

Color on your plate' is good for your health

An old wives' tale dating back hundreds of years taught: "Always have a lot of color on your plate." This advice was given so that people would meet their need for beta carotene.

Beta carotene is one of food's natural "antioxidants." It can help our bodies fight off cancer and heart disease. In today's modern world we're exposed to pollution, smoke, fatty foods, stress and sun exposure. Many of these we can't avoid completely. But, we can help ourselves to fight their negative effects by eating a well-balanced diet rich in leafy greens, yellow and orange vegetables and fruits, which provide our bodies with a daily store of these important antioxidants.

Most fruits and vegetables supply beta carotene. Especially the green and yellow/orange vegetables such as broccoli, spinach, sweet potatoes and the popular carrot (which we

Tips add to your enjoying cheese

AP — Cheese was the first convenience product, providing our ancestors with a lasting and highly portable food. Today we're more concerned about flavor and enjoy cheese because it tastes so good in so many dishes. To maximize the flavor and shelf life of your favorite cheese, follow these tips:

- STORING**
- Store cheese in its original wrapping or seal in foil or plastic wrap. Eliminate as much air as possible to prevent surface mold or drying.
 - Double-wrap strong-smelling cheeses in foil or plastic wrap. "In" in a tightly covered container so other foods don't absorb the odor.
 - No matter how carefully they are stored, natural cheeses continue to ripen and will spoil, even in the refrigerator. Eat cream cheese, cottage cheese, ricotta and other soft cheeses within one week of purchase. Store firmer cheeses, such as Cheddar and Swiss, for several weeks. Parmesan and other very dry cheeses will be fine for several months.
 - Surface mold is unappetizing but generally harmless. Cut out a 1/4-inch area around moldy areas before serving.

- FREEZING**
- To freeze natural and process cheeses, wrap in moisture- and vaporproof wrap. Seal, label and freeze for 6-8 weeks for natural cheeses; 4-5 months for process cheeses.
 - Because cheese texture is affected by freezing, use cheese that has been frozen only in cooking.
 - Do not freeze soft cheeses, such as cottage and ricotta.

- USING CHEESE**
- Four ounces of any natural or process cheese equals one cup shredded.
 - To try a new cheese, find out its family connections. Cheese "families" have similar flavor and texture so you can substitute a new cheese for a familiar one. Substitute Colby, Edam or Gouda for Cheddar; Asiago, Fontina or Romano for Parmesan; Neufchatel for cream cheese; Brie for Camembert.
 - To taste natural cheeses at their flavor peaks, let stand, covered, at room temperature 30-60 minutes before serving.
 - When cooking with cheese, use low heat and avoid long cooking times. High heat and long cooking toughen cheese. Shred, grate, cube or slice cheese to promote fast, even melting.

- LOW-FAT CHEESES**
- If you are looking for ways to cut down on the amount of fat you eat, seek out low-fat cheeses in the dairy case.
 - When cooking with a low-fat cheese, be especially careful to keep heat low. Stir in one direction only — and only until cheese melts.
 - Try using low-fat cheese for three-fourths of the amount called for in a recipe and aged Cheddar for the remaining. You'll get great flavor, less fat.
 - In casseroles, layer shredded low-fat cheese with the other ingredients and pour sauce over. The cheese melts and the flavor blends as the casserole bakes.

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Lite success Florine Mark

were told to eat for healthy eyes). Getting enough beta carotene in our diet is, in fact, essential for good vision and it also helps protect the eyes from forming cataracts.

Just knowing that eating foods rich in beta carotene can help to prevent certain types of cancers, and that it can help to preserve your vision, should encourage you to reach for a glass of carrot juice instead of soda pop. Now the good news. Foods rich in beta carotene are tasty.

DOESN'T A spiced carrot-raisin muffin sound good for breakfast? And for an afternoon snack, sweet potato chips are a healthy way to satisfy your craving for munchies. As the days and evenings begin to get cool, think about baking some acorn squash with a touch of brown sugar and cinnamon or enjoying a bowl of pumpkin chowder.

Take the old wives' tale seriously. It was excellent advice then — and in our modern environment it's even more important. Whenever you sit down to a meal, always be sure there is color on your plate, especially from the vegetable family. It's also a good idea to eat a carrot every day.

SPICED CARROT-RAISIN MUFFINS
Makes 12 servings
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
2 teaspoons double-acting baking powder

mg sodium; 46 mg cholesterol.
With orange: 246 calories; 4 g protein; 8 g fat; 40 g carbohydrate; 71 mg calcium; 253 mg sodium; 46 mg cholesterol.

Source: Weight Watchers Quick Success Program Cookbook, 1988.

SWEET POTATO CHIPS
Makes 2 servings
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
6 ounces thinly sliced sweet potato (3/4-inch thick slices)
1 teaspoon firmly packed brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
dash to 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In small mixing bowl, drizzle oil over potato slices and, using 2 forks, toss to coat. On non-stick baking sheet arrange slices in a single layer. In cup or small bowl combine remaining ingredients and sprinkle evenly over potatoes. Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees. Turn potato slices over and continue baking until crisp, 15-20 minutes (check for doneness frequently to prevent burning). Transfer potato chips to small serving bowl. Serve immediately or let cool to room temperature.

Each serving provides: 1 bread exchange; 1 fat exchange; 10 optional calories.
Per serving: 138 calories; 1 g protein; 5 g fat; 23 g carbohydrate; 25 mg calcium; 559 mg sodium; 0 mg cholesterol.

Source: Weight Watchers Quick Success Program Cookbook, 1988.

PUMPKIN CHOWDER
Makes 4 servings
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon margarine
1/4 pound Canadian-style bacon, minced

1 cup chopped thoroughly washed leeks (white portion only)
3 cups water
2 cups canned or cooked and pureed fresh pumpkin
2 packets instant chicken broth and seasoning mix
6 ounces cubed pared all-purpose potato
1/4 teaspoon each crumbled sage and thyme leaves
dash each pepper and ground nutmeg
1/4 cup half and half (blend of milk and cream)

In 3-quart saucepan melt margarine. Add bacon and leeks and cook, stirring frequently, until leeks are tender-crisp, about 2 minutes. Add water, pumpkin, and broth mix and stir until thoroughly combined. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat

to low. Add potato and seasonings and let simmer until potato is tender and flavors blend, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in half and half.

Each serving provides: 1 protein exchange; 1/4 bread exchange; 1 1/4 vegetable exchanges; 1 fat exchange; 30 optional calories.

Per serving with canned pumpkin: 193 calories; 9 g protein; 8 g fat; 23 g carbohydrate; 72 mg calcium; 959 mg sodium; 20 mg cholesterol; 3 g dietary fiber.

With cooked fresh pumpkin: 176 calories; 9 g protein; 8 g fat; 19 g carbohydrate; 59 mg calcium; 954 mg sodium; 20 mg cholesterol; 1 g dietary fiber (this figure does not include cooked fresh pumpkin; nutrition analysis not available).

Source: Weight Watchers Quick and Easy Menu Cookbook, 1987.

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