

Health Connection

February 2018

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AGRI LIFE

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Omega-3s and Asthma

People with asthma may want to consume more omega-3 rich foods, like fish and flax, and reduce their intake of salt and salt-rich foods. There is no doubt that omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids are essential fatty acids and an adequate intake has been shown to have numerous health benefits. Omega-3 fatty acids are needed to produce biochemical mediators that can inhibit the excessive inflammation associated with asthma. A reduction in dietary salt and an increased intake of omega-3 rich oils may reduce asthmatic attacks without also suppressing other parts of the immune system or causing other serious side effects as are frequently seen with the chronic use oral corticosteroids.

By James J. Kenney, PhD, FACN



Whole Wheat Breadsticks

Boost fiber and nutrient content with grains!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup warm water (about 100 degrees F)
- 1 packet dry yeast
- 3 cups white whole wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Pinch brown sugar
- Dash garlic powder
- Vegetable oil spray

Directions:

Mix the warm water and yeast until the yeast dissolves. Add the flour, oil and sugar and knead well by hand or on a mixing machine until the dough is very elastic. Cover the dough and allow it to rise for about one hour.

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured board and divide into 12 small sections. Roll each section until it is the size of a large thumb. Arrange on a baking pan. Lightly spray the tops with the vegetable oil cooking spray and sprinkle with garlic powder and a little Parmesan cheese.

Bake for 10 minutes at 400F. When finished you can serve warm with salt-free tomato/pasta sauce or keep at room temperature until ready to serve. You can also wrap and freeze them for later use. We like them for after school snacks or weekend socializing, too. Plus, this recipe makes a great pizza dough.





Mediterranean Diet Update

By Hollis Bass, MEd, RD, LD

Here's some of the latest in Mediterranean diet research:

Italians with type 2 diabetes who followed a Mediterranean-style diet had a 37% reduced mortality rate. Further, their death rate from stroke and heart disease was reduced by 34%.

A review article looked at weight loss among overweight and obese people who followed a Mediterranean diet compared to other diets (low-carbohydrate, low-fat, etc). The Mediterranean diet resulted in greater long-term weight loss than the low-fat diet. Weight loss was similar for the other diets.

In the United Kingdom, researchers evaluated the eating patterns of 24,000 people and assigned each a score for how closely they followed a Mediterranean-style diet. Those with higher scores had a 5-15% lower risk for heart disease than those with lower scores. The higher the score, the greater decrease in risk.

A small, recently-published study looked at post-menopausal women who followed the Mediterranean diet for 12 weeks. While their total cholesterol and "bad" LDL cholesterol levels did not change significantly, "good" HDL cholesterol increased and triglycerides decreased during that time.



A Doctor's Opinion...

One of my favorite podcasts is "Zorba Paster on Your Health." "Dr. Zorba" is a family physician who gives sound medical advice with lots of laughter. I'm always impressed with his nutrition recommendations!

Dr. Zorba is crazy about the Mediterranean diet. He's not alone and he has good reason. Research continues to show that a Mediterranean-style eating pattern is good news for health. You can find Zorba's podcasts at www.wpr.net/zorba or on iTunes.

Five a Day? Double It!

By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD

More Fruits and Vegetables:

You've likely heard the recommendation to eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables daily for best health. New advice is leaning more towards eating 5 servings of each.



Exploring the Data:

After analyzing over 95 studies that examined the health benefits of fruits and vegetables, London researchers concluded that 800 grams of daily fruits and vegetables (roughly equivalent to 10 portions) was linked to the lowest risk of premature death and disease.

Preventing Death:

After analyzing data from almost 2 million people, researchers evaluated how many daily fruits and vegetables were consumed by the participants, as well as the type. The data indicates that 7.8 million deaths could be prevented if people regularly consumed 10 daily servings of fruits and vegetables.



Preventing Cancer:

Reduction in cancer deaths was associated with consumption of green, yellow and cruciferous vegetables. For reducing risk of CVD, researchers found that apples, pears, citrus fruit, green leafy vegetables, and cruciferous vegetables were associated with less risk.



Spotlight on Added Sugars



How much added sugar do you consume? The typical American consumes enough added sugars to contribute to health problems, including fatty liver, insulin resistance, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. Added sugars provide calories without any nutritional benefit. These “empty-calories” can contribute to overweight and obesity. Often people think that if they’re not overweight, they can consume as much sugar as they want. However, consuming too much added sugar leads to health problems, even in people at a healthy weight. There’s an important difference between sugar that occurs naturally in fruit, plain milk, and unsweetened yogurt, and added sugars. Naturally-occurring sugar does not act the same way in our body as added sugars and it does not cause health problems.

The American Heart Association recommends limiting added sugars to no more than 100 calories per day (about 6 teaspoons) for women, and no more than 150 calories per day (about 9 teaspoons) for men. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate recommend that no more than 10% of daily calories come from added sugars, which is roughly 200 calories per day. This may sound like a lot until you start reading food labels:

- 12 ounces of a carbonated beverage like Coke, Pepsi, Sprite or root beer contains 126 calories – all from added sugars.
- 8 ounces of a fruit beverage or fruit drink contains 48 calories from added sugars.

- A typical glazed donut contains 32 calories from added sugars.
- One slice of apple pie contains 61 calories from added sugars.
- 6 ounces of flavored yogurt contains 78 calories from added sugars.

Use these 6 strategies to reduce added sugar in your food choices:

1. Read the ingredients list on food labels to find sources of added sugar, and choose foods that do not include added sugars in the first three ingredients.
2. Replace sweetened beverages with water or unsweetened tea or coffee.
3. Choose 100% fruit juice instead of fruit drinks that contain added sugars.
4. Gradually reduce the amount of sugar you add to tea, coffee, and cereal. Over a few weeks, you will adjust to a less sweet taste and be happy with less added sugar.
5. Enjoy fresh fruit instead of cakes, pies, cookies, or candies for dessert or snacks.
6. If you really want dessert, choose a small portion. 20 years ago a typical chocolate chip cookie was 1.5 inches in diameter. Today’s cookies are often at least twice as large, and contain 70 calories from added sugar.

By Lynn Grieger RDN, CDE, CPT, CWC