

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

INSIDE LINE

MARCH/APRIL 2007

CANCER FIGHTING FOODS

You know the basics of eating right, but did you know there are some foods that actually help you to fight off cancer and avoid heart disease? The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) shows that the following list of foods are rich in antioxidants. These natural chemicals stabilize free radicals, molecular compounds that are linked with diseases such as cancer. The optimal daily "dose" of antioxidant-rich foods is not yet known. For now, putting one of these high-antioxidant foods in at each meal (or snack) is a good goal. The USDA's top health boosters are:

***Apples:** One Red Delicious apple has more antioxidants than a Granny Smith or Gala apple – both of which also rank high on the USDA's list.

***Artichokes:** Whether you like the hearts or the meaty

petals, fresh, frozen, or canned will do!

***Barley:** May help reduce total LDL or "bad cholesterol" and contain more disease-fighting antioxidants than any other cereal or grain. Other heart-healthy whole grains are oatmeal and whole wheat bread.

***Beans:** Small red beans score highest, but kidney, pinto, and black beans also fight free radicals. It's best to buy dried beans and soak them overnight before using them in recipes like soup or chili.

***Berries:** Blueberries have the highest amount of antioxidants. However, cranberries, blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries are also jam-packed and at the top of the list.

***Broccoli:** And other cruciferous vegetables, like

Brussels sprouts, cabbage and bok choy have been linked to a lower risk of lung and colon cancer.

***Cherries:** Buy fresh or frozen, sweet or sour are all perfect for a snack.

***Cinnamon and cloves:** Look for holiday recipes that incorporate them or sprinkle oatmeal or cinnamon toast with cloves. Use a cinnamon stick as a flavor-enhancing stirrer in tea, coffee or cocoa.

***Nuts:** The USDA rates pecans as the top antioxidant nut.

***Oregano:** Move the dried oregano to the front of your spice rack and add it to pizza, soups, and garlic bread.

***Plums and prunes:** Prunes (dried plums) are the only dried fruit to land at the top of the USDA's list. Have one for a snack or put in your trail mix.

***Potatoes:** Russet potatoes are the highest- ranked potato because of their antioxidant-rich skin, so don't peel them.

***Salmon:** This fish, along with herring, halibut and sardines contain high amounts of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3's have been shown to reduce the risk of early death in people with heart disease. Other omega-3's include fish oil supplements, flaxseed and flaxseed oil, walnuts and canola oil.

***Tea:** The health benefits are stronger bones in older women and reducing the risk of ovarian and stomach cancers. Green tea contains higher levels of antioxidants than black tea.

***Tomatoes:** All red fruits and vegetables contain lycopene, which may help protect against prostate and other cancers. But tomato products, such as ketchup and pizza sauce, are the richest source of lycopene in your diet.

FACTS ON FOOD LABELS

Become a smart shopper by reading food labels to find out more about the foods you eat. A quick guide to reading the nutrition facts label:

Start with the serving size

*Look for both the serving size (the amount for one serving), and the number of servings in the package.

*Check your portion size to the serving size listed on the label. If the label serving size is one cup, and you eat two cups, you are getting twice the calories, fat and other nutrients listed on the label.

Check out the total calories and fat

*Find out how many calories are in a single serving and the number of calories from fat. It's smart to cut back on both if you are watching your weight!

Let the percent daily values be your guide

*Daily values are average levels of nutrients for a person eating 2,000 calories a day. A food item with a 5% DV means 5% of the amount of fat that a person consuming 2,000 calories a day would eat.

*Remember percent DV are for the entire day not just for one meal or snack.

*You may need more or less than 2,000 calories per day. For some nutrients you may need more or less than 100% DV.

Limit fat, cholesterol and sodium

*Total fat includes saturated, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat. Limit to 100% DV or less per day. New food labels now require trans fat to be listed.

*Saturated and trans fats are linked to an increased risk of heart disease.

*Sodium – high levels can add up to high blood pressure.

*Remember to aim low for % DV of these nutrients!

Get enough vitamins, minerals and fiber

*Eat more fiber, vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron to maintain good health and help reduce our risk of certain health problems such as osteoporosis and anemia.

*Choose more fruits and vegetables to get more of these nutrients.

*Remember to aim high for % DV of these nutrients!

Additional nutrients

*Protein – Most Americans get more protein than they need, so a % DV is not required on the label. Choose moderate portions of lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese, plus beans, peanut butter and nuts.

*Carbohydrates – There are three types of carbohydrates – sugars, starches and fiber. Select whole-grain breads, cereals, rice and pasta plus fruits and vegetables.

*Sugars – Simple carbohydrates or sugars occur naturally in foods such as fruit juice (fructose), or come from refined sources such as table sugar (sucrose) or corn syrup.

For food and nutrition information or for a referral to a dietetics professional in your area, call The American Dietetic Association Knowledge Center at 1-800-366-1655 or visit www.eatright.org.

BARLEY SQUASH PILAF

Serve as a main dish (4 servings) with a salad, as a side dish (6 servings) or, for a more hearty meal, stir in cooked whole-grain pasta.

1 Tbsp olive oil

12 oz peeled butternut squash, cut in ½-in. pieces (2 cups)

1 cup chopped onion

1 small red pepper, chopped

1 cup barley (pearl, not quick-cooking)

1 can (14 oz) chicken broth

½ tsp each dried sage and thyme

¼ tsp each salt and pepper

1 tsp grated lemon zest

Heat oil in large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add squash, onion and red pepper; sauté 3 minutes. Add barley; cook 3 minutes to toast slightly. Add broth, ½ cup water, the sage, thyme, salt and pepper. Cover; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, 20 to 25 minutes, or until barley is just tender. Remove from heat; stir in lemon zest.

Per serving (4): 273 cal, 8 g pro, 54 g car, 10 g fiber, 4 g fat (1 g sat fat), 0 mg chol, 351 mg sod.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY SENIOR GAMES MAY 8 - 18

For over twenty years, the Westmoreland County Senior Games has grown by leaps and bounds. The slogan for the games has been "Bring a Friend for Fun and Fitness." The senior population has taken that to heart as the Senior Games have had more athletes than ever in recent years. The ultimate goal of the games is to encourage an active lifestyle and continued participation in recreational activities beyond age 50.

The 2007 Senior Games will take place May 8-18 at Mammoth Park and several other Greensburg area locations. Anyone age 50 and over is eligible to participate. Registration cost is \$10. A few of the events include bocce, bowling, cycling, golf, horseshoes, and swimming. Medals will be awarded to the top three finishers of each event in each age bracket. Each participant will also receive an official 2007 Westmoreland County Senior Games t-shirt.

The Games are more about fun and fitness than serious competition. "The majority of people who participate in the Senior Games are not drawn to it

for the competition," said Dan Carpenter, Program Coordinator for Westmoreland County Parks and Recreation. "They like the fellowship and fun atmosphere. A lot of people think that they have to be a super athlete to come to the Games, but that is not the case."

The Westmoreland County Senior Games are sponsored by Excelsa Health and its Partners Advocating Total Health, 1480 WCNS, Ameriprise Financial, SuperValu, First National Bank of Pennsylvania, Unison Advantage, Silver Sneakers, and Inspiring Times in Westmoreland. To receive a registration booklet, call the Westmoreland County Bureau of Parks and Recreation at 724-830-3950 or request one via e-mail by visiting the County Parks' website at www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/parks.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Our bodies experience physical and emotional effects and can create positive or negative feelings as we adjust to our continually changing environment. Positive stress can help compel us to action by adding anticipation and excitement to life. Negative stress can result in feelings of distrust, rejection, anger, and depression, which in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, upset stomach, rashes,

insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. With the death of a loved one, the birth of a child, a job promotion, or a new relationship, we experience stress as we readjust our lives. In adjusting to different circumstances, stress will help or hinder us depending on how we react to it.

There are many sources of stress and many possibilities for its management. However, all require work toward changing the source of stress and/or changing your reaction to it.

***Become aware of your stressors and your emotional and physical reactions.** Determine what events distress you and how your body responds to the stress.

***Recognize what you can change.** You may be able to change your stressors by avoiding or eliminating them completely. You can reduce their intensity by managing the stressors over a period of time. Shorten your exposure to stress by taking a break or leaving the physical area altogether. Devote time and energy to make change by setting goals.

***Reduce the intensity of your emotional reactions to stress.** The stress reaction is triggered by your perception of physical and/or emotional danger. Work at adopting more moderate views. See the stress as

something you can cope with rather than something that overpowers you. Temper your excess emotions. Put the situation in perspective and do not labor on the negative aspects.

***Learn to moderate your physical reactions to stress.** Slow, deep breathing will bring your heart rate and respiration back to normal. Relaxation techniques can reduce muscle tension.

***Build your physical reserves.** Exercise for cardiovascular fitness by walking, swimming, cycling, or jogging three to four times a week. Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals and maintain your ideal weight. Avoid nicotine, excessive caffeine, and other stimulants. Mix leisure with work and take breaks when you can. Get enough sleep!

***Maintain your emotional reserves.** Develop some mutually supportive friendships. Pursue realistic goals which are meaningful to you. Expect frustrations, failures, and sorrows but, be kind and gentle with yourself.

Stress is an unavoidable consequence of life. Try to follow the advice in Reinhold Niebuhr's, serenity prayer, "Grant me the courage to change the things I can change, the serenity to accept the things I can't change, and the wisdom to know the difference."

ALCOHOL USE AND ABUSE

by the National Institute of Aging

Anyone at any age can have a drinking problem. The fact is that families, friends, and health care professionals often overlook their concerns about older people's drinking. Sometimes trouble with alcohol in older people is mistaken for other conditions that happen with age. But alcohol use deserves special attention. Some research has shown that as people age they become more sensitive to alcohol's effects. In other words, the same amount of alcohol can have a greater effect on an older person than on someone who is younger. Over time, someone whose drinking habits haven't changed may find she or he has a problem.

- Some medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, ulcers, and diabetes, can worsen with alcohol use.
- Many medicines—prescription, over-the-counter, or herbal remedies can be dangerous or even deadly when mixed with alcohol. This is a special worry for older people because the average person over age 65 takes at least two medicines a day. If you take any medicines, ask your

doctor or pharmacist if you can safely drink alcohol. Here are some examples:

*Aspirin can cause bleeding in the stomach and intestines; the risk of bleeding is higher if you take aspirin while drinking alcohol.

*Cold and allergy medicines (antihistamines) often make people sleepy; when combined with alcohol this drowsiness can be worse.

*Alcohol used with large doses of the pain killer acetaminophen can raise the risk of liver damage.

*Some medicine, such as cough syrups and laxatives, have a high alcohol content.

Even drinking a small amount of alcohol can impair judgment, coordination, and reaction time. It can increase the risk of work and household accidents, including falls and hip fractures. It also adds to the risk of car crashes.

Heavy drinking over time also can cause certain cancers, liver cirrhosis, immune system disorders, and brain damage. Alcohol can make some medical concerns hard for doctors to find and treat. For example, alcohol causes changes in the heart and blood vessels. These changes can dull pain that might be a warning sign

of a heart attack. Drinking also can make older people forgetful and confused. These symptoms could be mistaken for signs of Alzheimer's disease. For people with diabetes, drinking affects blood sugar levels.

People who abuse alcohol also may be putting themselves at risk for serious conflicts with family, friends, and coworkers. The more heavily they drink, the greater the chance for trouble at home, at work, with friends, and even with strangers.

However, not everyone who drinks regularly has a drinking problem, and not all problem drinkers drink every day. You might want to get help if you or a loved one:

- Drink to calm your nerves, forget your worries, or reduce depression.
- Gulp down drinks.
- Frequently have more than one drink a day. (A standard drink is one 12-ounce bottle or can of beer or a wine cooler, one 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.)
- Lie about or try to hide drinking habits.
- Hurt yourself, or someone else, while drinking.
- Need more alcohol to get high.
- Feel irritable, resentful, or

unreasonable when not drinking.

- Have medical, social, or financial worries caused by drinking.

Studies show that older problem drinkers are as able to benefit from treatment as are younger alcohol abusers. To get help, talk to your doctor. He or she can give you advice about your health, drinking, and treatment options, such as; 12-step help programs, detoxification, and individual and/or group counseling. Your local health department or social services agencies can also help.

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), part of the National Institutes of Health, recommends that people over age 65 who choose to drink have no more than one drink a day. Drinking at this level usually is not associated with health risks. For more information contact NIAAA at 301-443-3860 or visit www.niaaa.nih.gov.

LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Learning is a life-long pursuit. Westmoreland County Community College (WCCC) offers a wide range of high-quality learning experiences for people of all ages and interests. WCCC's continuing education spring semester begins in March and ends in May. Many classes meet for only one evening. Pennsylvania

residents age 60 or older may be eligible for a 50 percent reduction in tuition for continuing education classes.

Some classes offered during the spring semester are: Pastel Painting; Swing, Fox Trot and More (dance class); Meal Planning for Diabetics; Tai Chi for Arthritis; Weekend Gardner Series; Basic Will Writing and AARP Driver Safety.

For more information or to request a WCCC Continuing Education tabloid that lists all classes being offered, please contact Sylvia Detar at 1-800-262-2103, extension 4190 or 724-925-4190.

HEALTH INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET

Eighty percent of U.S. adults who use the Internet have searched for health-related information, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project. This means that 113 million Americans turn to the Web for answers to questions about diseases, treatments, and medications. Yet 75% of people seeking health information rarely or never check the source, date, or credibility of what they find. This could cause confusion about the best way to treat a condition, take a drug, or other poor health outcomes.

The Medical Library Association (MLA) has created a "Top Ten" list of websites in response to the public's need for quality

Internet health information. MLA is an organization of health science librarians from hospitals, medical schools, and academic medical centers around North America. The MLA Top Ten identifies websites that medical librarians have verified as current and authoritative. For further information about the "Top Ten", visit the MLA's website at MedlinePlus.com.

FAMILY THEATER EVENT

by ParentWISE, Inc.

ParentWISE, Inc. and the Greasepaint Players of the Greensburg Civic Theater present the second Family Theater Event on Thursday, March 29, 2007 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Greensburg Garden and Civic Center. This year the Greasepaint Players will present *King Arthur's Calamity*, and ParentWISE will host the pre-show party entitled *A Knight of Fun*. There will be a jousting game, a catapult, a sword and stone game, creating crowns and shields, refreshments and party favors. Each child will receive a raffle ticket for a chance to win prizes. Additional raffle tickets can be purchased. There will also be an autograph session after the show. Please contact ParentWISE, Inc. at **724-837-5410** to purchase tickets for the event. Tickets are \$10.00 for both children and adults, and children must be accompanied by an

adult. The Family Theater Event is the kick-off event for Child Abuse Prevention Month and the Month of the Young Child awareness campaigns.

For more information, please contact Julie Cawoski, Executive Director, at 724-837-5410 or jcawoski@parentwiseinc.com.

SEARCHING FOR A JOB

If you are 55 years of age or older, a resident of Westmoreland County, and your income falls within our guidelines, you may be eligible for our training program.

The Senior Community Employment Program (SCSEP) at Westmoreland County Community College enrolls low-income older adults to update old skills or get training in new skills, allowing you to earn while you learn in preparation for re-entering the job market. All positions earn \$6.25 per hour, 20 hours per week.

For more information, please call Mimi Owens 724-925-4098 or Rebecca Dunn 724-925-4231 or toll-free at 1-800-262-2103 and ask for the Lifelong Learning Center.

Available Training

Positions

Clerical Trainee – Office work, familiarity with office machines helpful but not required. Primary duties may include receptionist activities, copying and collating materials for mass

mailings, assisting with fundraising activities, and maintaining information areas. Positions available throughout Westmoreland County.

Dietary Aide – Must be knowledgeable in minimal food preparation techniques and have the ability to work with senior citizens.

Docent – Training provided in archiving, researching, and preserving local history.

Library Aide – Positions available throughout Westmoreland County.

Individuals should possess an inquisitive, helpful attitude.

Maintenance/Groundskeeper – Positions available throughout Westmoreland County.

Program Aide – Assists in event planning and record-keeping. Requires good organizational and interpersonal skills.

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