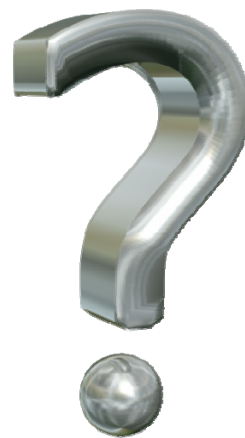


Your Questions Answered

This month we are taking the time to address nutrition-related questions that we in the Patient Food and Nutrition Services Department have heard from patients and clients as well as common nutrition questions or misconceptions in the news. This web page provides a glimpse of some of the common nutrition questions we have heard.

Stop by the Healthy Eating Program display in the cafeteria of University Hospital to pick up more information designed specifically to address your nutrition questions. At the display you can also enter your name into the drawing to win a free cookbook! Read on to find out how.



Which is better—butter or margarine?

Butter is high in saturated fat. Saturated fats are solid at room temperature and are generally found in animal products. When eaten in excess, saturated fats raise our LDL (bad) cholesterol and are associated with an increased risk for heart disease.

Stick margarine is high in trans fat. Trans fat is made through a process called hydrogenation or partial hydrogenation, in which hydrogen is added to vegetable oil to make it more solid and less likely to spoil. Trans fats have been shown to increase LDL (bad) cholesterol and decrease HDL (good) cholesterol; trans fat is also associated with an increased risk for heart disease.

Tub margarine that is trans fat free is the best choice because it contains mostly heart-healthy unsaturated fat. Choose tub margarine without hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil. Instead the first ingredients will be liquid vegetable oil or water. These margarines contain greater amounts of poly- and monounsaturated fats which help reduce bad cholesterol when they replace saturated and trans fats.

Are probiotics safe?

Probiotics are live microorganisms that when administered in adequate amounts confer a health benefit on the host. They can be purchased in the form of dietary supplements as well as in conventional food like yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, miso, and tempeh.

Prebiotics are the “food” for probiotics; they are non-digestible foods that make their way through our digestive system and help good bacteria grow and flourish. Food sources of prebiotics include bananas, berries, legumes, onions, oatmeal, flax, barley, and other whole grains.

Probiotics are considered safe for use in otherwise healthy persons. Pregnant women, nursing mothers, or individuals with a medical conditions should consult their physician before taking any supplements including probiotics.

Probiotics help restore the balance of beneficial bacteria in the gut after certain disease states, stress, poor diet, or antibiotic use. They have been shown to improve immune system function to help fight infections. Probiotics may also help control constipation and diarrhea. In fact, one pilot study published in the Nutrition Journal in 2007 found that a mixture of probiotics had a positive effect on the symptoms of constipation in children aged 4-16.



What foods are considered “healthy” snacks?

Snacking is often regarded as bad behavior and restricted or eliminated from our diets. However, snacks can be a fun, healthy, and creative way to satisfy your hunger and include nutritious foods into your diet. A variety of snacks can easily fit into a healthy diet, just remember to plan with variety and moderation in mind.

Benefits of Snacks:

Binge control—Eating a piece of fruit or a small handful of almonds midmorning or in the afternoon may prevent you from overeating by reducing hunger at your next meal.

Extra energy and nutrients—If a busy schedule prevents you from preparing nutritious, well-balanced meals everyday, a healthy snack during the day or before exercise can make the difference between some nourishment or none at all.

Stock your refrigerator and shelves with these nutritious foods that are fast and easy to prepare so you are more apt to make healthy choices.

- **Whole grains** are rich in complex carbohydrates and fiber, and will make you feel fuller longer. Low-fat whole grain crackers or a slice of whole grain toast are great options.
- **Fruits and vegetables** are full of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other beneficial nutrients. Because they are full of fiber, fruits and vegetables will provide a feeling of fullness with only a small amount of calories.
- **Nuts and seeds** are a great source of protein and monounsaturated fat, a heart-healthy fat that helps lower blood cholesterol when substituted for saturated fat. Because they are full of “good” fat, they will make you feel fuller longer. Just remember, a little goes a long way in terms of calories.
- **Low-fat dairy products** like yogurt, milk, and cheese are full of calcium and protein. Be mindful that dairy products can be high in saturated fat, so opt for the low-fat or fat-free versions. Some yogurts have a lot of added sugar, so consider plain yogurt with fresh fruit if you want to limit your caloric intake.



Here are some healthy **snack ideas** that minimize calories and unhealthy fats and maximize whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. With a little planning and preparation, you will have healthy foods oh hand so that you're ready when hunger strikes.

-Mash half a banana into 2 teaspoons natural peanut butter (without added sugar or corn syrup) and spread onto a whole grain bagel or piece of bread.

-Mix your favorite nuts, seeds, and dried fruit into a homemade trail mix and eat a handful at a time. Try mixing $\frac{1}{4}$ c dried cranberries, $\frac{1}{2}$ c dried apricots, $\frac{1}{2}$ c pumpkin seeds, and $\frac{1}{2}$ almonds for a quick and delicious snack.

-Chop up your favorite vegetables, like red and green peppers, carrots, cucumber, celery, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, or cauliflower, and eat by themselves to your heart's content or dip in hummus or low-fat ranch dressing.



-Layer a soft tortilla with 2 tablespoons shredded low-fat cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese and microwave until the cheese melts. Slice into pie shapes and dip in salsa. Try adding black beans, diced tomato, and sliced avocado for a heart-healthy snack or dinner.

-Top a small baked potato with 2 tablespoons fat free plain yogurt or low-fat sour cream and sprinkle with Cajun seasoning.

-Spread 1 ounce ricotta cheese or a brown rice cake and layer with fresh strawberries. Or try spreading herbed goat cheese with sliced olives for an easy, tasty snack.

-Try mixing vanilla yogurt, your favorite granola, and toasted walnuts, almonds, or hazelnuts. Top with your favorite fruit for a delicious, well balanced snack or breakfast.

-Warm a whole wheat pita in the oven on low, then cut it into small triangles. Dip it in homemade or store-bought hummus. Try garlic, spinach, or red pepper hummus for added flavor.

Should I take a multivitamin? What should I look for?

Taking a vitamin-mineral supplement is important for some people, but vitamin-mineral supplements cannot replace a balanced and nutritious diet. Eat well by emphasizing vegetables, fruit, and whole grain products. If you are taking vitamin-mineral supplements, it is always best to take them with a meal for better absorption.

Phytochemicals:

A good reason to stick with food

Phytochemicals are plant chemicals found in vegetables and fruit. These chemicals provide health benefits such as lowering the risk for cancer and heart disease. Hundreds of phytochemicals have been discovered. For example, indoles and isothiocyanates are compounds formed in broccoli, brussel sprouts, and cauliflower when they are cooked or chewed. These compounds may prevent the onset of cancer.



Some phytochemicals act as “antioxidants”. Antioxidants protect cells from the damaging process called oxidation. Oxidation may lead to cancer or heart disease. Vitamins C and E, selenium and beta-carotene are antioxidants.

Studies suggest that supplements do not provide the same health benefits as food. It is still unknown whether it is one phytochemical or a combination of them that provide the health benefit. Research on phytochemicals is ongoing and many of these compounds remain to be discovered. To be sure you are getting the benefits of all the phytochemicals found in food, eat a variety of vegetables and fruit every day.



The benefits of phytochemicals can be achieved by eating a variety of vegetables and fruit each day, including those that are dark green and orange.

Who needs vitamin-mineral supplements?

- Women in child-bearing years**
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women**
 - Children**
 - Vegetarians**
 - Older adults**
 - Athletes**
- People with restricted food intake**
- People on certain medications**
- People with medical conditions**

Why is breakfast the most important meal of the day?

Does the thought of eating breakfast make you groan? Many Americans skip breakfast on a regular basis - even though it is the most important meal of the day. After an overnight “fast”, we need breakfast to provide energy for our mind and body.



Five important reasons to eat breakfast:

1. Supplies your body with nutrients

Eating a balanced breakfast can supply your body with important nutrients such as carbohydrates, protein, vitamin C, folate, iron, calcium, and fiber. A balanced breakfast includes foods from at least three of the four food groups in Canada’s Food Guide.

2. Makes it easier to get your fiber

Many breakfast foods such as whole-grain cereals, breads, low-fat high-fiber muffins, and fruit are good sources of dietary fiber. When buying cereal, look at the label and choose one with at least four grams of fiber per serving. Not only does fiber keep you regular, but it may help keep blood cholesterol levels within a healthy range, which is good news for your heart. Fiber also helps keep blood sugar levels in check.



3. Helps maintain a healthy weight

Breakfast is important for maintaining a healthy body weight. It can “jump-start” your metabolism, which is an important part of maintaining a healthy body weight. If you skip breakfast, chances are you will feel hungry later on in the day. This may result in cravings for less nutritious foods and lead to an overall higher intake of calories.

4. Improves performance

Breakfast is important for both children and adults. It provides energy to carry out activities and increases mental alertness. Research has shown that eating breakfast can improve memory, problem-solving skills and overall mental and physical performance.

5. Sets the stage for life-long healthy eating habits

Enjoying a variety of great-tasting breakfast foods helps children develop good eating habits that will carry through to adulthood.

Homemade breakfast foods can be more nutritious than similar foods bought from a store or restaurant, because you control the ingredients. Try this delicious recipe:

Blueberry-bran muffins

Tip: You can freeze some and heat them up later for a quick breakfast.

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp salt
1 can (14 oz peaches in light syrup)
2/3 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup fat free egg substitute or 2 whole eggs
3 tbsp vegetable oil
4 cups bran flakes cereal
1/2 cup blueberries (fresh or frozen)

- Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray a 12 cup muffin tin with non-stick spray and set aside.
- In a medium bowl, combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. Set aside.
- Drain peaches and reserve 1/3 cup syrup. Pour peaches and reserved syrup into a blender and puree until smooth. In a large bowl, whisk together pureed peaches, brown sugar, eggs and vegetable oil. Add bran flakes and mix well. Add flour mixture and stir just until dry ingredients are moistened. Do not over mix. Gently fold in blueberries.
- Divide batter among 12 muffin cups and bake for 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center of muffin comes out clean.

Nutrient breakdown per muffin:
187 calories, 4 g fat, 0.6 g saturated fat, 2.9 g fiber

Source: Crazy Plates. 'Berried Treasure'. Janet and Greta Podleski. Granet Publishing Inc., 1999

Easy and Healthy Snack Ideas

Blueberry Smoothie

1/2 c nonfat or 1% milk
1/2 c nonfat plain yogurt
1 c frozen blueberries (unsweetened)
1 tsp honey

Put all ingredients into blender and blend until smooth. Enjoy!

Quick Chicken Salad

1/2 c cold leftover chicken
1/4 c canola or light canola mayo
1/4 c walnuts or pecans
1/4 c sliced grapes
Dash of curry powder

Combine all ingredients, then stuff into a hollowed-out pepper or half of a whole wheat pita pocket.

For more information or answers to your nutrition-related questions, try visiting on the following websites:

www.eatright.org

www.dietitian.com

www.americanheart.org

www.nutrition.gov

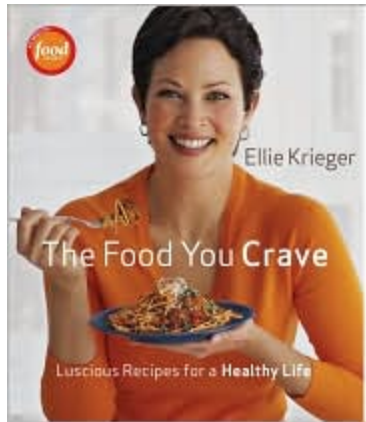
www.bbc.co.uk/healthy/healthy_living/nutrition/

Prepared by Uryna Gerber
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Enter to Win!

Stop by the Healthy Eating display in the cafeteria this month to pick up more information about this month's topic. You can also enter your name in the drawing to win a new cookbook!



The Food You Crave: Luscious Recipes for a Healthy Life is the latest cookbook written by Ellie Krieger. Krieger is a registered dietitian specializing in nutrition and health communications and host of the Food Network's *Healthy Appetite*. *The Food You Crave* contains 200 recipes that cover every meal of the day and every craving you may have. In addition, every recipe contains a complete nutritional breakdown, as well as tips on ingredients and techniques that will keep you eating smart and eating well.

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