

January 2021



# Nutrition NEWSLETTER



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# Mushroom Stroganoff Shells

Whole Grain

## Ingredients:

- 1 pound whole-grain shell pasta, cooked
- 1 cup cooked lentils
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 3 cups white button mushrooms, quartered
- ½ cup walnuts
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 2 tsp corn starch
- ¼ cup of plain low-fat Greek yogurt

## Toppings

- 1 tablespoon chives or green onions, sliced
- 1 tablespoon plain low-fat Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese



## Directions:

Cook the pasta according to package instructions. Drain in a colander and rinse in cold water. Reserve.

Sauté the mushrooms in olive oil until golden brown. Remove from the pan. Toast the walnuts in the same pan. Add the mushrooms back to the pan along with the lentils, broth, and corn starch. Bring to a boil then add the pasta and reheat all together. Remove from the fire and stir in the yogurt.

## Chef's Tips:

Garnish with sliced chives or green onions, a scoop of yogurt, and shredded Parmesan cheese.

This dish is great by itself or you can add a salad.

## Nutrition Facts:

Serves 4. Each 1 cup serving: 460 calories, 9g fat, 2g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 5mg cholesterol, 113mg sodium, 77g carbohydrate, 11g fiber, 7g sugars, 24g protein.

# Chicken Broccoli Rotini

Whole Grain



Use up your roasted chicken on this healthy favorite pasta dish.

## Ingredients:

- ❖ 1/2 pound whole-grain rotini pasta
- ❖ 1 cup chicken broth
- ❖ 2 tsp corn starch
- ❖ ¼ cup plain lowfat Greek yogurt
- ❖ 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese
- ❖ 1 cup steamed broccoli florets
- ❖ 1 cup shredded roasted chicken breast
- ❖ 1 cup arugula or beet greens

## Directions:

Cook the pasta according to the package instructions, drain in colander.

Pour the chicken broth and corn starch in a saucepan. Stir and bring to a boil. Add the broccoli, chicken, and Parmesan cheese. Reheat until the mixture comes to a boil and remove from the stove. Add the yogurt. Pour all into a serving dish and garnish with the baby beet greens or arugula.

## Chef's Tips:

Feel free to mix it up with other proteins, beans, and veggies. The yogurt makes the pasta creamy and gives the cheese flavor a boost.

## Nutrition Facts:

Serves 4. Each 1 cup serving: 273 calories, 3g fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 32mg cholesterol, 87mg sodium, 43g carbohydrate, 5g fiber, 1g sugars, 22g protein.

# Positive Resolutions for 2021

**W**e don't really know what to expect in the New Year. Think back to January of last year and the goals or plans you had for 2020. So much has changed since then. One comment We've heard over and over during this past year is that next year will be better... looking forward to 2021. Your attitude as we go into this year can make a difference to your overall health.

We're suggesting that, instead of making the regular list of resolutions this year, you can take it month by month.

This project, **Positive Resolutions for 2021** offers topics for each month. We'll help you with some ideas, suggestions, recipes, encouragement, and science-based support. All are positive ideas... nothing that makes you *stop* doing something and it's all based on topics that can improve your health, wellness, and overall well-being.

Let's take it in small steps.

Each month builds upon the previous month or months. At the beginning of each new month, set a measurable goal for yourself on the new topic while continuing the previous months' activities, too. Reevaluate how you're doing each month. At the end of the year, you'll have twelve new habits and a more healthful lifestyle.

## Here's our list of monthly Positive Resolutions for 2021...

[January - Foster Happiness](#)

February - Better Sleep

March- Try Whole Grains

April – Go for Fruit

May- Add a Vegetable

June -Eat a Plant

July - Go Fishing

August - Drink Up

September - Cook at Home

October - Add a Snack

November - Food Memories

December - Life's too Short

### Tips:

- **Make it you.** If you don't like these monthly suggestions, substitute an achievable goal based on a positive change you'd like to make in your life.
- Each month you'll need to decide **what would be a good accomplishment** for you. Are you going for a daily change, twice weekly, every other week, or one a month? That, too, is up to you. Look at where you are now and where you'd like to be at the end of the month and the end of the year. Be specific.
- **Writing goals down makes them more real.** Put them on your calendar at the beginning of each month -- either on your paper or electronic calendar. Or, set it as a reminder on your phone! It could be for every month, every week, or every day -- whichever works for you.
- **Journaling** or making notes on what you did also helps to make it a habit. There are phone apps that can help you do this.

By Cheryle Jones Syracuse, MS

# What is Vitamin A and What Does It Do?

Our immune system relies on a wide network of actions to protect our body from disease and help promote healing. Several nutrients play important roles in immune function, and one of these essential players is Vitamin A.

## What is vitamin A?

Vitamin A is most widely known as promoting healthy vision, yet it also is essential for cell growth and differentiation and plays a critical role in the normal formation and maintenance of the heart, lungs, kidneys, and other organs. Vitamin A is actually the name of a group of fat-soluble retinoids that include retinol, retinal and retinyl esters.

## What is Vitamin A's role in the immune system?

Vitamin A insufficiency is associated with increased mortality to common gastrointestinal and lung infections and poor responses to vaccines.

Vitamin A plays a crucial role in the epithelium, which is the lining of the inside of our digestive tract as well as our skin that protects our entire body.

Vitamin A is also an important part of the immune function of the mucus layer of the respiratory tract and intestines.

T-cells are part of our body's immune defense system responsible for killing infected cells and activating and regulating other immune responses. Retinoic acid (RA), a major oxidative metabolite of vitamin A, is a crucial component of T-cells. A review article published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition in 2012 concluded that although data from human studies are still needed, research from mice and rat models suggests that adequate vitamin A status, from either preformed retinol or beta-carotene, is important for maintaining a proper balance of well-regulated T cell functions and for preventing excessive or prolonged inflammatory reactions.

*By Lynn Grieger, RDN, CDCES, CPT, CHWC, References at <https://foodandhealth.com/vitamin-a-what-does-it-do/>*

# How Much Vitamin A Do I Need?

By Lynn Grieger, RDN, CDCES, CPT, CHWC

The Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for vitamin A is in retinol activity equivalents (RAE) to account for the different bioactivities of retinol and provitamin A carotenoids, all of which are converted by the body into retinol. The RDA is set to provide the average daily amount to meet the nutrient requirements of nearly all (97%–98%) healthy people.

What are the risks of too much Vitamin A?

Vitamin A is stored in the liver, and because it is fat soluble, excessive amounts can build up and lead to toxicity. Chronic high intakes of Vitamin A from supplements or food can lead to increased intracranial pressure, dizziness, nausea, headaches, skin irritation, pain in joints and bones, coma, and even death. The Tolerable upper Intake Level (UL) applies to the upper daily amount of Vitamin A from foods and supplements associated with an increased risk of liver toxicity. Unless your physician recommends otherwise, stay under the UL for the best health.

## Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) for Vitamin A

Age	Male	Female	Pregnancy	Lactation
1–3 years	300 mcg RAE	300 mcg RAE		
4–8 years	400 mcg RAE	400 mcg RAE		
9–13 years	600 mcg RAE	600 mcg RAE		
14–18 years	900 mcg RAE	700 mcg RAE	750 mcg RAE	1,200 mcg RAE
19–50 years	900 mcg RAE	700 mcg RAE	770 mcg RAE	1,300 mcg RAE
51+ years	900 mcg RAE	700 mcg RAE		

This table is from <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminA-HealthProfessional/>

# SOURCES OF VITAMIN A: FOOD VS SUPPLEMENTS

## What foods contain Vitamin A?

Foods contain two different forms of Vitamin A: **preformed Vitamin A** (retinol and retinyl ester) that are found in dairy products, eggs, fish, and meat; and **provitamin A carotenoids** which includes beta-carotene, alpha-carotene and beta-cryptoxanthin found in plants such as leafy green vegetables (spinach, broccoli, kale, romaine lettuce) and orange and yellow vegetables and fruit (carrots, sweet potatoes, apricots, winter squash and cantaloupe). In general, the more intense the color of the fruit or vegetable, the more beta-carotene it contains. Our body converts the provitamin A carotenoids into Vitamin A.

## What about supplements?

Vitamin A is available in both multivitamins and stand-alone vitamin A supplements. As with most supplements, it's better to get your vitamin A through food than in a pill, but it is possible to get it with supplements.

Do be aware of how much vitamin A you're taking, however. According to the National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements, "Because vitamin A is fat soluble, the body stores excess amounts, primarily in the liver, and these levels can accumulate. Chronic intakes of excess vitamin A leads to increased intracranial pressure [...] dizziness, nausea, headaches, skin irritation, pain in joints and bones, coma, and even death."

It's important to note that taking beta-carotene supplements has been associated with an increased risk of lung cancer and cardiovascular disease in current and former smokers. Eating foods containing beta-carotene are not associated with any adverse health conditions, although it is possible for skin to turn slightly yellow/orange when large amounts of beta-carotene are consumed. Once you decrease beta-carotene consumption, your skin will go back to its normal color.

Vitamin A can interact with some medications, and medications may have an adverse effect on Vitamin A levels in your body. If you take any of these medications, it's important to discuss your vitamin A status with your physician and only take supplements if recommended: the weight loss treatments Orlistat (Alli<sup>®</sup>, Xenical<sup>®</sup>), psoriasis treatment acitretin (Soriatane<sup>®</sup>), and bexarotene (Targretin<sup>®</sup>), used to treat the skin effects of T-cell lymphoma.

By Lynn Grieger, RDN, CDCES, CPT, CHWC, References at <https://foodandhealth.com/vitamin-a-food-vs-supplement/>

