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F.Y.I. Wellness Facts

◆ **Eating fish may help prevent colon cancer**, according to the ongoing European Prospective Investigation into Cancer (EPIC) study, which has followed hundreds of thousands of men and women from 10 European countries since 1992. Those who ate 10 to 20 ounces of fresh, canned, salted, or smoked fish a week were about 30% less likely to develop colon cancer than those eating less fish. Omega-3 fatty acids in fish possibly inhibit the cancer process, the researchers note. In contrast, a high intake of red and processed meat was associated with increased colon cancer risk—as was also seen in may earlier studies. Chicken and turkey had no effect.

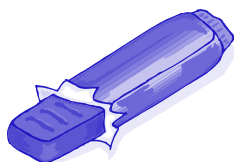
◆ **Green tea is a healthful beverage, but it is “highly unlikely” that it prevents cancer**, according to the FDA, which carried out a systematic review of the scientific evidence. Despite some promising animal and test-tube research, the FDA concluded that studies on humans do not support the anti-cancer claims that tea manufacturers wanted to put on their packages.

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Food For Thought

Behind Bars: *How to pick the right one for you* *Weight loss, meal replacement, boost? Match snack to what you want to do*



Bars — energy bars, protein bars, breakfast bars and more — have never been hotter, whether for a meal replacement, a snack on the go, or a pre- or post-workout energy boost. However, they are not necessarily health food. If a bar is your choice, pick carefully to get one that meets your needs, but don't believe that it's the same as a balanced combination of fruits, vegetables and low-fat protein foods full of vitamins and natural protective compounds.

If you are using a bar to replace a meal, check calorie content. Trying to get by on a bar with less than 250 calories will leave you searching for vending machines after a couple hours. Protein is important both to meet daily nutritional needs and to make a meal satisfy your appetite longer. Look for a bar with 10 to 15 grams of protein if you use it as a meal replacement. Among several choices, choose the bar with more fiber. To make such a bar into a more nutritious meal, add a piece of fresh fruit or small package of dried fruit. This will add energy, nutrients, natural protective compounds and fiber.

Some people have the opposite problem: they choose a bar because they think it's a more diet-friendly snack choice than a candy bar, but end up with a meal's worth of calories. For a light snack, look for a bar with 100 to 200 calories and at least three grams of fiber from some combination of whole grains, dried fruit and/or nuts. Some breakfast or granola bars may fall in this light calorie range, but if protein and fiber are low, and sugar or fat are high, vitamin fortification alone will not make them healthful.

Athletes who are trying to lose weight may want a higher calorie level of 200 to 300 calories for a snack, but the source of those calories matters. Runners, who want a bar with plenty of carbohydrate, should look for more of that carbohydrate listed as “other carbohydrate” and limited amounts of sugar.

Athletes trying to build more muscle often focus on bars with more protein, but the importance of that depends on overall eating habits. If regular meals contain moderate amounts of lean protein, then an after-exercise snack with 10 to 20 grams of protein will be plenty to enhance muscle growth. Only those who eat more limited meal protein, or large men doing serious bodybuilding, will really benefit from a between-meal bar with 25 or more grams of protein. In either case, less expensive alternatives to a bar can provide as much or more nutritional value.

One advantage of packaged bars is their portability and easy storage. But a sandwich bag with three-quarters of a cup of lightly sweetened whole grain cereal and raisins or other dried fruit is easily stored and provides 150 to 200 calories and at least 3 grams of fiber. A one-ounce sleeve of nuts is another alternative, providing 165 cal, 7 to 8 grams of protein and 2 grams of fiber. Combining both of these would make a snack with more calories and protein that might also be suitable as a meal replacement. If storage is not a concern, other options include peanut butter on whole grain crackers, fresh fruit with a quarter-cup of nuts, or 6 ounces of low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese with fruit.

In evaluating these choices, consider the big picture. Any food is more than the calories, carbohydrate, protein, fat and the few vitamins listed on the label. Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds supply additional vitamins and minerals not listed on a label, as well as a variety of natural plant compounds that can lower the risk of cancer, heart disease and a variety of health problems. No single food choice determines the quality of your whole diet, however. If you use packaged bars occasionally, make smart choices to put together an overall eating pattern loaded with well-rounded good nutrition.

Source: Nutrition Notes provided by the American Institute for Cancer Research in Washington, D.C.

Don't Limit Cranberries to Thanksgiving

“Cranberry juice, like all fruit juice, is high in calories, but by drinking a reduced calorie cranberry cocktail, you can help keep the calorie content lower while still receiving the benefits.”



Cranberry Juice

Cranberries are a Thanksgiving tradition, but don't overlook these ruby gems of good health throughout the year.

Cranberries are a good source of vitamin C, and they contain phytochemicals - plant-derived nutrients have potential health benefits. These phytochemicals make cranberries high in antioxidants - substances that prevent cell damage.

The November issue of Mayo Clinic Women's HealthSource covers the potential health benefits of cranberries or their juices may:

- * **Prevent certain bacteria that cause urinary tract infections from accumulating in the bladder in some people;**
- * **Have a role in treating certain stomach ulcers,**
- * **Lower levels of low-density lipoprotein, the “bad” cholesterol,**
- * **Increase blood levels of salicylic acid, an anti-inflammatory compound similar to aspirin that may have health benefits. However, people who take blood thinners should be careful because bleeding can be prolonged.**

Incorporating cranberries into your diet can be a challenge because of their tartness. Try adding cranberries to whole-grain cereal, serving cranberry chutney over poultry or adding dried cranberries to granola.

Cranberry juice, like all fruit juice, is high in calories. But by drinking a reduced-calorie cranberry juice or cranberry juice diluted with sparkling water - you can help keep the calorie content lower while still receiving the benefits.

Cranberry capsules or tablets are an alternative, but it's unlikely that they have the same potency and effectiveness as the actual juice or fruit.

Source: Posted by: Mayo Clinic on 03/06/2006

How to Avoid Emotional Eating

It's one thing to choose healthier meals and snacks but controlling what goes in your mouth when you're stressed, upset, or just plain bored is a whole other story. You need to have strategies in place to get by during those moments of weakness. Here are three tips on how to avoid emotional overeating.

1. **Plan Ahead:** In that moment of weakness or boredom, there's nothing easier than grabbing the Chunky Monkey from the freezer and chowing down. But what if indulgences like that aren't in the freezer, the fridge, or the pantry? Stock your kitchen with fruits, veggies, pudding cups, frozen fruit bars, popcorn, and yogurt. Be sure to wash and cut up the produce when you get it home — when you are in a munching mood, who wants to deal with peeling and cutting up a mango?
2. **Allow Treats:** There's nothing wrong with an occasional treat. In fact, treats make eating healthy and a little easier. Whether it's a small bag of chips during your favorite TV show or an ice cream cone on a warm Saturday afternoon, giving yourself permission to eat it eliminates the need for secret binge sessions and the guilt felt after splurging on a favorite food.

3. **Keep Active During TV Time:** Keeping your hands and head occupied can keep you from the television haze-induced



noshing. There's always knitting or crossword puzzles but what about holding onto the mail or a new magazine until you sit down for the evening. Need to write any thank you notes or pay any bills? It doesn't matter what it is, just keep busy.

Source: Provided by: iVillage.com

Health Pitches on Packages

From flags to stamps, several new symbols have recently debuted on packaged foods. They join the American Heart Association's decade-old check mark, found on hundreds of "heart-healthy" foods. But when you see a symbol, don't assume it's from an independent organization. Some are from the food manufacturers themselves, who are judging their own products using their own nutrition criteria. In other cases, companies must pay—typically thousands of dollars—to use the seals, a possible hardship for small companies. Moreover, foods that carry these symbols aren't necessarily better for you than ones that don't. Here's a sampling.

Heart-Check Mark. The American Heart Association symbol features a red heart with white check mark inside. Foods that carry it contain no more than 3 grams of total fat, 1 gram of saturated fat, 20 milligrams of cholesterol, and 480 milligrams of sodium per serving. They must also naturally be a good source of one or more major nutrients or fiber. The criteria for seafood, meat, and poultry vary slightly. No foods owned by tobacco companies are eligible. The pros? It's an objective program from a nonprofit health organization. The catch? The mark basically identifies low-fat foods that meet minimal nutrition standards; they don't particularly *help* the heart. And food companies pay \$7,500 per product up front, and thousands more each year to keep using the mark.

Whole Grain Stamp. Launched by the Whole Grains Council, a trade group, this black-and-gold stamp can help people meet the government's new recommendation to eat at least three servings of whole grains a day. It distinguishes three levels of whole grains: a "good source" (contains at least 8 grams of whole grains per serving); an "excellent source" (at least 16 grams of whole grains per serving); a "100%/excellent source" (at least 16 grams of whole grains and no refined grains). Companies must be paid members of the Whole Grains Council to use the stamp. As an alternative to the stamp, look for products that list a "whole" grain as the first ingredient.



Smart Spot. This PepsiCo promotion highlights foods and beverages that meet its own nutrition standards for fat, cholesterol, sodium, and added sugar, or those that contain natural or added ingredients with known health benefits, such as vitamin C or fiber. The logo, which reads "Smart Choices Made Easy" appears on over 100 PepsiCo brand products, including Quaker Oats and Tropicana orange juice. But filling up your supermarket cart with Smart Spot products doesn't guarantee a healthful diet, because the symbol is also found on nutrient-poor foods like Diet Pepsi, Baked Lay's chips, Aunt Jemima Lite syrup, and some Cap'n Crunch cereals.

Sensible Solutions. Kraft Foods now highlights its "better for you" foods and beverages with green flags. These products meet nutrition criteria established by the company. Along the lines of Smart Spot, they either provide beneficial nutrients or are low or reduced in calories, fat, sugar, or sodium. Eventually, about 25% of all Kraft foods will be flagged, including Post Shredded Wheat cereal and whole-grain Triscuits. But these foods are simply *better* for you, not necessarily *good* for you. That explains why they're also found on CarbWell Oreos, Cool Whip Lite, and Velveeta Cheese slices.

Keep in mind: Food package symbols, especially the Whole Grains Stamp, can provide some useful information. Those from private companies, however, can be misleading. You still have to read the nutrition facts label and ingredients list.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, November 2005

Wellness Facts Continued from Page 1

- ◆ **The terms "light," "mild," and "low-tar" on cigarettes are dangerously misleading,** since smokers may incorrectly assume that such brands pose a lower risk of lung cancer and heart disease. To satisfy their need for nicotine, smokers of light cigarettes usually cover the ventilation holes in the filters with their lips or fingers, take larger puffs, inhale more deeply, and/or smoke more cigarettes, and are thus likely to get the same amount of toxins. That's why these terms have been banned in the European Union since 2003; the Canadian government is also considering a ban. While the amount of tar in cigarettes sold in the U.S. has dropped by 60% since the 1950s, cancer rates among smokers have not dropped.
- ◆ **Coleslaw is usually more fat than it is cabbage.** It typically contains a lot of mayonnaise or cream, so a cup can have 200 calories, with fat providing more than 70% of the calories. If you make it at home, substituting non-fat yogurt for the mayo eliminates virtually all the fat, while keeping all the fiber, vitamin C, and other nutrients.

Source: University of California Berkeley Wellness Letter November 2005

Your Health in Numbers

Knowing these five numbers – and whether they need to go up or down – could save your life.

Blood Pressure

The top number (systolic pressure) is the pressure that's put on the artery walls when the heart beats. The bottom number (diastolic pressure) represents the pressure on the arteries between heartbeats. High blood pressure can cause nicks in your arteries, leading to inflammation and dangerous blood clots that cause heart attacks and strokes.

What's normal:

115/75 mm Hg is ideal
120/80 mm Hg is normal
140/90 mm Hg or above is high

When to get screened: At least once a year.



Cholesterol

Besides your total number, the three numbers you need to focus on the most are HDL (the “good cholesterol” is responsible for eliminating cholesterol from the body), LDL (the “bad cholesterol,” which leads to cholesterol buildup in your arteries and your triglycerides (fats in the bloodstream). The higher your HDL, the lower your chance of heart disease while the more LDL and triglycerides you have, the greater your chance of heart disease.

What's normal: Total cholesterol should be less than 200 mg/dl. **HDL levels** at 60 mg/dl or above are ideal and can even reduce heart-disease risk; levels below 40 mg/dl can increase risk.

LDL levels should be below 160 mg/dl if you have none or one of the following heart-disease risk factors: obesity, smoking, high blood pressure, low HDL, a family history of heart disease, or are a woman over 55; below 130 mg/dl if you have two or more of the above heart-disease risk factors; and below 100 mg/dl if you have heart disease, peripheral vascular disease, or diabetes. **Triglycerides** should be below 150.

When to be screened: Every five years if level is normal

Blood Sugar

This is a measure of how much sugar (glucose) is in your blood. High blood sugar can signal diabetes.

What's normal: Levels below 100 mg/dl are healthy; levels between 100 mg/dl and 126 mg/dl are considered pre-diabetes and need to be lowered; and levels of 126 mg/dl or higher typically results in a diabetes diagnosis.

When to be screened: Starting at age 45, get tested every three years if levels are normal. However, if you are at risk for diabetes (you're overweight, have high blood pressure, or have a family history of the condition) ask your doctor if you should get a blood-sugar test now.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

This figure, based on a calculation of height and weight, determines whether or not a person is overweight.

What's normal: A BMI of 18.5 to 24.9 indicates a healthy weight, 25 to 29.9 is overweight, and 30 or higher is considered obese.

When to be screened: Now! Calculate yours with our BMI calculator.

Waist Circumference

It's the number of inches around your unclothed abdomen, just above your hip bone. Larger waistlines have been linked to higher risk of diseases because of the fat's proximity to your organs.

What's normal: You want a measurement of 35 inches or below; any higher puts you at greater risk for a myriad of diseases including heart disease.

When to be screened: Now! All you need is a tape measure.

Source: *MSN Lifestyle*—The **REDBOOK** Real-Life Healthy Life Makeover

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cyndy V. Mondelus".

Cyndy V. Mondelus
Family & Consumer Science Agent I

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