

Health Connection

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There's a New MyPlate Tool!

About half of all American adults have one or more preventable chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, or diabetes. These illnesses are often related to food choices and inactivity. Start Simple with MyPlate provides a variety of easy recommendations that anyone can tailor to fit their individual situation.

MyPlate was originally developed by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion to help consumers put the 2015-2020 U.S. Dietary Guidelines into practice with meals and snacks. Start Simple is the most recent update to MyPlate and focuses on the six primary recommendations above.

By Lynn Grieger, RDN, CDE, CPT, CHWC



Meatless Meatballs



Ingredients:

- 1 cup of garbanzo bean flour
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 1 diced jalapeno pepper (seedless)
- 1 cup nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp olive oil
- dash garlic powder
- 3 cups low-sodium marinara sauce



Directions:

- Mix the garbanzo bean flour with the onions, peppers, yogurt, oil, and garlic powder. You want a very thick paste, about the consistency of real meatballs. You might have to add a little more yogurt to the mix to get it just right. It is best to add the yogurt slowly so you have the perfect mix.
- Bring the marinara sauce to a boil. Make the garbanzo bean paste into 1-inch meatballs and add them to the sauce. Lower the sauce mixture to a simmer and cook covered for 20 minutes. Stir occasionally and gently to keep the meatballs from sticking.
- Serve the meatballs hot with the sauce.



Serves 4. Per 1 cup serving: 218 calories, 4g fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans-fat, 4mg cholesterol, 111 mg sodium, 37g carbohydrate, 6g fiber, 17g sugars, 12g protein.

Chef Salad

Here is a twist on an old favorite that is “almost” vegetarian.

Ingredients:



- 6 cups of Bibb lettuce, rinsed and cut in bite-sized pieces
- 1/2 cup roasted pistachio nuts
- 1 tablespoon minced red onion
- 2 ripe tomatoes, cored and cut in wedges
- 1 cup chopped cauliflower
- Olive oil spray
- 2 tablespoons of vinegar
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, sliced thin

Directions:

Place lettuce, nuts, veggies, olive oil, and vinegar in a large bowl. Toss together and then top with hard-boiled egg slices.

Serve immediately.

Chef's Tips:

Pistachios can be replaced with toasted almonds or hazelnuts.



Nutrition Information

Nutrition Facts: Serves 4. Each 1 cup serving: 149 calories, 9g fat, 2g saturated fat, 0g transfat, 187mg cholesterol, 77mg sodium, 8g carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 4g sugars, 10g protein.

Sustainable Eating

By Lynn Grieger, RDN, CDE, CPT, CHWC



It's almost impossible to wrap our minds around the amount of food wasted around the world. The United Nations estimates that one-third of all food produced is wasted, which means over 1 billion tons of food is wasted each year.

To better understand public perceptions and behaviors around food waste, the IFIC Foundation commissioned a consumer research study of 1,000 U.S. adults ages 18 years and older from August 13 to August 14, 2019. This study showed that the top reason we're concerned about food waste is economics: we want to save money by wasting less food. The top three types of food wasted were leftovers from home-prepared foods, produce, and restaurant leftovers. It seems that while our original intention is to eat the leftovers and produce, 83% of people surveyed said they throw out food because it's spoiled or stale.

Food Waste is an Environmental Problem

We often think about wasting food as an ethical problem when millions of people are hungry. We also think of it as an economic problem when it comes to our own wallets and grocery bills. However, food waste is also an environmental problem of massive proportions. Emissions associated with wasted food add up to about 4.4 gigatons of greenhouse gases every year. According to IFIC, that means that if wasted food were its own country, it would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world, just after China and the U.S.

Reducing food waste starts at home with each of us. Not only will we save money by preventing food waste at home, we'll also contribute to a healthier planet.

Tips to Reduce Food Waste

1. *Purchase fruit and vegetables that look imperfect but are fine to eat so that they're not thrown out by the grocery store. Use imperfect vegetables to make soups and stir-fries, and fruit to make smoothies or to top pancakes.*
2. *Plan meals for the week and only purchase foods you plan to use.*
3. *Before going to the grocery store, look in the fridge to see what foods you already have on hand to avoid purchasing foods you already have.*
4. *When you get home from the store, take the time to wash, dry, chop, dice, slice, and place your fresh food items in clear storage containers.*

4 Diet Hacks for Healthy Blood Pressure

By Jill Weisenberger, MS, RDN, CDE, CHWC, FAND

Focus on Fruits and Vegetables

Eat fruits and/or vegetables with every meal and snack. These are naturally low in sodium and high in potassium and other nutrients for healthy blood pressure.



Use Half the Sauce or Seasoning Packet

When cooking a packaged dish with a seasoning pack, trim half the sodium by using only half of the sauce or seasonings. You probably won't need anything more, but feel free to sprinkle additional sodium-free herbs and spices from your spice rack or add a fresh squeeze of lemon to further boost flavor if you'd like.

Sprinkle Nuts and Seeds

Pumpkin seeds, Brazil nuts, almonds, etc give us a healthy dose of magnesium, an important mineral for blood pressure management. Toss some on salads, over chopped fruit, or on steamed vegetables. And while you're at it, get some of these other wholesome sources of magnesium: peas, beans, lentils, spinach, wheat germ, avocado, brown rice and salmon.



Go Low-Fat with Dairy

Enjoy low-fat or nonfat dairy. Yogurt for breakfast. Milk in your latte. Look for ways to incorporate dairy into your meals and snacks. It's likely that the combination of dairy nutrients – calcium, magnesium, and potassium -- with dairy protein is the reason for the dairy and healthy blood pressure connection.

Gut Bacteria and Childhood Obesity

Recent studies estimate that up to 17% of children may be overweight or obese in the US (1). And while our electronics-crazed society and intakes of highly processed foods may be fueling the problem, a new study by researchers at Wake Forest Baptist Health finds that the bacteria in our guts and how it interacts with metabolic organs such as fat tissue and immune cells, may impact the risk of obesity in children (2).

For years, the medical establishment assumed that obesity was simply a result of overconsumption of calories. But research over the past 10 years suggests that the microbes in our guts are not only linked with obesity but may be one of its key causal factors, according to Dr. Hariom Yadav, lead author and assistant professor of molecular medicine at Wake Forest School of Medicine, which is part of Wake Forest Baptist.

According to the CDC, the percentage of children in the US impacted by obesity has more than tripled since the 1970s. Among school-aged children, the rate of obesity is rising 2.3% annually, which is an unusually high rate. Obesity raises the risk for premature chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes.

Dr. Yadav's research was published in the most recent issue of *Obesity Reviews* and evaluates current studies (both animal and human) along with how the connection between the gut microbiome and immune cells can be passed from mother to baby during gestation and then be linked to obesity in children.

Yadav's review also examined how a mother's health, food intake, physical activity, use of antibiotics, birth method

(vaginal or C-section), and feeding method (breast milk or formula) could impact the risk of obesity in her children.

According to Yadav, "This compilation of current research should be very useful for doctors, nutritionists and dietitians to discuss with their patients because so many of these factors can be changed if people have enough good information. We also wanted to identify gaps in the science for future research."

Having a better comprehension of how the gut microbiome and obesity in mothers and their children will hopefully help researchers create more successful preventive programs and treatment programs to evaluate the rise of childhood obesity, states Yadav.

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By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD