



live well, work well

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Mediterranean Diet Improves Heart Health

The New England Journal of Medicine recently published the results of its study on how a Mediterranean diet affects heart health. This study—the first major clinical trial on the subject—revealed that following a Mediterranean diet can prevent about 30 percent of major cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks, strokes and deaths from heart disease, in high-risk individuals.

This diet focuses on improving heart health through consumption of certain foods, rather than on losing weight. Participants in the study were either assigned to follow a Mediterranean diet rich in olive oil, nuts, wine, beans, fish, fruits and vegetables, or a low-fat diet. Of the participants following a Mediterranean diet, half were instructed to consume at least four tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil per day, and the other half were instructed to consume at least one ounce of walnuts, almonds or hazelnuts per day. These items were supplied.

The basics of the Mediterranean diet were to consume, at a minimum, two servings of vegetables and three servings of fruit per day, fish at least three times per week, and legumes

such as beans, peas and lentils at least three times per week. Participants were instructed to eat white meat rather than red, and, if drinking was a normal part of their routine, to drink at least seven glasses of wine per week with meals.



Participants' adherence to the diet was tracked through blood and urine samples. In addition to revealing the benefits of the Mediterranean diet, the study showed that low-fat diets are not significantly beneficial and are more difficult to maintain.

While not everyone is convinced of the study's findings, the study, which tracked the health of over 7,000 high-risk individuals in Spain, is a major stride in diet and heart health research.

National Autism Awareness Month

Autism is a developmental disorder characterized by impaired social interaction, communication issues, and unusual, repetitive or severely limited activities and interests. While it can affect anyone, autism has been found to be more common in boys than in girls.

Spread autism awareness in your community this month by getting involved, attending an event or even just discussing it with family and friends.

DID YOU KNOW

Having a family member with autism can affect many areas of life. Things like going out to eat, attending sporting events and even watching movies can be uncomfortable or even impossible for individuals with autism. Many organizations are working to break down this barrier by hosting autism-friendly events, such as movie showings.



Is Your Workout Tech-savvy?

While technology is not a mandatory addition to your workout, many individuals find it useful and even motivating. Music players are only the tip of the iceberg—whatever your fitness regime, there's probably some sort of device or app for it.

If you're looking to make your solo workout more exciting and interactive, fitness gaming, or active video games, might be for you. From yoga to boxing to tennis, there are many types of fitness video games that really do make you break a sweat.

For smartphone lovers, there are apps that can remind you it's time to exercise, and track distance travelled, your course and workout time—some of these apps are even available to download for free.

Those numeric-minded individuals looking for measurable results may find pedometers, heart rate monitors and multi-

purpose tools useful. From measuring sleep quality to tracking the number of calories burned, these tools record workout and daily activity levels.

If your workout routine hits a bump in the road, try giving it a technological twist—you may find it's just what you need to boost motivation and get back on track.



Buy In Season and Save

Suffering from sticker shock on the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables? Instead of skipping these nutritional items altogether, buy produce when it is in season—and much cheaper. The following lists common fruits and veggies by season:

Winter: Citrus fruits (such as grapefruits, lemons and oranges), bananas, kale, leeks, mushrooms, onions, pears, potatoes, rutabagas, turnips and winter squash (such as butternut and acorn)

Spring: Apricots, asparagus, bananas, broccoli, cabbage, collard greens, green beans, honeydew melon, lettuce, mangoes, peas, onions, leeks, mushrooms, pineapple, rhubarb, spinach and strawberries

Summer: Apricots, bananas, beets, bell peppers, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, cantaloupe, cherries, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, grapefruits, grapes, green beans, honeydew melon, kiwifruit, lima beans, mushrooms, nectarines, okra, peaches, peas, plums, radishes, strawberries, summer squash, tomatillos, tomatoes, watermelon and zucchini

Fall: Apples, bananas, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, cranberries, garlic, ginger, grapes, mushrooms, parsnips, pears, pineapple, pumpkins, rutabagas, sweet potatoes, Swiss chard, winter squash (such as butternut and acorn) and yams

To see what's growing seasonally in your region, visit:
http://snap.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/nutrition_seasons.php.

Asparagus with Gremolata

Need to mix up your side dish routine? Make use of one of spring's in-season vegetables, asparagus, with this quick and delicious recipe.

2 pounds asparagus, washed and drained
2 tbsp. margarine or butter
2 tsp. lemon peel, grated
1 large garlic clove, minced
2 tbsp. lemon juice

Cook asparagus in a large pot of boiling water until tender (about 4 minutes). Drain. Rinse with cold water to cool quickly, then drain again. Pat dry. Wrap in a paper towel and then plastic wrap; refrigerate. Melt margarine in a heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add lemon peel and garlic and stir for 30 seconds. Add asparagus and toss to coat. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Sauté until asparagus is heated through and coated with Gremolata sauce (about 3 minutes). Transfer to platter. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.

Yield: 6 servings. Each serving provides 70 calories, 4g total fat, 0mg cholesterol, 35mg sodium, 3g dietary fiber, 3g protein and 3g sugar.

Source: <http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/>

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Alcohol-Related Illnesses

Excessive consumption of alcohol can cause many negative health effects. "Excessive consumption" means more than two drinks per day for a man under 65 and more than one drink per day for a woman under 65. In the short-term, alcohol depresses the central nervous system, lowers inhibitions, impairs speech and reduces muscle coordination. In extreme amounts, alcohol can significantly depress the vital centers of the brain and can cause a coma.

Those who drink alcohol excessively on a regular basis may experience fatigue, short-term memory loss and many other adverse health effects, including:

- **Liver disorders**
 - Heavy drinking can cause alcoholic hepatitis (inflammation of the liver).
 - After years of drinking, hepatitis can lead to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver).
- **Gastrointestinal problems**
 - Excessive alcohol consumption can result in inflammation of the stomach lining, which interferes with the absorption of B vitamins.
 - Heavy drinking can also damage the pancreas, which regulates metabolism and produces enzymes to help

digest fats, proteins and carbohydrates.

- **Cardiovascular problems**
 - Heavy drinking can lead to high blood pressure and increase the risk of a heart attack.
- **Diabetes complications**
 - Alcohol can increase the risk of low blood sugar because it prevents the release of glucose from the liver. This is dangerous for those that have diabetes and already have problems with low blood sugar.
- **Sexual dysfunction and irregular menstruation**
 - Heavy alcohol consumers who are male are at risk of erectile dysfunction, and female heavy drinkers can suffer from interruptions in their menstruation cycles.
- **Birth defects**
 - Drinking alcohol while pregnant may cause fetal alcohol syndrome. This condition can cause the following birth problems: developmental disabilities, heart defects, shortening of the eye lids and small head.
- **Bone loss**
 - Alcohol can interfere with

bone growth and increase the risk of fractures.

- **Neurological complications**
 - Heavy drinking can cause numbness in the hands and feet, and dementia.
- **Increased cancer risks**
 - Habitual alcohol use is linked to an increased risk of esophageal, laryngeal, liver and colon cancer.

In addition to the health risks of excessive alcohol consumption, alcohol abuse is also linked to:

- Domestic abuse and divorce
- Poor performance at work and school
- Higher risk of motor vehicle crashes and drunk driving
- Greater likelihood of other injuries as a result of being impaired by alcohol
- Higher incidence of suicide



Did You Know...?

Avoiding alcohol or drinking in moderation is essential in curbing your risk of developing alcohol-related illnesses. With increased age, the body breaks down alcohol more slowly, which increases its damaging effects.