



Expanded Food and  
Nutrition Education  
Program

### The Market Basket



**March/April 2007**

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#### **March is National Nutrition Month!**

Through National Nutrition Month®, created in 1973, the American Dietetic Association promotes healthful eating by providing practical nutrition guidance and focusing attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound physical activity habits. Remember these National Nutrition Month key messages to eat smart and stay physically active this month and all year long:

The food and physical activity choices you make today and every day - affect today and in the future. Eating right and being physically active are keys to a healthy lifestyle.

Make smart choices from every food group. Give your body the balanced nutrition it needs by eating a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day. Just be sure to stay within your daily calorie needs.

Get the most nutrition out of your calories. Choose the most nutritionally rich foods you can from each food group - those packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients but lower in calories.

Find your balance between food and physical activity. Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness plus it helps control body weight, promotes a feeling of well-being and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.

Find your balance between food and physical activity. Be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. Children and teenagers should be physically active for 60 minutes every day, or most every day.

#### **Foods To Choose!**

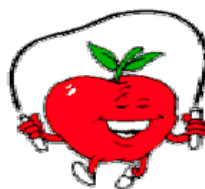
Eat a variety of fruits: fresh, frozen, canned or dried! These choices are better than fruit juices for most of your fruit choices.

Eat more dark green vegetables, like broccoli and kale; eat more orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes. Don't forget about beans and peas, like pinto beans, kidney beans, and black beans.

Every day, get at least 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk or an equal amount of yogurt and/or cheese (1 ½ ounces of cheese equals 1 cup of milk . )

Make half of your grains whole! Check the ingredients list for "whole" grains, such as whole wheat, or whole oats.

Go lean with meats and poultry and cook with little added fat. Bake it, broil it, or grill it!



## Strawberry Time!

Growing up in central Florida, this time of year brings back many fond childhood memories. You see, the end of February and early March marks the beginning of strawberry season in Florida. Plant City, the Winter Strawberry Capital of the world, always has Our Annual Strawberry Festival. What a treat to see (and smell) all the beautiful displays of strawberries, not to mention savoring their sweet taste.

This delicious fruit is not only tasty, but healthy for you too. One cup of strawberries provides the amount of vitamin C that we need for growth, healthy gums and teeth, and general good health. And 1 cup of fresh strawberries has only 55 calories. In addition to vitamin C, they also contain small amounts of vitamin A, calcium, iron, riboflavin, and niacin.

**Selecting Strawberries:** Choose bright, fresh, clean strawberries with:

A full, solid red color.  
Bright green caps attached.  
No moisture, dirt, or decay spots.



Avoid strawberries that are:  
Dried or shrunken.  
Without green caps.  
Covered with white spots, which indicate disease.  
In stained containers, which indicate soft, bruised fruit.

Strawberries are highly perishable. Berries will lose quality rapidly when left at warm temperatures. After you pick or buy berries, pour them unwashed and uncapped into a shallow tray and refrigerate. When you are ready to use them, wash berries a few at a time in cold water, lifting them gently out of the water with your fingers. Drain the berries; then uncap them.

Strawberries can be frozen whole, sliced, mashed, pureed, depending on your plans for use later. Strawberries packed in dry moisture-vapor-proof containers keep a shorter length of time than those packed in sugar and syrup. However, if you cannot use sugar, dry-packing strawberries is one way to prolong the strawberry season. If you freeze strawberries unsweetened, add no-calorie sweetener when the berries are served rather than before they are frozen.

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### Strawberry Yogurt Pops:

1/2 pint strawberries  
1 banana  
2-8 oz. containers of low-fat strawberry yogurt  
1 cup low-fat milk

Slice the banana and strawberries into a blender, add yogurt and milk and blend. Pour into Popsicle molds and Freeze. Enjoy!!



**Egg-stra! Egg-stra!** Read all about it—egg safety for Easter egg hunts! The following tips can help you to plan a safe and egg-citing event.

Before the hunt . . .

Wash your hands thoroughly *before* handling eggs at every preparation step, including cooking, cooling, dyeing, and hiding. Only use eggs that have been refrigerated and discard eggs that are cracked or dirty. When decorating, be sure to use food grade dyes. It is safe to use commercial egg dyes, liquid food coloring, and fruit drink powders. When handling eggs, be careful not to crack them. Otherwise, bacteria could enter the egg through the cracks in the shell. Keep hard-cooked Easter eggs refrigerated until just before the hunt. Keep them *fully* chilled by storing them on a shelf *inside* the refrigerator, not in the refrigerator door.

Consider buying one set of eggs for decorating only and another set for eating. During the hunt . . . Hide the eggs in places that are protected from dirt, pets, and other potential sources of bacteria. To prevent bacterial growth, don't let the eggs sit in hiding places for more than 2 hours.

After the hunt . . . Discard any eggs that were cracked, dirty, or that children did not find within 2 hours. Place the eggs back in the refrigerator until it is time to eat them!

#### Easter Bunny Salad:

Lettuce  
1 can pear halves  
Whole cloves  
Almond halves  
Cottage cheese



Put a lettuce leaf on a plate. Lay half a pear on lettuce flat side down. And place a clove on each side of the narrow part of the pear for eyes (2 cloves). And two almond halves for the ears. And 1 teaspoon cottage cheese for a tail.

#### Pink Easter Salad:

(20 ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained  
1 (21 ounce) can light cherry pie filling  
1 (14 ounce) can fat-free sweetened condensed milk  
1 1/2 cups toasted almonds  
2 1/2 cups light non-dairy whipped topping

Mix all ingredients together and chill before serving

## EASTER BUNNY CARROT MUFFINS:

2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup raisins  
1/2 cup chopped walnuts  
Grated zest of 1 orange  
1 large egg  
1 1/4 cups buttermilk  
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar  
1/3 cup vegetable oil  
1/2 cup packed grated carrot

**Butter Crumb Topping**  
1/4 cup all purpose flour  
1/4 cup light brown sugar  
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
2 tablespoons of unsalted butter

### Directions:

Heat the oven to 400 degrees. Place paper liners in 12 muffin pan cups. Sift the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt into a mixing bowl. Stir in the raisins, walnuts, and orange zest. Crack the egg into a medium-size mixing bowl. Add the buttermilk, brown sugar, and oil. Whisk well.

Make a well in the dry mixture. Pour in the liquid all at once and stir until the ingredients are almost blended. Then fold in the carrot. Have your child use a large spoon to divide the batter evenly between the muffin cups. Gently press a little of the crumb topping (see below) on each one.

Bake the muffins on the center rack for 20 minutes, or until the tops are golden brown.

Cool the muffins in the pan for two to three minutes, then transfer them to a wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature. Makes 12.



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