



THE MARKET BASKET

January/February 2012



Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program



Hi Friends:

The new year is here! I hope that you had a wonderful holiday season celebrating with family and friends. Let's keep that joyful holiday spirit all year long. This issue covers many topics from fitness facts to how to get the most for your dollar at the grocery store. Til next issue....

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The Dish on Fish

Health experts have been encouraging people to eat more fish for a number of years. Concerns about the safety of fish consumption exist, however. Much of the concern regarding seafood involves fish contaminated with mercury and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB). Polluted water contaminates small fish. As large and older predatory fish feed on small contaminated fish, they accumulate mercury in their skin and fatty tissue. Eating too much contaminated fish can cause birth defects, brain damage in children, and serious impairment in adults.

Americans are eating more salmon, partly because of the health benefits of omega-3 fats found in fatty fish. Because of the increased demand for salmon, the number of salmon farms has grown. Compared to wild salmon at \$15 per pound, farmed salmon typically sells at \$6 per pound but it has higher levels of mercury and PCBs. Farmed salmon from Washington state and Chile are the safest, while the least safe are from Scotland and the Faroe Islands.

Recommendations for women who are pregnant or will become pregnant, nursing women and young children:

- Reduce PCBs levels by cooking fish and discarding any fat and skin.
- Check with your county health department before eating locally-caught fish.
- Avoid eating shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish, because of their high concentrations of mercury.
- Eat up to 12 ounces a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. Limit intake of albacore or white tuna to 6 ounces per week. Five of the most commonly eaten fish that are low in mercury are shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, and catfish.
- ◆ When eating fish, the benefits do outweigh the risks, whether choosing wild or farm raised fish. As with anything, eat fish in moderation and adhere to the FDA/EPA guidelines to keep you and your family safe.



Squeezed by Rising Food Prices?

Before you go to the store...

Make a list. Why? You'll spend less time in the store. For every minute in a supermarket, you spend \$2.17, according to the Food Marketing Institute. Also, if you have a list you will make less trips to the store and save gas.

- Plan your meals. Look for specials and seasonal foods.
- Where you shop may cost you money. Bulk food stores may not always be a good choice. You may be tempted to buy foods you don't need and can't store properly. Large food packages make it too easy to eat larger portions.
- Use coupons for foods you need. Sometimes coupons tempt you to buy things you don't need.
- Convenience foods can drain your food dollar. You pay for convenience such as a ready-to-cook chicken breast. If you prepare it yourself, YOU have control over what goes in the food — less fat and salt.
- Looking for the best value? Foods high in fat and sugar, like cookies, chips, doughnuts and soft drinks, have fewer nutrients than nutritious fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk and lean meats. Remember, the fiber in fruits and vegetables fills you up and keeps hunger away.

Buy non-food items like pet food, cleaning supplies and personal care items from discount stores. You pay more for these at the grocery store.

At the store...

- Shop alone. Shopping without kids can help you avoid the nag effect.
- Shop on a full stomach so you are less tempted to buy more.
- Consider store brands. Many taste the same as name brands and are from the same companies as name brands. If you are making a dish where appearance doesn't matter, like using frozen vegetables in a mixed dish, buy a store brand and save money.
- Bigger is not always cheaper especially if you buy a large size food package and throw food away. Bring a calculator to compare unit prices. Sales tags often do not re-compute unit prices.
- Shop the outer aisles where you find nutritious fruits, vegetables, dairy products and meats. The inside aisles are where you find higher priced processed foods and snacks.
- Look high, look low. Bargains are usually on the top or bottom shelves — NOT at eye level.



Track your store's loss-leader items. What are loss-leader items? They are low-priced items to get you to the store so you buy other higher priced items. Different sections of the store are featured each week. Stock up on each week's loss-leader items, especially things like cereals and juice.

When you get home...

Store food properly. Food that gets thrown out is money lost. According to a University of Arizona study, households throw away about \$600 a year — or ten \$60 fill-ups with gas!

Eating out...

- Eating out costs money and uses extra gas. Preparing food at home allows YOU to control what goes in your food. Food prepared at home can be healthier. If you have children, involve them in the meal planning and preparation to build their kitchen skills.

If you must eat out, share an entrée. Or choose appetizers which are smaller portions of food.

Eating at home...

- Portion sizes. Most of us eat larger portions than we need. Serving food on smaller plates and drinks in taller, thinner glasses can help us eat or drink less.
- Eat slowly. Put your fork down between bites. You'll eat less. Try to be the last person who finishes eating!
- Repackage large containers of food into smaller bags and containers. If you must have snacks on hand like cookies, smaller portions help you avoid overindulging.

Keep healthy foods in sight — like fruits on a bowl in the kitchen or cut-up vegetables in the refrigerator. You and your family are more likely to choose them over healthier snack foods.



Fitness Facts:



Food for Thought: Keeping Balanced Meals Top of Mind

Whatever your fitness level, a sound eating plan is not only necessary for health and well-being, but may be just the fuel you need for an improved fitness edge. In fact, good nutrition will help you perform better and recover faster post-workout. Think nutrient-rich, which means getting the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients — but not too many calories — from the foods you choose. Build your best diet with a variety of foods from all Five Food Groups.

Low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt together provide nine essential nutrients such as calcium, potassium, vitamin D and protein. These help build and maintain bone mass and are important for promoting good health. Potassium also helps regulate the body's fluid balance and supports healthy blood pressure.

Protein-rich foods build and maintain muscle mass. They also aid in muscle recovery after strenuous exercise. Sources of protein include lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and legumes, such as soybeans, lentils, nuts and peanut butter.

Grains — such as cereals, bread, pasta and rice — supply energy for working muscles. At least half of your grains should be whole grains such as whole-wheat bread, brown rice, bulgur and oatmeal.

Fruits and vegetables contain necessary carbohydrates which fuel your body. From asparagus to zucchini, berries to cantaloupe, you'll reap a bounty of good nutrition when you choose from a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables. Choose those that are brightly colored — green, yellow, red or orange.

Your body relies on **fat** for energy during prolonged activities. Fats also play a role in immune function, joint health and the feeling of fullness. Choose monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats more often. Try vegetable oils such as olive, canola and safflower when cooking, take a handful of almonds, peanuts or walnuts for a snack, or top a salad with avocado slices or olives.

Stay Hydrated

The body is 60 to 75 percent water. When you exercise, your body loses fluids through sweating and breathing. Drinking adequate fluids before, during and after exercise helps maintain the body's water level. Water is supreme; however, sports drinks that contain 6 to 8 percent carbohydrates* and electrolytes are recommended during exercise that lasts longer than one hour, or if exercising in hot, humid conditions. Drinks containing more than 8 percent carbohydrates, such as fruit juice and soda, can cause stomach upset. Carbonated beverages are not recommended since they may cause stomach bloating and a burning sensation in the throat.

Whatever your preference, make sure you drink up and stay well hydrated. Keep a water bottle handy throughout the day.





Beef and Potato Tamale Casserole

- Russet Potatoes, white or yellow-flesh 2 medium or 3-4 small red potatoes
- Tomatoes, diced, in juice 1 can (14 1/2 ounces)
- Taco Seasoning, 1 packet (1 1/4 ounces)
- Yellow Corn Tortillas, cut in half 4
- Ground Beef 15% fat 3/4 pounds
- ◆ Cheddar Cheese, shredded 1 cup



Cut potatoes in half lengthwise. Slice across into 1/4-inch-thick half moons. In mixing bowl, combine tomatoes, water and taco seasoning, reserving 2 teaspoons taco seasoning. Spread 2 tablespoons tomato mixture in bottom of a 1-quart microwave-safe dish. Cover with 4 tortilla halves. Crumble beef over tortillas and sprinkle with reserved taco seasoning. Sprinkle half the cheese over beef. Add half the remaining tomato mixture. Spread potatoes on top in a single layer. Cover with remaining tortillas. Spread remaining tomato mixture on top and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Cover tightly with lid or plastic wrap. Microwave on high for 20 minutes (cooking time may vary depending on your microwave) or until potatoes and beef are done. Let sit for two minutes. Use oven mitts or tongs to remove from microwave. Remove plastic wrap carefully to prevent burns from steam.

Chocolate dipped strawberries

- Strawberries, large 20 each
- Chocolate Chips, semisweet 1/2 cup
- Vegetable Oil 1 teaspoon



.Wash the strawberries with cold water and pat dry with a paper towel. Line a cookie sheet with waxed paper. Put the chocolate chips and the oil in a saucepan. Heat over low heat, stirring all the time with a wooden spoon, until chocolate is melted. Dip the lower half of each strawberry or banana chunk into the chocolate mixture. Let the extra chocolate drip back into the saucepan. Put the chocolate dipped fruit on the lined cookie sheet. Put cookie sheet in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes or until chocolate is hard



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