poultry, fish or meat.

Take advantage of the season

Summer is prime time for the best fruits and vegetables.

- Try grilling vegetables, such as pearl onions, mushrooms, zucchini and bell peppers. Most vegetables can be grilled by cutting them into bite size pieces and threading onto skewers. Grilled fruit kabobs are also a great summertime dessert!
- Buy fresh herbs (or grow them). They can bring out the flavor in food. If you have extra, chop them up, put them in an ice-cube tray and fill it with water. Once the herbs freeze, pop them out and put them in a plastic bag. Defrost by running them under hot water.
- At your next barbecue, skip the chips and serve crunchy carrot sticks, bell pepper strips and broccoli with a low-fat dip.
- Head to the beach with a veggie-filled picnic lunch. In addition to turkey or lean ham on whole wheat bread, pack fruits and vegetables such as baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, grapes, plums blueberries and cherries.
- If you are going camping or hiking, unsweetened dried fruits, such as cranberries, raisins, apricots and figs, are easy to tote in your backpack and can provide quick "pick me up" energy.
- Avoid food dyes and excess sugar and make your own frozen fruit pops at home. Freeze 100 percent fruit juice in small paper cups (add diced-up fruit to the juice before freezing for extra fiber and nutrients). Insert wooden sticks when the juice is slushy enough to hold the stick upright. When the juice is frozen solid, peel the paper off and serve.
- Keep containers of fruits and vegetables washed and cut into bite-size pieces in the refrigerator. Have them as snacks instead of chips and cookies.



Rice, Bulgur, Couscous, And Quinoa Which Grain Gets The Healthiest Grade?

There's been a lot of talk about lesser-known **supergrains** lately, like [farro](#) and [freekeh](#). But it's got me wondering about the more traditional ones—you know, the ones you can get in almost any bulk section. If you live somewhere where your choices are limited to, say, rice and couscous, how do you pick? **Which grain is healthiest?**

Of course, "healthiest" is a pretty broad term, so let's define it. Pretty much all grains are, by definition, either low in fat or fat-free—but which delivers the most protein, the most fiber, the most nutrients? Which are OK for folks with gluten sensitivities? Which have the fewest carbohydrates? The fewest calories?

Let's take a look.



Rice

Grade: C-/B; Conditional

Long-grain brown rice is a staple for a reason...but that reason is that people have heard of it. Also, that it's in every grocery store. But even the healthiest of rice is actually pretty calorific—over 200 calories in one cooked cup, which is about the same as quinoa. But rice has about half as much protein as quinoa, and less fiber, too. It's also got more carbs than any of the others.

However, wild rice, which technically isn't actually rice as you know it, but rather, a mixture of grains from various plants that resemble rice, does have more protein and more fiber. So if you're really a fan of rice, opt for the wild kind instead. **It gets a B** (hence, the conditional grade). And as for white rice? It has next to nothing to offer—even the enriched stuff has less fiber and less protein than the other grains on the list.

Bulgur

Grade: B+

Even if you haven't officially met bulgur, you probably know it as the grain that makes that refreshing, yummy tabbouleh salad that your crunchy neighbor always brings to the block party. Mystery solved! But really, [bulgur](#) is good for a lot more than just the occasional side. Made from wheat kernels, bulgur boasts a sweet, rich flavor that's great as a substitute for oatmeal or other breakfast cereals. It has no fat and has fewer calories than all the rest—just 150 in a cup of the cooked stuff.

Additionally, it's relatively low in carbs (that same cup has about 34 grams, though, so it's still not actually low), and contains a whole lot of fiber. It also delivers a nice iron boost and a decent serving of protein.

Overall, bulgur is definitely a pretty great choice, all things considered. But it's not the true winner.

Couscous

Grade: C+

I used to really love [couscous](#), and I still make it pretty frequently because it takes almost no time and is as cheap as can be. But unfortunately, it doesn't really stack up against the rest of these also-inexpensive, also-easy-to-make grains.

Low in fiber (just 2 grams in a cooked cup? Not great.) and just OK on protein (about 6 grams, the same as bulgur, but substantially less than quinoa), couscous just isn't the best option. It's also got almost no iron. And while it's pretty low in calories, bulgur's still got it beat. Sorry, couscous. You're not terrible, but...you're not great, either.



Quinoa ★

Grade: A

Ok, for the record, [quinoa](#) (pronounced keen-WAH, for those keeping score at home) is technically a seed, not a grain. But it's sold like a grain and eaten like a grain and is basically a grain, so it's included. Also, it's supremely simple to cook, pretty cheap to buy, and mega healthy. It's also—and here's the best part—[great for gluten-free eaters!](#) Quinoa is probably one of the best choices you can make in place of rice or any other actual grain. Because while, as a seed, it has a tiny amount of fat, it also offers a complete protein, so even in a meatless meal, it's got plenty of muscle-building material that doesn't need beans or anything else to make it nutritious. It's also really fibrous, and [has a low glycemic index](#), so it keeps you fuller, longer—which makes it a great camping or backpacking food. And while it's definitely not low-carb, the carbohydrate-to-protein ratio is pretty great, so it's worth it.



TIPS FOR A HEALTHY AND SAFE 4TH OF JULY

Celebrate Independence Day without illness or injury:

- **The rule of “not letting food sit out** for more than two hours” is shortened to one hour if the temperature is above 90° F. When in doubt, throw it out.
- **Always wear a life jacket** when boating — no matter your age or swimming experience level. The U.S. Coast Guard estimates that life jackets could have saved the lives of more than 80% of boating fatality victims. Remember, life jackets for adults do not work for children.
- **The hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.** are the most hazardous for outdoor ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure in the United States. Seek shade during these times. Remember to always reapply sunscreen (with an SPF of 15 or higher) every two hours when you’re in the sun (set a timer) or right after you swim. Make sure the sunscreen protects against both UVA and UVB rays.
- **Watch for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke**, especially in children. Kids’ bodies absorb more heat on a hot day than adults do. Also, children are less able to lower their body heat by sweating. A child’s body temperature may increase three to five times as fast as an adult’s body temperature. Signs of trouble include red, hot, and moist or dry skin; no sweating; a strong, rapid pulse or a slow, weak pulse; a throbbing headache; dizziness; confusion; being grouchy (or grouchier than normal); or acting strangely.

10 Minutes to a Healthier Heart

Don’t avoid exercising because you’re short on time. Even quick workouts can benefit your heart.

Does spending an hour at the gym seem daunting – and something you really don’t have time for? Fitness experts say you can work out 10 to 15 minutes at a time and still reduce your risk for heart disease. The American Heart Association recommends all adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week.

What is moderate physical activity? It includes:

- Brisk walking, jogging or running
- Biking
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Jumping rope

Now, let’s tackle those 150 minutes – break it up! One-hundred fifty minutes each week breaks down to 30 minutes, five days a week. Want to break it up even more? Just make sure you are getting at least 10 minutes of aerobic activity at a time. Try 15-minute increments, twice a day, five days a week. That means you could sneak in a 15-minute walk on your lunch hour and spend 15 minutes doing yard work in the evening. There’s your daily exercise – and perhaps, a better-looking yard! Be sure to check with your doctor before starting any type of exercise program.

Southwest Pasta Salad

The pasta salad is loaded with flavor. It has black beans, tomatoes, peppers, onion, sweet corn, avocado and cilantro. And the best part? The creamy avocado dressing. It is rich and creamy, but in a healthy kind of way. The dressing is easy to whip up, just throw all of the ingredients in your blender or food processor and blend until smooth.

Ingredients:

Directions:

For the salad:

8 ounces pasta
 1 (15 oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed
 1 cup grape tomatoes
 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
 1/2 cup diced orange or yellow bell pepper
 1/2 cup diced red onion
 1/2 cup sweet corn (can use frozen corn)
 1 large avocado, peeled, seeded, and diced
 Salt and pepper, to taste
 1 lime, for juicing over the salad
 1/4 cup chopped cilantro

For Creamy Avocado Dressing:

2 ripe avocados, peeled and seeded
 3 tablespoons plain Greek yogurt (I use Chobani)
 1/2 cup low-fat buttermilk
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
 2 tablespoons chopped green onion
 1 small jalapeño pepper, chopped and seeds removed
 2-3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
 Salt and ground black pepper, to taste

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Salt the water and stir in the pasta. Cook until al dente. Rinse with cold water and set aside.

2. While the pasta is cooking, make the Creamy Avocado Dressing. Combine all of the dressing ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth.

3. In a large bowl, combine pasta, black beans, tomatoes, peppers, red onion, corn, and chopped avocado. Pour dressing over pasta salad and stir until salad is well coated. Season with salt and pepper. Squeeze fresh lime juice over the salad, so the avocados don’t brown. Garnish with chopped cilantro and serve at room temperature or chilled.



Recipe from: www.twopeasandthepod.com



5 'Fancy' Food Label Terms You Need To Understand Before You Buy Another Morsel

How many times have you chosen the 'artisanal' loaf over the plain old baguette, or the 'natural' chicken to save some dollars on the organic stuff? Food label creators reach from an arsenal of fancy language to rope you into buying their product, so it's important to be able to sniff out the bs from the truth. Here's a glossary of some terms that can be misleading if you aren't savvy to their meaning.



1. Artisanal

If words were a high school, then 'artisan' would be the hot new student in class. This is one of the trendiest terms being thrown around lately, and everyone from Domino's to Arby's wants a piece. The only problem is that the definition of artisanal is diametrically opposed to the way these companies are using it. An artisan, as Merriam-Webster states, is 'one that produces something (as cheese or wine) in limited quantities often using traditional methods.' So how a national chain that mass-produces their food, like Panera Bread or Burger King, can get away with using this term is simply because there's no legal reason.

2. Natural

'Natural' lives in the same, unregulated realm as artisanal, so tons of corporations are free to abuse it on their labels. The US Food and Drug Administration's policy on the term: "[FDA] has not objected to the use of the term on food labels provided it is used in a manner that is truthful and not misleading and the product does not contain added color, artificial flavors or synthetic substances." Sounds great, but this leaves a lot of loopholes for clever corporations to get around. In other words, a yogurt company can claim that the processed sweeteners like corn syrup and fructose are natural, since they're technically derived from nature. Be very wary when buying 'natural' products, and always read the ingredients.



3. Reduced Sodium

There are many creative ways to say your product has 'low sodium,' and they all have surprisingly different meanings, as helpfully laid out in an article on *Sodium Content* *. Basically, if the product says 'sodium free,' 'very low sodium,' or 'low sodium,' then most of the time it really does have a significantly low level of salt. The trouble comes with phrases like 'reduced sodium,' 'light in sodium,' and 'lightly salted.' For example, by FDA rules, you can say your product has reduced sodium if it has at least 25% less sodium than in the original version of the item. That's tricky, because if you're eating Cup Noodles, then 25% of 2060 mg of sodium still equals a sick amount of sodium. Always read the label if you're concerned about your sodium intake.

4. Organic

When it comes to organic, the United States Department of Agriculture lays out three categories:

-100-percent Organic: Products that are completely organic or made of only organic ingredients qualify for this claim and a USDA Organic seal.

-Organic: Products in which at least 95 percent of its ingredients are organic qualify for this claim and a USDA Organic seal.

-Made with Organic Ingredients: These are food products in which at least 70 percent of ingredients are certified organic.

The USDA organic seal cannot be used but "made with organic ingredients" may appear on its packaging."

Pretty straightforward stuff, unlike the tricky loopholes involved with 'natural.'



5. Non-GMO

Unlike organic products, the FDA and USDA have no regulation over products containing genetically modified organisms.. However, the Non-GMO Project is "North America's only independent verification for products made according to best practices for GMO avoidance," so a product containing its seal can be trusted to have a rigorously low level of at-risk ingredients. As with natural and artisanal, any product can claim to be GMO-free, but if they don't have the Project's stamp, then you can't be positive they're tested.

Note *: <http://lowsodiumgourmet.com/interpreting-food-packaging-labels/>