

December

Immune-Boosting Foods

Cold-weather months are notorious for assisting in the spread of bacteria and viruses, experts say, because germs can spread through the air more easily when the temperature and humidity are low. No food or supplement prevents or cures disease, but some have properties that can enhance your body's ability to fight off viruses and infections.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is believed to have antiviral properties and may lower the risk of contracting influenza; in a person who already has the flu, it also can help prevent the illness from developing into pneumonia. Vitamin D-containing foods include shiitake and button mushrooms, salmon, herring, sardines, tuna, cod-liver oil and eggs. A vitamin D supplement may be a good choice; be sure to check with your healthcare provider about the right dosage for you.

Probiotics

These "good" bacteria populate our intestines and make up 70 to 80 percent of our immune system. Probiotics help to keep the balance between good and bad and keep your system in check. Yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut and other fermented foods are a great source of probiotics.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C has been well known to improve our immune system. It is a powerful antioxidant (think of it as a rust-proofer for our entire body) that gets rid of harmful substances. Enjoy an extra serving of bell peppers, kale, kiwi and citrus fruits.

Lemon Parmesan Kale Salad

1 bunch kale, stemmed and torn into bite-size pieces.
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 lemon, juiced
Sea salt, to taste
Black pepper, to taste
3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
Red pepper flakes, optional



1. Place the kale in a large bowl. Drizzle olive oil over the kale and add garlic. Massage the oil into the kale.
2. Add lemon juice, salt and pepper.
3. Stir in 1/2 cup of the Parmesan cheese and add red pepper flakes (if desired).
4. Garnish with the remaining Parmesan cheese.

*It is best to let this salad sit for at least 1 hour, or overnight.



Gifts from the Kitchen

Jar Gift Class

Tuesday, December 10th
Stop by anytime between 3 – 6 p.m.

Cost: \$10

Let Hy-Vee take the pressure off you to find the perfect gift for your food-loving friend or family members! We will be preparing 3 unique gifts for you to assemble and take home. Cross those hard-to-shop-for people off your list.

Everything Seasoning
Whole Wheat Pancake Mix
Citrus Body Scrub

Pre-register by signing up at Customer Service;
AGraff@hy-vee.com; 507-625-9070.



Hilltop Hy-Vee | 2010 Adams St.

Pick of the Month: Cranberries

Cranberries are often thought of as a “Thanksgiving” food, but these small, nutrient powerhouses are a great addition to any meal.

5 Reasons to Eat Cranberries:

1. Cranberries have unique health benefits from naturally occurring compounds called proanthocyanidins (PACs), which may help prevent urinary tract infections, stomach ulcers and gum disease.
2. Cranberries contain some of the highest amounts of flavonoids, which may help promote circulation and maintain heart health.
3. New studies have found cranberries may help boost a healthy immune system.
4. One cup fresh, chopped cranberries has 5 grams of fiber and is a good source of vitamin C.
5. Enjoy cranberries in a variety of forms – fresh, dried and juice. A one-cup service of fruit equals 1 cup fresh, ½ cup dried or ½ cup 100% cranberry juice.



Cranberry Jalapeno Cream Cheese Dip

All you need:

- 1 (12 oz) bag Ocean Spray fresh cranberries
- 1 to 2 jalapeno peppers, stemmed and seeded
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup Walden Farms calorie-free cranberry sauce
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- ¼ cup chopped green onion
- 1/8 – ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- Pinch salt
- 2 (8 oz each) packages light cream cheese, softened
- Whole-grain crackers, for serving



All you do:

1. In a food processor, chop cranberries and jalapeno pepper to a fine dice. Add sugar, Walden Farm cranberry sauce, orange juice, orange zest, onion, cumin and salt. Pulse to combine. Pour mixture in bowl, cover and place in refrigerator at least 4 hours or overnight.
2. Spread softened cream cheese into a large rimmed dish or 9-inch pie plate. Top cream cheese with cranberry-jalapeno mixture. Cover and place in refrigerator 2 hours. Serve with crackers.

Cranberries are popular during Thanksgiving, but with that bright festive red color, they can be used throughout December too...and not just for eating. Consider using them to spruce up your holiday decorating.

In a Vase – Adding cranberries to a vase full of flowers or candles can help increase the festive factor. Simply toss them in with the water, either completely full so the entire vase is showing red, or just some to mingle within the stems. They will float however, so keep that in mind when deciding how many to pack in. Pairing cranberries with white flowers or candles will add a striking contrast, and rumor has it the flowers will last longer in cranberry-filled water.



In Water – If you plan on doing any entertaining, try adding cranberries to a clear glass water pitcher. The berries will add an ever-so-slight tang to the water, not to mention a beautiful aesthetic. If you don't plan on using a pitcher or cooler, just sprinkle some of the cranberries in each guest's glass, or use this next tip on cranberry ice cubes.

Ice Chips – A great way to make things look extra festive is by making cranberry ice chips. Add the berries to an ice cube tray with water, and they'll come out in fun formations you can put in glasses with regular ice. If you're really feeling merry, try using straight-up frozen cranberries instead of ice, or mix the two.



Sweet Stuff

Modified from Kerry Neville @Food and Nutrition Magazine

Photo: Tyllie Barbosa



Sweeteners can be divided into two groups. Nutritive sweeteners contain calories, while nonnutritive sweeteners are either extremely low in calories or contain no calories at all.

Although they may differ in form, most nutritive sweeteners — honey, sugar or maple syrup — are similar in terms of calories and carbohydrates as well as their lack of nutrients. These types of sweeteners are often referred to as added sugars. While the body metabolizes added sugars and the natural sugars found in foods like fruit and milk the same way, foods containing added sugars are often higher in calories and lower in nutrients.

Nonnutritive sweeteners sweeten foods with minimal or no carbohydrate and calories and can be a tool for those with diabetes or anyone looking to cut back on calories. However, nonnutritive sweeteners can't always be used interchangeably with nutritive sweeteners in recipes, as their taste and cooking qualities may differ.

Types of Sweeteners

Monk Fruit (Luo Han Guo): Native to Asia, monk fruit contains a supersweet compound called mogroside. It's 150 to 200 times sweeter than sugar, but has no calories. You'll find it popping up in a number of sweet foods and beverages, and as a standalone sweetener.

Agave Nectar: The juice from the agave plant is processed to make agave nectar, a thick syrup ranging from light to dark amber in color that's about one-and-a-half times sweeter than sugar. Although often promoted as a healthier sweetener, agave should still be used sparingly.

Stevia: Offering calorie-free sweetness that's 250 times sweeter than sugar, compounds extracted from the leaves of the stevia plant are highly purified and sold as sweeteners under various brand names. Whole stevia leaves must be sold as dietary supplements.

Brown Sugar: A combination of table sugar and molasses, brown sugar comes in light or dark varieties. Keep it moist by storing in a sealed plastic bag. To soften hardened brown sugar, heat in the microwave for 30 seconds or add an apple wedge to a tightly sealed bag for a day or two. Firmly pack brown sugar into cup or spoon when measuring.

Table (White) Sugar: Sugar cane and sugar beet are the main sources of this highly refined pantry staple, also known as granulated sugar. A teaspoon measures up at 16 calories, while a small sugar cube delivers similar sweetness for 9 calories.

Turbinado (Raw Sugar): Its light brown, coarse crystals have a slight molasses flavor. Raw sugar is made from the juice that remains after the sugar cane has been processed to remove the sugar crystals and molasses. Although its color and name suggest it may be a healthier alternative to table sugar, it's not.

Pure Crystalline Fructose: This form of fructose derived from corn is found in some calorie-reduced foods and beverages. Since it's 20 percent sweeter than sugar, you can use less. You'll find it in some enhanced and flavored waters, energy drinks, yogurt, nutrition bars, powdered beverage mixes and baked goods.

Molasses: The liquid remaining after refining sugar cane or beets becomes molasses. Light molasses results from the first boiling; it's lightest in flavor and color. Dark molasses, thicker and less sweet, comes from the second boiling. The third boiling produces blackstrap molasses, a very dark, thick and slightly bitter variety that's an excellent source of calcium and magnesium.

Corn Syrup: Not to be confused with high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup is a concentrated solution of dextrose and other sugars made from the starch of corn. Check package labels to be sure you're getting the real thing. Famous as a key ingredient in pecan pie, corn syrup keeps crystals from forming, so it's ideal for candies, jams and frostings too.

Superfine Sugar: As its name implies, superfine sugar is more finely granulated table sugar. It dissolves almost instantly, making it ideal for whipping into meringues and stirring into cold liquids. Keep a box on hand or make your own. Just whirl table sugar in the food processor until fine.

Maple Syrup: Although often imitated, pure maple syrup is made by boiling down sap tapped from maple trees. The amount of sap needed to yield 1 gallon of syrup depends on the sap's sugar content, but it can be upward of 50 gallons. A quarter-cup serving of maple syrup packs 216 calories — not including pancakes.

Powdered (Confectioner's) Sugar: Made from granulated sugar crushed to a fine powder with a smidgen of cornstarch added to help prevent clumping, powdered sugar is sometimes used to decorate baked goods. Easily dissolved, powdered sugar is preferred for candy and icing.

Honey: With more than 300 varieties, honey's flavor, color and aroma differ depending on the nectar of the flowers visited by the bee. Generally, the lighter the honey's color, the milder the flavor.

Roasted Butternut Squash and Sweet Potatoes Serves 6

Developed by Jessica Siegel

All you do:

- 1 (10-ounce) bag frozen cubed butternut squash
- 1 (10-ounce) bag frozen cubed sweet potatoes
- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon raw blue agave nectar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon



All you need:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Allow frozen butternut squash and sweet potatoes to defrost just enough so that they can be separated easily.
2. In a large bowl, combine olive oil, agave, salt, pepper and cinnamon. Add vegetables and mix well using your hands or a large spoon. Spread vegetables evenly on a baking pan and cook 25-30 minutes, until sweet potatoes are tender when pierced with a fork, stirring once about half-way through cooking.

Nutrition Info: 1/2 cup. Calories: 106; Total fat: 4g; Sat. fat: 1g; Chol.: 0mg; Sodium: 52mg; Carb.: 18g; Fiber: 2g; Sugars: 2g; Protein: 2g; Potassium: 277mg; Phosphorous: 32mg

Honey-Sweetened Fruit Ricotta Toast

Serves 1

Developed by Karman Meyer

All you need:

- 1/4 cup fat-free ricotta cheese
- 1 slice of a hearty wheat bread, toasted
- pinch of cinnamon, or to taste
- 1/2 cup sliced strawberries or peaches
- 1/2 tablespoon honey

All you do:

1. Spread desired amount of ricotta cheese on toasted bread and sprinkle cinnamon on top.
2. Place sliced fruit on top of ricotta cheese, then drizzle honey over fruit. Sprinkle more cinnamon if desired.



Nutrition Info: 1 slice. Calories: 175; Total fat: 2g; Sat. fat: 1g; Chol.: 2mg; Sodium: 375mg; Carb.: 30g; Fiber: 3g;

Sugars: 16g; Protein: 11g; Potassium: 235mg; Phosphorus: 141mg

Stuff their Stockings with Good Health!

Everyone loves the gift of delicious food, and your neighborhood Hy-Vee has the perfect items for stuffing stockings. Help Santa out this year by taking your Hy-Vee dietitian's suggestions and stuff their stockings with good taste and good health.

GOOD-FOR-YOU GIFTS:

- Burt's Bees lip balm and lotion
- EOS lip balm
- Ecotools make-up brushes
- KIND nut and fruit bar
- Somersault sunflower seed snacks single-serve pack
- Sawmill Hollow Aronia Plus Superfruit Chews
- Clementine orange
- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Mini Chocolove dark chocolate bar

FOR THE GOURMET FOODIE:

- Zöet premium Belgian chocolate bar paired with a bottle of merlot wine
- Craft beer with nuts
- Zyliss kitchen tools – herb snippers, cherry pitter, garlic slicer, lettuce knife
- Local honey
- Bulk snack mixes
- Himalayan pink sea salt grinder

TREAT YOUR TEACHER:

- Stash brand teas paired with Madhava flavored agave nectar
- EOS hand cream
- Zum's popular Frankincense and Myrrh-scented soap
- Zum hand sanitizer
- Starbucks or Caribou coffee



CELEBRATE HOT COCOA DAY – DECEMBER 13TH

Enjoy a creamy, chocolaty cup of hot cocoa. Simply heat a mug of Kalona SuperNatural organic whole chocolate milk in the microwave. Kalona organic chocolate milk is produced from 100% Amish and Mennonite family farms in Iowa and Missouri.

This newsletter is brought to you by your Hy-Vee Registered Dietitian