



Living Well Calhoun

ASK THE DIETITIAN

By Amanda Latchaw, Dietetic Intern, Health Department.

Decoding/deciphering nutrition information

Nutrition information in the news can be confusing as it seems like there's always something new. Nutrition is continuously being researched for prevention and treatment of our health. Remember when there was a time where we should avoid eggs due to high cholesterol? Now the research is saying we should incorporate eggs because they don't raise cholesterol levels compared to trans fats and saturated fats. What should we believe and what should we be wary of? Here are a few things that may help you navigate as you read or hear about nutrition in the news:

- ❖ Check to see if the article or news mentions a Registered Dietitian (RD) or Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) because they are nutrition experts and have gone through the education, internship, and examination to be credentialed.
- ❖ Who conducted the study? It's important to know this information to see if there is any bias for a particular food group or product. Of course the ones backing up the study are going to put their product in a good light to get more marketing.
- ❖ Does the information presented seem too good to be true? If the article is based on a study, see if it goes into detail about how many participants were involved. The larger the study, the more reliable the results.

To learn more, you can also check out the Harvard's School of Public Health [article](#) about this topic.

Keep in mind what may work for your co-worker or family member may not generate the same results for yourself. We all have unique bodies and different digestive systems. We need to be able to customize our own dietary lifestyle based on what our bodies need, so reach out to a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist or have a conversation with your medical provider. What nutrition news have you come across that made you question the validity of the content?

Happy eating!

If you have questions you would like to ask Amanda, email them to mstamand@calhouncountymi.gov

Herb Harvest

It's harvest time and we are going to talk a little bit about some simple tips to preserve your fresh herbs. I discovered a new way to freeze herbs in ice cube trays. I use water for my soups, and oil for my pasta dishes or roasts. Think about what you would utilize the most and decide if you want to use oil, butter, or just water. Happy Harvesting! It's well worth it!

- ◆ Choose firm, fresh herbs, ideally from the market or your own garden.
- ◆ If you wish, you can chop them fine. Or leave them in larger sprigs and leaves.
- ◆ Pack the wells of ice cube trays about 2/3 full of herbs.
- ◆ You can mix up the herbs too; think about freezing different types together such as sage, thyme, and rosemary to add to winter roast chickens and potatoes!
- ◆ Pour extra-virgin olive oil, water, or melted, unsalted butter over the herbs.
- ◆ Cover lightly with plastic wrap and freeze overnight.
- ◆ Remove the frozen cubes and store in freezer containers or small bags.
- ◆ Don't forget to label each container or bag with the type of herb (and oil) inside.



FERMENTED FRUIT DRINKS



WHY FERMENTED DRINKS?

For tens of thousands of years, our ancestors used fermentation as the main method of preservation of their food. Without refrigeration or the ability to can, they relied on the workings of natural microorganisms to change their fresh harvests into storable ones. They made and ate fermented sauerkraut, kimchee, grains, pulses, milk, fish, meat and vegetables. This process not only preserved their foods but gave them digestive enzymes, probiotics and made the vitamins and minerals inherent in the substances more bio-available to their bodies.

When you enjoy naturally fermented and unpasteurized foods like fermented fruit drink or sauerkraut, you can bypass expensive probiotic supplements. Traditionally fermented foods are your best, and most diverse, source of invaluable enzymes and bacteria to support digestion. It's with good reason that every single culture throughout the world includes a lacto acid fermented food central to their diet. Home-made ferments are delicious and far more pleasurable than is swallowing a pill to boost intestinal flora, and is far less expensive than are probiotic supplements.

Are fermented foods safe? They're actually safer than eating raw fruits and vegetables because the lactic acid bacteria inhibits—even prevents—proliferation of pathogenic organisms.

In the height of summer, strawberries and other berries ripen quickly, and often go soft and unpalatable. At this stage, before they turn moldy, they are perfect for fermenting, not least because these are signs that the process has already begun. Fermenting fruits are a great way to save a few pennies and a few fruits from the garbage.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU MAKE FERMENTED DRINKS

To make fruit fermented drinks you can start with almost any fruits or vegetables. They can be fresh, frozen, or dried. You can make them with a lot of fruit or just a little. When you make a pumpkin pie, save the skin and seeds and ferment them. Throw in some herbs from the garden, raisins or spices if you like.

You need only fruit, unpasteurized honey, and pure water. (If using tap water and/ or pasteurized honey, you need to add a starter such as whey or yeast.) Use a single fruit or a combination of fruits and feel free to experiment with herb flavorings. Don't bother to core or peel organic fruits like apples or pears. After peeling a pineapple, you can recycle the peel into pineapple drink. Very soft and sweet fruits (like melon, banana, mango or papaya) more quickly ferment and so allow approximately two days; also they sour more quickly if over-fermented.

Warm weather and high sugar content cause faster fermentation. If the mixture is actively bubbling in just one day, it contained too much sugar (next time use less fruit and/or honey) and will sour and start to become alcoholic rather than develop the healthful and tangy lacto-bacteria.

If you don't have fully ripened fruit—particularly stone fruit: peaches, apricots, cherries, plums, or nectarines—on hand, use apples or pears or frozen or preservative-free dried fruit. While some fruits become sweeter after harvest, stone fruits do not, and most of the stone fruits available in supermarkets were harvested before ripening. Fermented drinks made from immature fruit lacks both essence and flavor; it tastes utterly flat and not at all pleasing.

WHAT YOU NEED TO MAKE FERMENTED FRUIT DRINKS:

1. Enough ripe fruit to fill a quart jar by one quarter to one third
2. Pure water to almost fill the jar. *Note: Chlorine can inhibit fermentation, so, if possible, dechlorinate the water by pouring it into a wide-mouthed jar up to 24 hours ahead of making your drink.*
3. 1 tablespoon unpasteurized honey
4. Several thin ginger slices or other seasonings (optional)

For raspberries or other delicate berries, put them in whole. Slice denser fruits like strawberries and apples. Halve grapes, cherries, and dried apricots, figs or prunes. Either split or mash firm-skinned fruits like blueberries and citrus.

Place the fruit, honey and seasonings (optional) in a quart jar. Add enough water to fill all but the top inch of the jar; this critical “head room” safely allows pressure to build. There’s no need to stir in the honey; it will dissolve.

Tightly cover the jar, set it on your countertop and give it a shake 2 or 3 times a day to prevent undesirable bacteria from forming on the surface. Once it starts bubbling, press on the center of the lid to gage CO2 pressure buildup. When the lid bulges up rather than giving to light pressure, open the lid to release CO2 and then retighten the lid.

In approximately 24 hours, you’ll see bubbles in the mixture. It’s ready after 2 to 3 days or when the mixture is vigorously bubbling and the fruit looks “cooked” rather than raw and has a pleasing flavor. Taste your brew as often as you wish. These drinks are good to add to a non or alcoholic beverage, as well as cooking with it. The possibilities are endless.

When it’s ready, strain out and discard the fruit solids (you could eat them but their essence is gone). Serve your fermented drink as is or keep refrigerated for up to a week.

Other Fermented Combinations:

cherry, raspberry, cardamom

apple, raisins, cinnamon

lemon, dried apricots, ginger

mango, chai spices

beet, apple, lemon balm

nectarine, chamomile

blackberry, peaches, vanilla bean

dried prunes, lemon, ginger

apple, dried apricot, ginger and a cinnamon stick (left)

raspberries and a ginger slice (right)



Try it! Send a picture along with your favorite combination for a point on your ticket to fitness.

Sources:

<https://www.almanac.com/fruit-kvass-recipe-fermented-drink>

<https://www.rebeccawood.com/recipes/fruit-kvass/>

Healthy Recipes

Good for a fit ticket point with submission of recipe

Submitted by Vanessa Jeffers

Savory Grilled Salmon Kabobs

Ingredients:

2 tsp dried oregano
2 tsp sesame seeds
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp black pepper
1 tsp salt
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
½ tsp garlic powder
1 ½ pounds skinless salmon fillets, cut into 1 ½ inch pieces
2-3 lemons
2 tbsp olive oil

Directions:

Preheat grill for medium heat. In a small bowl, combine oregano, sesame seeds, cumin, pepper, salt, cayenne and garlic powder. Set aside.

Beginning and ending with the salmon, thread salmon and lemon slices onto 2 parallel skewers. If needed, fold lemon slices in half before placing on the skewer.

Brush with Olive oil and season with spice mixture. Repeat with remaining salmon and lemon slices. Grill for 3-4 minutes per side, or until salmon is cooked through.



Submitted by Marie St-Amand

Ratatouille (Not the Movie)

Ingredients:

¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 yellow bell peppers, diced into 1/2-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
1 large yellow onion, diced into 1/2-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 large eggplant (1 ½ pounds), diced into 1/2-inch pieces (about 9 cups)
1 large zucchini (1 pound), diced into 1/2-inch pieces (about 3 ½ cups)
3 cloves garlic, minced (about 1 tablespoon)
3 tablespoons tomato paste
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, optional
1 ½ pounds ripe tomatoes, diced into 1/2-inch pieces (about 4 cups)
½ cup fresh parsley, chopped, plus more for serving
6 large fresh basil leaves, torn, plus more for serving

Directions:

Heat ¼ cup olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat until shimmering, about 1 minute. Add the bell peppers, onion and 1 teaspoon salt and cook, stirring often, until the onions are translucent and the bell peppers have softened slightly, about 10 minutes. Add the eggplant, the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil and 1 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring often, until the eggplant is very soft, about 8 minutes. Add the zucchini and continue to cook, stirring often, until beginning to soften, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, tomato paste and red pepper flakes, if using. Cook, stirring often, until the zucchini has softened, about 5 minutes.

Stir in the tomatoes, bring to a simmer and then reduce the heat to low and cover the pot. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until the ratatouille has reached a thick stew-like consistency, about 10 minutes. Stir in the parsley and basil with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon into a bowl and sprinkle with more fresh parsley and basil before serving.



OnGoing

Weight Loss/Maintain Challenge

This individual Weight Loss/Maintain Challenge may just be what you need. If you would like to participate, simply send me a picture of your weight when you are ready to join.

The goal is to create a group (name won't be shared if you don't want to) to share tips, tricks, recipes and encouragements to maintain or reach your goals.

If you would like to join without sending me your weigh-in, that is perfectly fine, you just won't be eligible for prize drawings, but you will reap the benefits of a "support" group.

This will be based on the honor system. Simple rules:

1. Email me a picture of your weigh-in. (If you want to be eligible for prize drawings)
2. Always weigh yourself on the same scale.
3. Send me your weight once a month, if you lose or maintain, your name is added for drawing.
4. For every month you lose your name is added to the drawing.
5. In November names will be drawn for prizes. If you lose maintain for 6 consecutive months, your name will be in the "hat" 6 times!!!

Ask a friend, family member or co-worker to participate along with you, it helps with motivation and accountability!!!

Participate in this event, lose or maintain, and you get a point on your Ticket to Wellness.

Motivation

is what gets you started;

Habit

is what keeps you going.