

HEALTHY EATING

Eggnog Month

Beware of drinking eggnog made with raw eggs during the holidays! Many older classic holiday recipes call for raw eggs. This cooking practice is not considered safe because of possible *Salmonella* infection.



5 Easy Ways to Eat 100 Less Calories per Day

What does 10 pounds of fat look like? For a rough estimate, imagine 40 sticks of butter or margarine or 10 1-pound cans of vegetable shortening.

Looks like a lot — yet how many of us add this much weight in a year without realizing it until our pants fit a little tighter or our belt runs out of notches.

Sometimes, we're too hard on ourselves when we're trying to lose weight. We eat some pretty awful-tasting foods, forgo getting together with friends if food is involved or take the joy out of eating through a monotonous and limited diet.

While people have lost hundreds of pounds through some of these methods, it's often the same 10 pounds over and over again!



Eating 100 calories less a day can help you lose about 10 pounds a year

It takes an excess of about 3,500 calories to gain a pound. Break that into smaller bites and 100 extra calories a day can put on about 10 pounds a year. The good news is LOSING 10 pounds can be as easy as eating 100 calories LESS each day for a year.

ONE dietary change may be all it takes. Here are some simple changes, involving just ONE food; each will decrease your daily intake by about 100 calories. The amounts of calories saved are approximate; check nutrition facts labels on specific foods for exact amounts.

As a general rule, experts recommend a slow and steady weight loss of 1/2 to 2 pounds per week. It's difficult to obtain adequate nutrients if you consume less than 1,200 calories per day. It's beneficial for most people to increase their activity level AND eat less.

1. Modify Your Milk. Instead of drinking two cups of whole milk, switch to two cups of 1% low-fat milk or skim milk. The nutrients are comparable.

2. Downsize Your Drink. If you've been drinking a 20-ounce container of a regular soft drink, switch to a 12-ounce container size. Or, better yet, drink a cold glass of water, perhaps with a slice of lemon!

3. "Dress, Don't 'Drown' Your Salad." *Cook's Illustrated* magazine advises 1/4 cup of vinaigrette should be enough to dress 2 quarts (8 cups) of loosely packed salad, an amount they suggest for 4 servings. That means each 2-cup serving of salad greens should have about 1 tablespoon of dressing on it.



Aim for 1 tablespoon of dressing for each 2 cups of salad greens

TIP: Dressing slides off damp salad greens and collects in the bottom of the salad bowl. You'll get more flavor with less

dressing if salad greens are washed and thoroughly dried. Bagged lettuce that is pre-washed and labeled “ready to eat” should be dry enough as is.

If you need to wash salad greens, the easiest way to dry them is in a salad spinner. Pack lightly to avoid overcrowding and bruising the greens. After spinning, pat off any remaining moisture with clean paper towels. If you don’t have a spinner, pat greens dry, thoroughly, with clean paper towels or a clean kitchen towel.

4. Size up Your Cereal Bowl. Check the portion size you’re pouring in relation to the size cited on the box; decide if you’re pouring more calories than desired. Try eating from a smaller bowl to aid in portion control.

5. Count Your Cookies. A single medium-sized cookie easily can have about 100 calories. Often we pop two or more into our mouths before we realize it. If you feel you’re not getting enough “crunch” by limiting yourself to one cookie, try eating an apple instead — the calories are similar.

Source: Alice Henneman, MS, RDN at ahenneman1@unl.edu

Thankful for Health

During the holiday season, we often think about the many things for which we are thankful. It might be family, friends, or a good job. It may also be our ability to keep ourselves healthy by eating good food and partaking in physical activity. Here are a few more ways to think about being thankful for health and physical activity.

If you are able to do physical activity outdoors, you might be thankful for the clean, crisp air that allows you to breathe. Walking outdoors in the sunshine increases your exposure to Vitamin D, which promotes calcium absorption, bone growth, immunity and decreases inflammation.

Exercising reduces stress by releasing your body’s endorphins which elevates your mood. People who engage in regular physical activity have fewer heart attacks and strokes, lower blood pressure and higher levels of HDL (healthy cholesterol) than non-exercisers. For some, it also improves quality of sleep and keeps you energized.

Maybe you are thankful that physical activity helps you to maintain a good weight. Physical activity, especially walking, can be free and is relatively easy to do. By enjoying physical activity, we are able to strengthen the heart and lower disease risk. It also tones the arms, legs and torso. During the holiday season, you might be especially thankful for physical activity when you feel like you’ve eaten too many desserts, and now have a way to work those extra calories off.

As you exercise, you might be thankful that you have a good friend to go with you. Maybe you have a spouse or child that likes to go and talk about their day. To be surrounded by friends and family and to be able to forget the stresses of the day may make you grateful for all you have.

While you are doing physical activity, you can take a few minutes to think of all the things that make you thankful. And by doing so, you can live a healthy life.



Source: Ann Fenton (ann.fenton@unl.edu), Extension Educator.

Cranberries – A Great American Fruit

Cranberries have become a common part of holiday celebrations, whether they're used as garland decorating a Christmas tree or in the holiday meal. One of only three native North American fruit crops, cranberries provide plenty of health benefits, too.



- Cranberries prevent harmful bacteria from wreaking havoc on the body. They have long been known to prevent urinary tract infections, which was commonly attributed to the juice's acidity. Recent research by Rutgers University found that certain compounds in cranberry juice prevent infection by not allowing some bacteria to stick to urinary tract walls. Additional research may have implications for stomach ulcers, gum disease, plus ear and respiratory infections.
- Cranberries also contain powerful antioxidants that slow or prevent oxidative stress caused by free radicals in our bodies, preventing harmful diseases such as cancer, heart disease and age-related neurodegenerative diseases. Research by Cornell University reported that cranberries ranked highest in total antioxidant activity compared to 10 other commonly-eaten fruits, including apple, red grape,

strawberry, peach, lemon, pear, banana, orange, grapefruit and pineapple.

Tips for Getting Creative with Cranberries:

- **Nutrition and health.** Cranberries are fat-free, cholesterol-free, sodium-free, and a good source of Vitamin C and fiber. Cranberries are thought to provide health benefits because of their flavonoid and phytonutrient content. These naturally occurring compounds have antioxidant and antimicrobial benefits. They have also been shown to promote cardiovascular health by reducing low-density lipoprotein-oxidation (bad cholesterol), maintaining or improving high-density lipoprotein levels (good cholesterol), and improving vascular function.
- **Forms and availability.** The peak harvest season for fresh cranberries is October through December. Sometimes fresh cranberries can be found in the freezer section near the end of their season. Cranberry juice, sauce and dried.
- **Selection and Storage tips.** Choose fresh cranberries that are full, plump, firm and dark red or yellowish-red. Avoid cranberries that are soft, shriveled, or have brown spots. Fresh cranberries should be stored in the refrigerator, preferably in a crisper for about three to four weeks. Cranberries freeze very well, either whole or sliced. When sealed in an airtight container, frozen cranberries will keep for up to nine months.
- **Cooking with cranberries.** Shortly before use, rinse fresh or frozen cranberries and throw out any that are shriveled or bruised. Cranberries are good for both cooking and eating raw. If raw cranberries are too tart, cook them before eating. One method is to cook them in a pot of water for 10 minutes on medium heat or until the cranberries pop. If cooked longer, they will taste bitter.
- **Getting culinary with cranberries.** Cranberries are versatile and can be combined with many other flavors. Try mixing cranberry juice with other juices such as apple, orange or grape. Dried cranberries can be added to nuts, trail mix, granola, oatmeal, or even chicken salad. Fresh or dried cranberries work well in quick breads such as muffins, sweet breads, and yeast breads. These berries also work well in pies, cobblers, chutneys, salsas, and relishes.

Recipe Ideas with Cranberries!

Chunky Cranberry Spread (16 servings, 1 tablespoon each)

Ingredients

- 1 8-oz. package low-fat cream cheese
- 1-2 tablespoons low-fat milk
- 1/2 cup chopped dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup chopped blanched almonds or other nut
- 1/2 teaspoon orange zest, preferably fresh

Directions

1. Place cream cheese in a medium bowl and allow to soften at room temperature.
2. Mash and work with a fork until texture is light enough to combine easily with other ingredients.
3. Gradually add just enough milk so cheese becomes soft and easy to spread.
4. Mix in remaining ingredients.
5. Cover and refrigerate up to 2 days ahead. Flavors will blend and mellow if this recipe is made ahead of time and allowed to refrigerate at least a few hours before serving.
6. Spread on slices of a whole-grain bread.

Source: fnh/chunky-cranberry-spread



Cranberry BBQ Sauce (8 servings)

A spicy-sweet condiment delicious on grilled vegetables, lean meats or poultry.



Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon (T) vegetable oil
- 1 cup minced yellow onions
- 1 T minced garlic
- 1 tsp. dry mustard
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1-1/2 T tomato paste
- 1-1/2 cups cranberry sauce
- 1/4 cup cider vinegar
- 1 T dark molasses
- 1/4 - 1/2 cup water, if needed

Directions

1. In a sauce pan, heat oil over medium-high heat; add onions and sauté 2 minutes.
2. Mix in garlic, mustard and chili powder and continue cooking 1 minute.
3. Stir in tomato paste and cook 1 more minute.
4. Add cranberry sauce, vinegar and molasses and bring to a simmer, whisking often until mixture becomes smooth.
5. Lower heat and simmer 15-20 minutes or until mixture reduces and thickens. Add water to mixture if it gets too thick.
6. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. Place in a covered container and refrigerate until ready to use. Reheat before using.

Source:

<http://www.uscranberries.com/Recipe/Details/263>

Check out the U.S. Cranberry Marketing Committee website at www.uscranberries.com, which includes many healthy cranberry recipes. For more food, nutrition and health information from UNL Extension go to www.food.unl.edu.

Taken in part from <http://hortupdate.unl.edu/Cranberry> and <http://food.unl.edu/healthy-bites-october-national-cranberry-month>