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Nutrition NEWSLETTER



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Creamy Pumpkin Pasta with Spinach and Walnuts

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon EVOO (extra virgin olive oil)
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ onion, diced
1 tsp dried ground ginger
1 tsp dried ground turmeric
1/2 tsp cinnamon
Pinch red pepper flakes
Pinch paprika
1 cup pureed pumpkin (canned)
2 cups skim milk or fat free half and half
Pinch sea salt
2 tsp hot sauce
¼ cup sliced sundried tomatoes
2 cups spinach leaves, raw, rinsed and dried, stems removed, divided in half
1 cup toasted walnut pieces, divided in half
8 ounces dried pumpkin pasta



Directions:

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain in a colander, rinse lightly and allow to stand.

Meanwhile, make the sauce. Heat the EVOO in a large Dutch oven skillet. Sauté the garlic, onion, and seasonings until the onion is translucent, about 2 minutes. Add the pumpkin, milk, and salt. Bring to a boil. Add the hot sauce and sundried tomatoes and cook for about 4 minutes until the tomatoes are soft. Add the spinach and continue to cook and stir until the spinach wilts. Remove the pan from the burner.

Add the pasta to the sauce in the Dutch oven pan. Add the rest of the raw spinach and stir. Pour into a serving bowl. Top with the remainder of the walnut pieces. Sprinkle a little pepper and drizzle with olive oil. Serve hot.

Serves 6. Each 1 cup serving: 493 calories, 17g fat, 2g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 2mg cholesterol, 65mg sodium, 71g carbohydrate, 6g fiber, 10g sugars, 17g protein.

Allergens: Milk, Peanut, Tree Nut, Wheat

Chef's Tip:

If you do not have pasta, use a small shaped regular or vegetable flavored pasta instead.

Tri-Color Pasta With Grapes, Greens, and Chicken

A fast way to use up leftover chicken or turkey.

Ingredients:

2 cups red seedless grapes, stems removed, rinsed split in half
½ box tri-color pasta (beet, kale, plain)
½ roasted chicken
1 head radicchio
1 head frisée (chicory) or leaf lettuce
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp mustard
Juice of 2 Meyer lemons
2 radishes
Freeze-dried sage or fresh chopped, 1 teaspoon



Directions:

Preheat the oven to 425. Toss 1 cup or half the grapes with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and roast for 20 minutes.

Cook the pasta according to the package directions.

Shred the chicken and place it in foil in the oven to warm it up (while roasting the grapes). Rinse and drain the lettuces and hand-tear them into large pieces. Make the dressing by mixing ¼ cup olive oil, mustard, and lemon juice. Slice the radishes very thin.

To assemble: Mix the pasta with the chicken, torn lettuce, roasted grapes, and dressing, Top with the remaining grapes that are fresh, sliced radishes, the Greek sage, and a little more olive oil. Serve warm.

Cook's notes: make this recipe vegan by substituting white beans in place of chicken.

Nutrition Facts:

Serves 6. Each 1 cup serving: 389 calories, 6g fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 13mg cholesterol, 51mg sodium, 68g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 11g sugars, 15g protein.

Allergens: Wheat

Positive Resolutions: Moderation

This time of year provides us with many opportunities to enjoy special foods and beverages. Perhaps some of these foods are favorites only available during these holidays. Some foods or treats have special memories.

This brings us to this month's positive resolution theme: Life's too short to completely deprive yourself of these special foods and events.



But, frequently these desserts, sweets, and treats are loaded with fats and sugars and have low nutrient density. A month of unrestricted indulgence can result in weight gain. It is estimated that the average person gains one to five pounds each holiday season. This doesn't sound like a lot, but the problem is, most people don't lose that weight come January. Year after year, this weight gain can lead to overweight and obesity.

So what can people do instead? It's all about balance.

You've probably heard the phrase "Life's too short, so eat dessert first." This sounds like fun and can make a favorite treat extra special. If the food item is something you really adore, go ahead and eat dessert before your meal (occasionally, not every day). Be mindful of what you're eating and savor every bite.

Moderation is the key. Every food can fit into a healthful diet. Some foods can be eaten more often and others less often. Dessert and other sweet holiday treats can be tempting, even for those with the best intentions. Here are some ideas and thoughts on enjoying this time of year and moving healthfully into the new year. Plan ahead and be prepared before you're faced with difficult decisions.

- Eat the food twice. Cut the portion in half and eat half at lunch and the remainder at dinner or tomorrow... not only have you enjoyed the treat, but you've had it twice.
- Share with someone. This goes back to smaller portions, but you have the pleasure of enjoying a treat with another person. Share the joy and the calories. If the food brings back a special memory, share that, too.
- Choose healthier options. Look for recipes that give you the concept of your favorite dessert with a few modifications. How about a crustless pie? Cookies with whole grains or extra fruits? Lighten up the pumpkin pie with egg whites and skim milk. Or make pecan pie with egg whites and a crunchy cereal.
- Add more exercise to your routine. Not only will extra activity reduce some holiday stress, it'll burn more calories.

Life's too short not to have a happy and healthy holiday season with friends and loved ones. Enjoy the blessings.

By Cheryle Jones Syracuse, MS, Professor Emeritus at The Ohio State University

MIND Your Eating Pattern for Better Brain Health

Rush University Medical Center scientists have discovered that older adults may benefit from a nutritious diet known as the MIND diet. This type of eating pattern helps prevent amyloid plaques and tangles, which are protein deposits that develop between nerve cells and impact thinking and problem-solving skills.



The MIND diet was created by the late Martha Clare Morris, ScD, a Rush nutritional epidemiologist and her colleagues. **MIND is a combo platter of the Mediterranean and DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diets.** According to past research, the MIND diet may cut an individual's chance of developing Alzheimer's dementia.

"Some people have enough plaques and tangles in their brains to have a postmortem diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, but they do not develop clinical dementia in their lifetime," said Klodian Dhana, MD, PhD, lead author of the paper and an assistant professor in the Division of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine in the Department of Internal Medicine at Rush Medical College .

According to Dr. Dhana, despite the build up of plaques in the brain, some individuals have the ability to keep cognitive function. The study suggests that the MIND diet is linked with better cognitive functions despite brain pathologies related to Alzheimer's disease.

Scientists evaluated the associations of diet from the beginning of the study until death on brain pathologies and cognitive functioning in older adult subjects in the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center's ongoing Memory and Aging Project. The project started in 1997 and includes individuals living in the greater Chicago area. Subjects were primarily Caucasian without known dementia and all had agreed to undergo yearly clinical evaluations while alive and brain autopsies after they died.

The study included 569 participants that were asked to do annual evaluations and cognitive tests to see if they developed thinking or memory problems. An annual food frequency questionnaire was provided starting in 2004 to inquire about 144 food items they'd eaten in the past year.

A MIND diet score was given by the researchers using the answers to the questionnaire based on how often the subjects ate certain foods. The score was calculated based on the frequency of healthy or unhealthy foods consumed (reported by each participant) during the study period. An average MIND diet score was used from the beginning of the study until a participant died. Accuracy of the study findings were confirmed using seven sensitivity measures.

"We found that a higher MIND diet score was associated with better memory and thinking skills independently of Alzheimer's disease pathology and other common age-related brain pathologies. The diet seemed to have a protective capacity and may contribute to cognitive resilience in the elderly." Dhana said.

By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD

Go Inside the MIND Diet

To stick to and benefit from the MIND diet, an individual would need to consume at least three servings of whole grains, one leafy green vegetable, and other vegetables every day in addition to a glass of wine and a snack of nuts

Beans should be eaten every other day or more often. Poultry, berries, and fish should be eaten at least once per week. Unhealthy foods such as butter should be limited to less than 1 ½ teaspoons per day and sweets, full fat cheese, fried and fast foods should be consumed less than once per week.

Health providers can help their clients try the MIND diet with these simple eating pattern adjustments:

- **Swap out butter and margarine with olive, avocado, or canola oil.**
- **Add frozen spinach or other greens to soups, stews, sauces, or casseroles.**
- **Include beans or lentils as part of Meatless Monday meals.**
- **Snack on dried fruit and nuts instead of chips or candy.**
- **Reduce red meat and include fish at least once or twice per week.**
- **Replace processed grains like white pasta or rice with whole grain spaghetti or brown rice.**
- **Eat salad or other green vegetable at least once a day.**
- **Add chopped nuts and frozen fruit to yogurt in place of sugary granola.**

By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD



WHAT ARE PLANT-BASED “MEATS”?



It seems like every month there's a new plant-based meat alternative on the market. In 2020 the world-wide plant-based meat market was \$5.6 billion and is expected to grow by 15% through 2027.

Since 2015, plant-based meat substitutes that mimic the taste, texture, and appearance of animal products have exceeded 4400 products worldwide. Veggie burgers have been around for years – since 1982 when London-based natural foods restaurant owner Gregory Sams introduced the "VegeBurger." The first veggie burgers were made from lentils, a variety of vegetables, nuts, and seeds and didn't taste anything like a beef burger.

Today the focus is on replicating the taste and texture of meat using plants plus the latest technology, moving away from the traditional veggie burger and toward highly-processed foods.

What Ingredients are in Plant-Based "Meats"?

Manufacturers use a variety of ingredients to make plant-based "meats," including:

- Wheat gluten
- Wheat seitan
- Soy
- Pea protein
- Potato starch
- Various types of oils
- Different types of starches (these act as binders to hold everything together)
- Vegetables
- Legumes
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Commercial flavoring and colors
- Fermented, genetically engineered yeast

By Lynn Grieger, RDN, CDCES, CPT, CHWC

ARE PLANT-BASED "MEATS" HEALTHIER THAN MEATS?

Now that we know about the history of plant-based meat alternatives and what exactly goes into many "meats," it's time to find out whether plant-based meats are healthier than animal meats. I'm afraid there's not one simple answer to this question. Each type of plant-based meat contains different nutrients.

Let's speak generally for a moment. Here are a few positive aspects of replacing traditional meats with plant-based meat alternatives:

- Plant-based meats contain fiber, while animal meats do not contain fiber. Fiber is found only in plants and promotes a healthy digestive tract as well as reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and diverticular disease.
- There is a strong scientific link between consuming red and processed meats and several types of cancer as well as heart disease. The American Heart Association recommends limiting red meat and including more whole grains, vegetables, legumes, and nuts.
- Replacing red and processed meat with plant-based meat is associated with a 25–40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, a 40% reduction in nitrogen emissions, and a 23% per capita reduced use of cropland for food production.
- Plant-based meats tend to be lower in total fat and harmful saturated fat than red meat and processed meats.

There are also some negative aspects of replacing meats with plant-based meat alternatives:

- Animal meats are good sources of zinc, iron, and vitamin B12; not all plant-based meat makers add these nutrients to their products.
- Plant-based meats tend to be higher in sodium than red meats, while most processed meats (sausage, lunch meat, hot dogs, etc) typically are high in sodium
- Some plant-based meats include added sugars that are never found in red meat; some types of processed meats, however, may contain added sugars.
- All plant-based meats are processed to some degree, and some are highly-processed.

So, what's a person to do? Here's what we suggest:

- Choose plant-based meats that contain legumes, vegetables, nuts, and seeds – whole foods that contain a variety of nutrients that are crucial for good health.
- Avoid products that contain more than 800mg sodium per serving.
- If you are allergic to soy, nuts, or seeds read the ingredient lists carefully to make sure you're purchasing products that do not contain these items.
- Choose plant-based products with additional iron, zinc, and B12 to more closely replace the nutrients naturally found in meat.

By Lynn Grieger, RDN, CDCES, CPT, CHWC