



Wellness Matters

A fresh look at health, nutrition and food safety brought to you by Nancy Gal, UF/IFAS Extension Agent IV.

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Contact the agent: nancy.gal@marioncountyfl.org

APRIL 2014 | VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2



Timely Tips

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Healthy Salads Begin with Lettuce ~ The Greener the Better

What makes a salad healthy? Of course, it's the healthful ingredients from the lettuce to the dressing and everything in between. While there is no "one recipe" for salad, it typically features the basic ingredients of lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, and dressing. But, in recent years, salads have taken on a life of their own. When prepared with healthful ingredients in appropriate amounts, they have become much more than an appetizer, but a common entrée for people who want to manage their weight and increase consumption of fresh vegetables and fruits. Healthy salads typically contain a variety of low-fat, nutrient-rich foods such as dark colored lettuce, vegetables, fruits, protein sources, legumes, nuts, and seeds, topped with low-fat, low-sodium dressing.

Selecting nutrient-rich lettuce is the first step in building your healthy salad. However, not all lettuces are "nutritionally" equal. The nutritional value of lettuce varies based on the type. In general, lettuce supplies few calories with very small amounts of carbohydrates, protein, dietary fiber, and a trace of fat. The key nutrients are water, vitamin A, potassium, and vitamin K. The main characteristic when selecting nutrient-rich lettuce is the color; the darker the better. Dark-green lettuces are rich in vitamin A. Actually, they are rich in beta-carotene, which converts to vitamin A in the body.

Five Types of Lettuce

Baby loose leaf

arugula, spinach, baby green romaine, red romaine, baby green spinach, baby red oak, red chard, red tango and tatsoi

Loose leaf, bunching or cutting lettuce

curly endive, escarole, green chard, green leaf, green tango, red leaf

Butterhead

baby red butter, butter

Cabbage or Crisphead

green cabbage, iceberg or crisphead, radicchio, red cabbage, savoy cabbage

Cos or Romaine

romaine

*A Closer Look ...
Nutritional Value of Select Lettuce ~*

Why is iceberg lettuce the most popular in the United States even though it is low in vitamin A and flavor?

The answer is simple—it ships well and is most available.

[What Do These Lettuces Look Like?](#)

Source: University of Georgia

UPCOMING EVENTS

Diabetes Support Group

Mt. Moriah Baptist Church

April 3, May 8, Jun. 5, Jul. 10,
Aug. 21, Sep. 4, Oct. 2, Nov. 13,
and Dec. 11, 2014
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

For information, call May Stafford,
R.N. at 352-629-3782

ServSafe® Food Manager's Training and Exam

UF/IFAS Extension Marion County
2232 NE Jacksonville Rd.
Ocala, FL 34470

Apr. 10, Aug. 14, and Nov. 6,
8:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Pre-registration required.
Call 888-232-8723
Cost: \$110 for class & exam
\$165 for class, book & exam

Prediabetes: two-part program

Forest Public Library
905 South Highway 314A
Ocklawaha, Florida
April 21 and 28
11:00 a.m. – NOON
Register by June 19
352-438-2540

Food Modification for Special Needs*: two-part program MRMC Prestige 55 Program

Collins Center
May 15 and 22
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Auxiliary Center
May 23 and June 6
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

*Please call Munroe Regional
Medical Center (MRMC)
at 352-671-2153 for more
information.

Food Safety At Home

Forest Public Library
June 23
11:00 a.m. - NOON
Register by June 19
352-438-2540

News You Can Use

Water ~ Our Most Important Nutrient

Water is one of the most abundant and essential substances on earth. All living organisms, whether humans, animals, or plants, must have water to live. Without water there would be no life on earth. Actually, water is an **essential nutrient**. Essential nutrients are substances obtained from the diet, because our bodies are unable to produce them in adequate amounts. Essential nutrients provide energy, regulate metabolic processes, or produce and maintain body tissues. The six essential nutrient groups are water, protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins, and minerals. Of the six nutrient groups, only protein, carbohydrate, and fat provide energy.

Water at Work in Our Bodies ...

- * *Transports* nutrients and other essential substances and removes waste.
- * *Lubricates* body tissues and supports mobility of bone joints.
- * *Protects* against shock by cushioning body tissues, especially delicate areas such as the brain, eyes, and spinal cord.
- * *Supports* proper digestive, absorption, and respiratory processes.
- * *Regulates* body temperature.
- * *Participates* in most metabolic reactions, particularly those involved in producing energy.

The human body is approximately sixty percent water. Every cell and organ requires water to function properly. In general, an adult requires up to three liters (five pints) of fluid daily to sustain all bodily processes. Our water intake comes from a variety of sources: drinking water, beverages, and many solid foods. While the water content of some foods is very obvious such as fresh produce, other foods can be quite surprising.

What do you think? Which of the following foods is higher in water?

Peanut Butter	or	Ketchup
Cooked Carrots	or	Cranberry Juice
Cottage Cheese	or	Apple Sauce
Roasted Chicken	or	Pork Chops
Mashed Potatoes	or	Pasta
Chocolate Pudding	or	Brownie

Click [here](#) for the answers.

So How Much Water Do You Need?

Daily water requirements are based on several factors including age, health status, activity level, and environment. According to the Institutes of Medicine, the recommendations (daily Adequate Intake) are based on average consumption for generally healthy people who are sufficiently hydrated. Consult with your healthcare provider for your individual needs. To learn more visit the [Institutes of Medicine: Dietary Reference Intakes: Electrolytes and Water](#) .

References: [Where's the Water?](#)

Wendy Dahl, PhD., Assistant Professor, Food Science and Human Nutrition, UF/IFAS Extension

[Water: The Nutrient](#)

Linda S. Boeckner, Extension Nutrition Specialist, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Nutritional Value raw blueberries

1 cup

calories	84
protein	1 g
fat	0 g
carbs	21g
fiber	4 g
folate	9 mcg
potassium	114 mg
sodium	1 mg
vitamin A	80 IU
vitamin C	14 mg

Key:

g grams
mg milligrams
mcg micrograms
IU International Units

[Reference - USDA Nutrient Database](#)

Are you Tired of “Junk-Food” Desserts?

Try this healthy dessert that is sure to satisfy any sweet tooth. Use a mix of berries or one type depending on preference.

Berry Parfait

Ingredients:

2 cups low-fat plain regular or Greek yogurt
2 cups fresh berries (blueberries, strawberries, raspberries)
2 cups granola cereal

Putting it Together:

Set out four parfait glasses.

Spoon 2 tablespoons of yogurt into each glass and smooth surface.

Spoon 2 tablespoons of granola over yogurt and smooth surface. Spoon 2 tablespoons of fruit over the granola.

Repeat steps above using remaining ingredients.

Enjoy!

Produce Picks

Blueberries are one of the most popular fruits around ... not only are they sweet and juicy, but nutrient-rich, providing vitamin C, vitamin A, potassium, and fiber for just 84 calories per cup. In addition to being healthy and delicious, there is really no preparation - just remove stems and leaves, place in a colander, rinse with cool tap water, and eat. Select firm, plump, dry smooth-skinned blueberries that are deep purple to blue-black in color; discard moldy, squished, and shriveled blueberries. Blueberries should be stored in the refrigerator and kept no longer than about 10 days. While “popping” fresh blueberries is an anytime treat, they are a healthful addition to almost any meal or snack. Blueberries boost the nutritional value of quick breads such as muffins, loaf breads, pancakes, and waffles. Adding fruit at breakfast is super easy with blueberries ~ sprinkle on top of cold or hot cereal or mix into low-fat yogurt. Building healthy salads may start with fresh leafy greens, but are not complete without the addition of fresh fruit to complement the savory flavors of the other ingredients. Finally, blueberries are a natural fit for smoothies ~ just add your favorite ingredients and blend. So don't miss out, enjoy fresh Florida blueberries from April through June while they are in peak season.



Cuisine Corner

Arugula, Berry, and Citrus Salad

Ingredients:

16 ounces arugula, rinsed and drained
1-1/2 cups sliced, fresh strawberries
1-1/2 cups fresh blueberries
2 medium oranges, peeled and segmented
1 lemon, juiced
1 tablespoon olive oil
8 ounces crumbled gorgonzola cheese
1/4 cup slivered almonds



Directions:

1. In a medium-sized mixing bowl add arugula, lemon juice, and olive oil. Toss gently to coat and lightly season with salt and pepper.
2. Serve on four chilled plates. Place an even amount of the dressed arugula in the center of each plate.
3. Arrange an even amount of orange segments, blueberries, and strawberries on top of the arugula.
4. Evenly distribute the crumbled gorgonzola cheese on top of each salad.
5. Garnish each salad with slivered almonds.
6. Serve salad chilled.

Yield: 4 servings

Nutrition per 218 calorie serving: 11 grams fat; 26 grams carbohydrate; 8 grams protein; 7 grams fiber; 168 milligrams sodium; 59% vitamin A; 158% vitamin C; 28 % calcium; and 11% iron.



A Closer Look: Select Lettuce



*Nutritional information for select lettuce varieties:
one-cup raw, shredded or chopped*

Lettuce	Calories	Fiber g	Potassium mg	Vitamin A IU	Vitamin K mcg	Folate mcg
Butter head	7	0.6	131	1822	56	40
Green-	5	0.5	70	2666	46	14
Iceberg	8	0.7	80	286	14	17
Red leaf	4	0.3	52	2098	39	10
Romaine	8	1.0	116	4094	48	64

Lettuce

Selection and Storage:

Select lettuce with fresh, clean outer leaves. Avoid lettuce that looks slimy or has black spots. Slime is a sign of bacterial contamination and the black spots are typically mold. Store lettuce in the vegetable crisper of the refrigerator at 40°F or below and use within a few days. Lettuce should not be stored near apples, pears or bananas. These fruits naturally produce ethylene gas, that will cause the lettuce to develop brown spots and decay quickly.

Clean

Wash all produce thoroughly under cool running tap water. This includes produce grown conventionally or organically, no matter where it comes from such as your own garden, farmer’s market, or grocery store. It is not recommended to wash produce with soap, detergent or commercial produce washes.

Lettuce leaves should be patted dry with a clean paper towel to prevent wilting and to help the salad dressing adhere to the leaves rather than accumulate at the bottom of the bowl.

It is best to tear lettuce leaves rather than cut with a knife, since cut edges will discolor quickly.

Do You Know Where the Nutrients Are in Lettuce?
The ribs and spine contain dietary fiber and the leaves provide vitamins and minerals.



Fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of antioxidants. Research has shown that foods rich in antioxidants such as **vitamins A**, C, E, beta-carotene, lycopene, and lutein may help protect cells from harm caused by molecules called free radicals. Antioxidants serve as neutralizers to protect against damage to cells that can lead to certain types of cancer and other diseases.

Food Safety Tip:
When preparing any fresh produce, start with clean hands. Wash your hands with warm, soapy running tap water for at least 20 seconds before and after preparation.

Calls to the Agent

Question: How do I freeze fresh blueberries?

Answer:

The two recommended methods for freezing fresh blueberries are dry and liquid packs. For best results choose ripe berries and discard leaves, stems, and immature or imperfect berries.

Dry Pack

Pack unwashed* berries into clean containers leaving 1/2 inch headspace (space between the blueberries and container top). For easy access, berries can be frozen first by placing single-layer on a tray until firm and then packing into containers. Seal and freeze. Wash before using.

* Washing before freezing causes the skins to become tough.

Liquid Pack—crushed or pureed

Wash blueberries prior to preparation. Crush and press blueberries through a fine sieve, or puree in a food processor. Add 1 cup to 1 1/8 cups sugar to each quart (two pounds) of crushed or pureed berries. Gently stir until sugar is dissolved. Pack into clean containers leaving adequate headspace**. Seal and freeze.

** Headspace for liquid pack depends on container size:
container with wide top opening—1/2 inch pint; 1 inch quart
container with narrow top opening— 3/4 inch pint; 1 1/2 inch quart

Reference: [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#)

Question: What is Greek-style yogurt?

Answer:

In recent years, Greek-style yogurt has become very popular in the United States, not just as a different variety of yogurt, but also as a healthy substitute for high-fat foods such as sour cream and mayonnaise. Greek-style yogurt is processed differently from plain yogurt which changes the consistency and nutrient content. Basically, a special straining process removes most of the whey which makes it thicker. However, with the whey goes some of the calcium. The final product has a higher protein content, but a lower calcium content. Of course, calcium is one of the key nutrients provided in yogurt ~ so be sure to read the package label to make certain calcium has been added.

Reference: [Greek Yogurt ~ Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#)



Meet the Agent

Nancy Gal, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent IV, has been on the faculty of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension in Marion County since 1987. She teaches health, nutrition and food safety to adults and youth ~ promoting wellness and disease prevention. Her areas of specialty include type 2 diabetes, pre-diabetes, cardiovascular disease, weight management, and food safety. Nancy is well known for her diabetes education programs and has served on the Florida Diabetes Advisory Council and Florida Alliance for Diabetes Prevention and Care. Her professional accomplishments include international, national and state recognition for her work with Dr. Linda Bobroff, UF/IFAS Extension Nutrition Specialist, on the development of the UF/IFAS Extension's [Take Charge of Your Diabetes](#) program.

What is Extension?

Extension is a partnership between state, federal and county governments to provide scientific knowledge and expertise to the public. The University of Florida, together with Florida A&M University, administers the Florida Cooperative Extension Service.

University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) is a federal, state, and county partnership dedicated to developing knowledge in agriculture, human and natural resources, and the life sciences, and to making that knowledge accessible to sustain and enhance the quality of human life.

At the University of Florida, Extension is located in the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) and is called UF/IFAS Extension. The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) and the Florida Agricultural Experiment Station are also located at Extension.



[UF/IFAS Extension Marion County](#)

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