



The Market Basket

Ways to Save Money and Eat Healthier
EXPANDED FOODS AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

February 2006

Hi Everyone:

Hi Everyone! Happy Valentines Day to you and yours! Believe it or not Chocolate in Moderation can fit into a heart-healthy eating plan according to the American Dietetic Association. Dark Chocolate is especially high in Antioxidants! February is Heart Healthy Month so with that in mind our Main Topic in this Newsletter for this month will be “Good Food Sources for Antioxidants and what they do for your Heart” Have a Great February!! Also in this issue will be more Healthy Recipes.

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From warding off heart disease to slowing degeneration of the brain and eyes, the health benefits of antioxidants are quite common today. Antioxidants work by neutralizing highly reactive, destructive compounds called free radicals.

- **Vitamin C** -- Also called ascorbic acid, vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin found in all body fluids, so it may be one of our first lines of defense. This powerful antioxidant cannot be stored by the body, so it's important to get some regularly -- not a difficult task if you eat fruits and vegetables. Important sources include citrus fruits, green peppers, broccoli, green leafy vegetables, strawberries, raw cabbage and potatoes.
- **Vitamin E** -- A fat-soluble vitamin that can be stored with fat in the liver and other tissues, vitamin E is promoted for a range of purposes -- from delaying aging to healing sunburn. While it's not a miracle worker, it's another powerful antioxidant. Important sources include wheat germ, nuts, seeds, whole grains, green leafy vegetables, vegetable oil and fish-liver oil.
- **Beta-carotene** -- The most studied of more than 600 different carotenoids that have been discovered, beta-carotene protects dark green, yellow and orange vegetables and fruits from solar radiation damage. It is thought that it plays a similar role in the body. Carrots, squash, broccoli, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, kale, collards, cantaloupe, peaches and apricots are particularly rich sources of beta-carotene.
- **Selenium** -- This mineral is thought to help fight cell damage by oxygen-derived compounds and thus may help protect against cancer. It is best to get selenium through foods, as large doses of the supplement form can be toxic. Good food sources include fish, shellfish, red meat, grains, eggs, chicken and garlic.

An apple slice turns brown. Fish becomes rancid. A cut on your skin is raw and inflamed. All of these result from a natural process called oxidation. It happens to all cells in nature, including the ones in your body. To help your body protect itself from the rigors of oxidation, Mother Nature provides thousands of different antioxidants in various amounts in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes. When your body needs to put up its best defense, especially true in today's environment, antioxidants are crucial to your health.

Here's how oxidation works. As oxygen interacts with cells of any type - an apple slice or, in your body, the cells lining your lungs or in a cut on your skin -- oxidation occurs. This produces some type of change in those cells. They may die, such as with rotting fruit. In the case of cut skin, dead cells are replaced in time by fresh, new cells, resulting in a healed cut. This birth and death of cells in the body goes on continuously, 24 hours a day. It is a process that is necessary to keep the body healthy. Yet there is a downside. While the body metabolizes oxygen very efficiently, 1% or 2% of cells will get damaged in the process and turn into free radicals.

In the 21st century, people need to get more antioxidants in their diet to offset all these assaults. When you follow the USDA's advice to eat multiple servings of fruits and vegetables, you're compensating for the effects of environmental toxins. Your body simply doesn't produce enough antioxidants to do all that. What exactly do they do? Antioxidants work to stop this damaging, disease-causing chain reaction that free radicals have started. Each type of antioxidant works either to prevent the chain reaction or stop it after it's started.

The body needs a mix of vitamins and minerals, such as vitamins A, C, E, and beta-carotene, to neutralize this free radical assault. "We can't rely on a few blockbuster foods to do the job, You can't eat nine servings of broccoli a day and expect it to do it all. We need to eat many different foods. Each type works in different tissues of the body, in different parts of cells. Some are good at quenching some free radicals, some are better at quenching others. When you have appropriate amounts of different antioxidants, you're doing what you can to protect yourself."

Multivitamins and vitamin supplements can provide the body with an antioxidant boost. Yet getting too much of some supplements, like vitamin E, can be harmful. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts contain complex mixes of antioxidants, and therein lies the benefit of eating a variety of healthy foods.

Orange Fun Pops

Ingredients:

**6 ounces orange juice concentrate
6 ounces water
1 cup plain low-fat yogurt
1 t vanilla**

Directions

Blend all ingredients and pour into ice cube trays. Put a drinking straw (that has been cut in half) into each cube. Freeze several hours. Then enjoy!

Chocolate Milk Cooler

Ingredients:

**1 cup skim milk
1/3 cup instant nonfat dry milk powder
1 T unsweetened cocoa
1 t vanilla
2-3 t sugar
5-6 ice cubes**

Directions

Place milk, milk powder, cocoa, vanilla and sugar in blender. Cover and blend at high speed until smooth. Remove center of cover and add ice cubes, one at a time, blending until each is thoroughly crushed. Serve immediately. Makes 2 scrumptious servings!

Sweet Potato Fries

- **2 tb Thawed orange juice -concentrate**
- **1 t Onion powder**
- **1/2 ts Salt**
- **1/8 ts Ground red pepper (cayenne)**
- **1 lb Sweet potatoes, cut into -1/2" sticks**

Line a cookie sheet with foil and spray with Pam In a medium bowl combine orange juice concentrate, onion powder, salt and cayenne. Add potato sticks and turn to coat. Arrange coated potato sticks on the oiled foil in a single layer.

Bake 10 min; turn carefully, bake 10 more minutes or until tender.

Top Hat Pizza

Ingredients

1 7-to 7-1/2-inch round piece whole-wheat pita or pocket bread
3 tablespoons prepared pizza sauce
1/4 green or red bell pepper
1/4 small onion
1/8 teaspoon dried Italian herb seasoning
1/2 ounce part-skim mozzarella cheese (2 tablespoons grated)
1/2 teaspoon grated Parmesan cheese

Peel and chop onion (see Cook's Note). Measure out 2 teaspoons and set aside. (Save the rest to use in another recipe.)

2. Rinse bell pepper and place on cutting board. Remove seeds and white pith from inside the pepper. With small, sharp knife, chop bell pepper. Measure out 1 tablespoon and set aside. (Save the rest to use in another recipe.)

3. Grate cheese if it is not pre-shredded (see Cook's Note)

4. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

5. Using kitchen scissors cut out a circle from top layer of the pita bread, leaving 1 inch of top all around to form an edge or border. Same cut-out circle.

- 6. Place bottom of pita on cookie sheet or baking sheet. Using oven mitts, put on middle rack in hot oven. Bake 5 minutes.**
- 7. With oven mitts, carefully remove from oven and place pan on wire cooling rack. Cool slightly.**
- 8. Place cooled pita on cutting board. Using small spatula or spoon, spread pizza sauce evenly on top and also under the edge of the pita bread. Sprinkle bell pepper, onion, Italian seasoning, and mozzarella cheese evenly on top of sauce. Top with reserved circle of pita bead to form a "hat."**
- 9. Return completed pizza to cookie sheet or baking sheet. Bake in hot oven for 8 to 9 minutes.**
- 10. With oven mitts, carefully remove pan from oven to cooling rack.**
- 11. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and let stand a few minutes.**
- 12. Place pizza on cutting board. Cut in half with kitchen scissors, small knife, or pizza cutter. Serve hot.**

Cook's Note

To grate your own cheese, follow these directions:

Place the grater in a bowl.

Hold the grater firmly in one hand and place a large piece of cheese in other hand. Rub the cheese against the small holes of the grater. (The cheese will come out in shreds.)

Be careful not to rub your knuckles against the grater.

Oh so delicious Oatmeal:

- 1 c. water**
 - 1/2 c. rolled oats**
 - dash of salt**
 - 1/4 c. applesauce**
 - pinch of cinnamon**
 - 2 tsp. brown sugar**
- 1. Pour the water, oats, and salt into a medium-size pot on the stovetop.**
 - 2. Heat the mixture until it boils, then turn the heat to low.**
 - 3. Using a wooden spoon, stir in the applesauce and cinnamon.**
 - 4. Cook on low heat and continue to stir the mixture for 5 minutes.**
 - 5. Pour the oatmeal into a bowl and sprinkle the brown sugar on top.**
 - 6. Allow the oatmeal to cool for a minute before digging in.**

