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# Nutrition NEWSLETTER



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### Brought to you by:

Evan Zingman  
Z Physique  
NSCA-CPT, B.S.  
Email: [Evan@Z-Physique.com](mailto:Evan@Z-Physique.com)  
Voice: 602.750.9647  
Online: [Z-Physique.com](http://Z-Physique.com)  
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# Chicken Noodle Bowl

## Ingredients:

1 cup chicken broth (low-sodium)\*  
3 cups water  
3 sliced carrots  
8 ounces wide egg noodles  
2 cups leftover roasted chicken\*  
2 cups peas  
1 tsp Italian seasoning or garlic herb mix  
Garnish: dash of olive oil

\*For the broth we cooked a leftover chicken carcass and used that cooking liquid but you can also use canned broth or a bouillon cube



## Directions:

Bring the broth and water to a boil. Add the carrots and noodles and cook for 10-12 minutes or until the noodles are almost tender. Add the chicken, peas, and seasoning. Bring back to the boil.

Pour into 4 bowls and top with a little oil

Serve with salad and whole grain crackers.

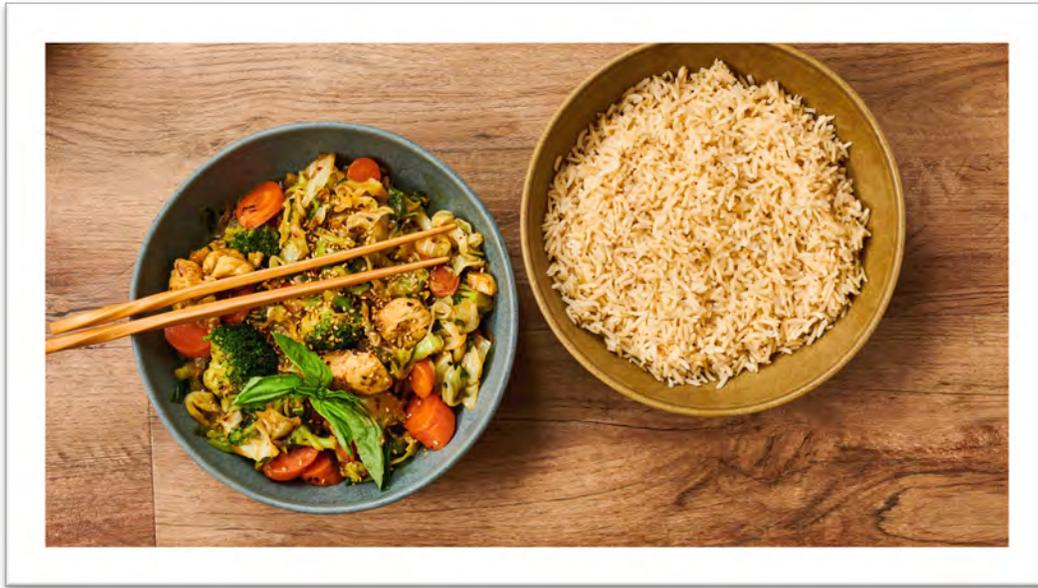
## Nutrition Facts:

Serves 4. Each 1-1/2 cups serving: 616 calories, 8g fat, 2g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 155mg cholesterol, 165mg sodium, 93g carbohydrate, 7g fiber, 7g sugars, 42g protein.

## Chef's Tip:

This is a great way to use up leftover roasted chicken. If using raw chicken add it with the noodles.

# Broccoli Chicken Stir Fry Bowl



This bowl meal is light on the budget and full of crunchy veggies with a nice garlic flavor. It is very filling yet low in calories, too!

**Ingredients:**

- 1 tsp vegetable oil
- 4 cloves garlic minced
- 3 cups sliced cabbage
- 3 carrots, sliced
- 2 cups chicken tenders, sliced
- 3 cups broccoli
- 1 cup chicken broth
- Dash of fresh or dried basil
- 3 cups brown rice, steamed

**Directions:**

Heat the oil in a large wok or skillet, Sauté the garlic, cabbage, and carrots. Remove from the pan. Add the chicken tenders, broth, and basil. Bring the heat back up so the liquid is simmering and cover the pan. Cook until the chicken is cooked about 8 minutes. Add the broccoli the last 3 minutes.

Add the cabbage mixture to the chicken, stir. Serve with cooked brown rice.

Use sesame seeds for a fun garnish and serve with soy sauce to the side.

Serves 4. Each 2 cups serving: 299 calories, 4g fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 19mg cholesterol, 136mg sodium, 53g carbohydrate, 9g fiber, 8g sugars, 16g protein.  
Allergens: Peanut, Soy

# Alcohol and Brain Health

As the risk for Alzheimer's disease is on the rise, most adults want to do whatever they can to prevent it. In a recent edition of the newsletter, we touched on the benefits of exercise. What about other lifestyle habits?

A recent study that evaluated casual, moderate alcohol intake and its link to premature brain aging was completed using the Brain-Age Regression Analysis and Computational Utility software. The software, known as BARACUS, uses measures of the brain's cortical thickness, cortical surface area, and subcortical volumes found from structural MRI to predict brain age in a sample of adults.

This study featured 240 subjects with an average age of 35 (+/- 10.7) years. Of these subjects, 49% were African American and 48% were male. Advanced brain aging was considered the difference between predicted and biological age, known as the "brain age gap."

A significant link between prior 90-day alcohol intake and brain age gap was indicated through statistical analysis. The results were repeated in a second independent subject group of similar sample size, age, and other demographics.

Results showed that brain age gap occurred even in the absence of smoking (a risk factor for dementia). Brain age gap was observed by 5 days per drink consumed over a 3-month time frame. This equates to a little less than 1 drink per day over 90 days.

**The results indicate that minimal alcohol intake is associated with untimely brain aging. More research is necessary to show cause and effect.**

It may be helpful to take a look at the ABV (alcohol by volume) of various drinks. Often, people are consuming more alcohol than they think. A 12-oz canned hard seltzer may be 1.6 drinks, one 12-oz beer may be 2 drinks, and a cocktail with 3 oz of distilled spirits (like gin) counts as 2 drinks.

A new consumer-friendly calculator at [StandardDrinks.org](https://www.standarddrinks.org) can help people figure out how many drinks they're actually consuming, along with what's in their recipes.

*By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD*

Occasional, moderate drinking is often seen as heart-healthy and potentially beneficial in preventing dementia. Previous studies suggest that a drink per day could reduce risk of brain aging. However, other research begs to differ.



# 3 Key Nutrients for Plant-Based Eating

We're hearing more and more about the benefits of eating a plant-based diet. A plant-based diet means most of our food choices come from plants.

We're even seeing "meats" made from plants that somehow manage to still look and taste like meat. Think about the Impossible Burger and the Beyond Burger, for example.



While there's no arguing with the health benefits of eating more plants, if you're replacing most or even all animal products with plants, it's important to focus on three individual nutrients that are more prevalent in animal products: zinc, iron, and vitamin B12.

**Zinc** is an essential mineral that plays a crucial role in immune function, wound healing, protein synthesis, and cellular metabolism. Zinc is required for growth and development during pregnancy, childhood, and adolescence. Our bodies don't have a way to store zinc, so we need zinc on a daily basis for optimum health.

**Iron** is an essential component of hemoglobin, a red blood cell protein that transfers oxygen from the lungs to each cell throughout the body. Without enough iron in our hemoglobin, we feel tired and fatigued. Iron supports muscle metabolism and healthy connective tissue and is also necessary for physical growth, neurological development, cellular functioning, and synthesis of some hormones. Iron deficiency is the most common nutrition deficiency in the world. Iron is stored in the body as ferritin in the liver, spleen, muscle tissue, and bone marrow.

**Vitamin B12** is required for the development, myelination, and function of the central nervous system, healthy red blood cell formation, and DNA synthesis. B12 is the only vitamin that is only naturally available in animal products. Many breakfast cereals and nutritional yeast are fortified with B12. Unlike most other vitamins, B12 is stored in substantial amounts, mainly in the liver, until it is needed by the body. If a person stops consuming B12, it takes about 3 to 5 years to deplete B12 stores in the body. Over time, B12 deficiency can lead to irreversible nerve damage.

*By Lynn Grieger, RDN, CDCES, CPT, CHWC*

*References at <https://foodandhealth.com/3-nutrients-plant-based/>*

# Get Enough Zinc, Iron, and B12 Each Day

**R**ed meat and poultry provide most of the **zinc** in the American diet. Plant sources of zinc include legumes, nuts and whole grains; however, these foods contain phytates which decrease its absorption in our digestive tract.

**Vegetarians require as much as 50% more zinc as carnivores for optimum health. Some food preparation techniques reduce the action of phytates and increase zinc bioavailability. For example, soak legumes, grains and seeds in water for several hours before cooking so that sprouts form, and/or choose more grains that use leavening (anything with yeast, baking soda, or baking powder to make it rise) because leavening partially breaks down phytates**

**How much zinc do I need?** The RDA for zinc for women age 19+ is 8mg per day and for men age 19+ is 11mg per day. If you're pregnant you need 11 mg zinc per day, and 12 mg zinc when breastfeeding. If you don't eat any animal products that are high in zinc (beef, crab, lobster, oysters, pork, chicken) on a regular basis, then increase your daily zinc intake by 50%. That means 12mg zinc per day for women and 16.5mg zinc per day for men who eat a primarily plant-based diet. If you're pregnant, aim for 16.5 mg zinc and 18 mg when breastfeeding.

Meat, seafood and poultry contain both **heme and nonheme iron**, while plants contain only nonheme iron. Heme iron from meat is more absorbable than nonheme iron from plants. Vitamin C increases the absorption of nonheme iron, but once again phytates decrease the absorption. The RDA for iron for vegetarians is 1.8 times higher than people who eat meat because of these absorption issues.

**How much iron do I need?** If you don't regularly consume animal sources that are good sources of iron (oysters, beef liver, sardines, beef, dark meat chicken) then increase your daily iron by 1.8 times: 32 mg for women age 19-50 and 14 mg for men age 19 and older and women age 50 and older. If you're pregnant, aim for 48 mg of iron and when breastfeeding 16 mg of iron.

- Women age 19-50 need 18 mg iron per day.
- Men age 19-50 need 8 mg iron per day.
- Women and men age 50+ need 8 mg iron per day.
- Iron needs increase to 27 mg during pregnancy and 9 mg when breastfeeding.

**B12** bioavailability appears to be about three times higher in dairy products than in meat, fish, and poultry, and the bioavailability of vitamin B12 from dietary supplements is about 50% higher than that from food sources.

**How much B12 do I need?** Men and women age 19 and over need 2.4 mcg of B12 per day. B12 needs increase to 2.6 mcg during pregnancy and 2.8 mcg when breastfeeding. Since Vitamin B12 is not naturally present in any plants, if you don't regularly consume animal products you'll need to include fortified nutritional yeast or other foods that often contain added B12 such as breakfast cereal, plant milks (for example almond, soy and rice milk often contain added B12) and foods marketed toward vegans.

*By Lynn Grieger, RDN, CDCES, CPT, CHWC*

*References available at <https://foodandhealth.com/zinc-iron-and-b12-each-day/>*



# WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH KIDS' MENUS?

If it makes you crazy to see so much processed food on the kids' menu at restaurants, you're not alone. I've often asked myself, "why can't they serve adult food in kid-sized servings?"

The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) is taking a stand. Their recent position paper in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* states "there is no difference between healthful foods for adults and for children aged 2 and up, except for age-appropriate adjustments in texture and portion size."

Pamela Rothpletz-Puglia, EdD, RD of the School of Health Professions, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey notes, "If you think about kids' food, the archetype or terminology that we widely use to describe the food that we feed our children, it's really a social norm or societal construct that we've perpetuated."

**Many of these foods are ultra-processed, high in calories, saturated fats, and added sugars. Long-term intake of these foods can be harmful to children's tastes and preferences. It may exacerbate fear of new foods and picky eating behaviors and could negatively affect their future health as well.**

The authors of the position paper note that the assumption that kids need different foods than adults may have started during the alcohol prohibition era, when the restaurant industry made children's menus to offset loss of income from alcohol sales. Kids' food and menus have become the social norm, though it's known that children can eat healthy food like adults. Ultra-processed foods like hot dogs, mini pizzas, French fries, and chicken nuggets persist on menus, are the social norm, and are highly palatable to kids.

Tip: slowly transition kids to adult like meals and let them experiment with things they like from the adult menu. Eating in healthy places that have salad bars and other healthy options can be a good strategy.

*By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD*

The definition of "kids' food" is food that is likely to be eaten by children between the ages of 2 and 14 at home or in the community. A long-held assumption in the US is that kids need different food than adults.

# Changing the Way Kids Eat: A Dietitian's Guide

## Why should kids eat less healthfully than adults?

Now that we know that the food on kid's menus is there as a result of social expectations and norms, we can take steps to change those expectations.

Nutrition educators can help change consumer demand and social norms around food choices by creating family and community resilience and healthy changes to the ultra-processed food environment. Promoting the fact that children over the age of 2 can consume the same healthy diet as adults, while keeping servings and nutritional needs in mind, may move the needle on children's food options.

Working with the media, food, and restaurant industries on health promotion messaging, advertising, menu labeling, and healthy menu options can also help in improving the unhealthy kids' food environment. Reach out to policy makers with your views!

By changing the beliefs about healthful foods for both kids and adults to enjoy, nutrition educators can encourage positive social and behavior changes for individuals, families, and communities at large.

Here are tips for nutrition educators to help change the food environment:

- Teach parents appropriate serving sizes for kids from all food groups.
- Reach out to restaurants and offer help in modifying kids' menus.
- Offer nutrition and cooking classes for families at school, camps, or recreation centers.
- Provide practical tips to families about healthy choices for kids.
- Discourage using processed food as a reward.

*By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD*



*Home made veggie pizza, baked chicken fingers, and salad bars are fun ways to engage kids with better choices.*