

The Lunchbox Nutritionist
Kathleen Searles MS, RD, LDN



Welcome to the Lunchbox Nutritionist newsletter! This monthly e-mail newsletter will feature articles, recipes, and tips to help you keep eating healthy. Let me know what you think!

- Kathleen

Article of the Month: Choosing a Nutrient-Rich Diet



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You should enjoy your diet. Because nutrient-rich foods are familiar, easy to find and represent the five basic food groups, achieving balance and building a healthier diet can be simple and stress-free.

Selecting nutrient-rich foods and beverages first is a way to make better choices within your daily eating plan. Choose first among the basic food groups:

* Brightly colored fruits and 100 percent fruit juice

- * Vibrantly colored vegetables and potatoes
- * Whole, fortified and fiber-rich grain foods
- * Low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt
- * Lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts.

Here are some practical ways for you to add nutrient-rich foods and beverages to your daily diet:

- * Make creamier oatmeal by adding fat-free milk instead of water. Mix in some raisins, dried cranberries, cherries or blueberries too.
- * Make sandwiches on whole-grain bread, such as whole wheat or whole rye. Add slices of avocado, tomato or cucumber to fillings like lean roast beef, ham, turkey or chicken.
- * Whole-wheat macaroni and cheese is a great way to enjoy a whole-grain food with a serving of dairy.
- * When eating out, look for nutrient-rich choices such as entrée salads with grilled seafood and low-calorie dressing, baked potatoes topped with salsa, grilled vegetables and reduced-fat cheese and yogurt parfaits made with strawberries and blueberries.
- * Choose nutrient-rich beverages such as low-fat or fat-free plain or flavored milk or 100-percent fruit juice.
- * Top foods with chopped nuts or reduced-fat shredded sharp cheese to get crunch, flavor and nutrients from the first bite.
- * Spend a few minutes to cut and bag vegetables so they are in easy reach of every family member: ready-to-eat favorites like red, green or yellow peppers, broccoli or cauliflower flowerets, carrots, celery sticks, cucumbers, snap peas or whole radishes. Keep cut vegetables handy for mid-afternoon snacks, side dishes, lunch box additions or a quick nibble while waiting for dinner.
- * Serve meals that pack multiple nutrient-rich foods into one dish, like hearty, broth-based soups that are full of colorful vegetables, beans and lean meat. Make chili with a dollop of low-fat yogurt. Serve these with whole-grain breads or rolls.
- * For dessert, enjoy a tropical treat by blending mango, plain low-fat milk, ice and a splash of pineapple juice. Stir chocolate syrup into a cup of coffee-flavored yogurt, freeze and enjoy.

Recipe of the Month: Summer Squash Medley

*When I was a newlywed, I was amazed to watch a friend make this dish **without any recipe at all!** So think of this more as a recipe guideline, and personalize it to your tastes and available produce.*

Olive oil

Sweet onion (such as Vidalia onion), chopped

Assorted summer squash (such as zucchini, yellow squash, pattypan squash), sliced

Fresh basil, cut in thin strips (dried basil works too, but fresh tastes great!)

Parmesan cheese

Heat olive oil in a large skillet. Add onion and sauté until translucent. Add sliced squash. (Zucchini seems to take a little longer to cook, so add it first.) Continue cooking over low to medium heat, stirring occasionally. It will cook faster if you partially cover the pan. (A spatter screen works well for this.) Cook to desired doneness. (I like my squash cooked until it is translucent, which can take a good 20 minutes or even more if the pan is quite full.) Add fresh or dried basil near the end of cooking time.

Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese before serving. This dish can stand alone as a main dish or side dish. It is also tasty served over rice or pasta. Refrigerate leftovers and use for lunch the next day!

News and Events:

Ahh, it's summer and time to relax with some refreshing iced tea. But did you know that some teas have as much sugar as regular soda? Send an e-mail with TEA in the subject line to get a free tea fact sheet and a chart showing the calories and sweeteners in some popular ice teas.

Do you need to brush up on your healthy eating habits? Call or e-mail today to schedule a problem solving session to help you get back on track!

Contact Information:

Beverly Office
900 Cummings Center
Suite 218U
Beverly, MA 01915

Newburyport Office
37 1/2 Forrester Street
Newburyport, MA 01950

Variations: 1) Add sliced mushrooms with the onions. 2) Add halved cherry tomatoes near the end of cooking time. 3) Substitute crumbled feta cheese for the Parmesan.

Let me know how this works for you and share **YOUR** ideas for other variations!

Quote of the Month

"Those who do not find time for exercise will have to find time for illness."

- Edward Smith Stanley, 1752 - 1834

Phone: 978-697-2834

Email:

ksearles@lunchbox-specialist.com



About Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, LDN

I am a Registered Dietitian and am licensed to practice in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. The exciting field of nutrition has been my passion ever since I took a foods class with my friends in high school.

Through my work in different states and different settings I have developed my philosophy of helping people improve their diets by finding foods that fit into their particular routines, budgets, and preferences. I look forward to helping you solve your nutrition challenges with tasty and satisfying foods.