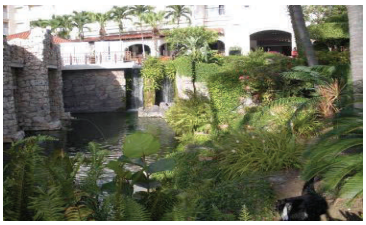

May 2010

Volume 99

Food and Fitness

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Web sites of interest:

- stroke.org
- ucavo.ucr.edu
- rick-bayless.com
- nutritionandaging.fiu.edu
- calorie-count.about.com/activities-lawn-garden-ac8

May is National Stroke Awareness Month

Learning about and managing your controllable risk factors for stroke can go a long way toward stroke prevention. These risk factors include high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat), high cholesterol, diabetes, tobacco use, physical inactivity, and obesity.

Limiting sodium intake is an extremely useful tool to manage blood pressure. Recent reports suggest that government intervention to reduce sodium in the food supply may be of help. Why wait? You can reduce sodium now by:

Buying fresh produce

Buying canned or frozen vegetables without added salt

Eating lots of fruits and vegetables

Buying whole grain pasta, oats, and rice without added salt

Using milk and yogurt without added salt

Removing salt and seasoned salts from your home

Using fresh lemon, lime, flavored vinegars and herbs to season food

Asking the waiter in a restaurant for salt not to be added to your food. You can even call ahead to make sure this would be possible.

Get Fit and Enjoy the Outdoors!

Have you been "holed up" all winter watching your muscles getting flabbier and the pounds gathering at your waistline? We all know it's important to get back to regular aerobic exercise and strength training.

At last it's springtime! We can get outside, enjoy the fresh air, burn some calories and get fit! Mowing the yard, planting a vegetable or flower garden, and working in the dirt are all fun ways to increase strength and fitness, and to burn calories. In addition to these activities improving your health, you can be proud of your beautiful lawn, and enjoy delicious vegetables and flowers from your garden.

For example "Calorie Count" at www.about.com states that if you weigh 150# you can burn 374 calories per hour pushing a powered lawn mower. If you weigh less than 150# you burn fewer calories, but still get a very good work out. If you weigh more than 150#, you burn more calories.

Mowing the lawn also works the muscles in your legs, shoulders, back, chest and arms. Working your muscles helps them to increase and maintain strength which enhances the ability to perform activities of daily living. Fitness and strength help us to look good and remain independent!

Any activity that gets us moving will burn calories and help increase fitness. Performing work such as pushing (a mower), pulling (weeds), lifting (a shovel), and carrying (wood), help increase muscle strength.

See side box for fun summer activities and the calories/ hour burned by a150# person.

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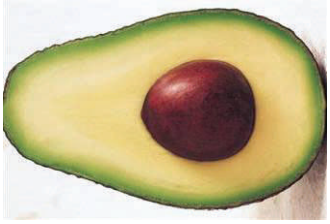
Avocado—the Treat that Treats You Well!

Cinco de mayo (May 5) celebrates the Battle of Puebla, where Mexico, with the help of France, defeated Spain in its quest for independence. Celebrations always include dishes made with avocado!

Cut through the dark, pebbly skin of an avocado and you'll find a taste treat that's actually good for you! Avocados are a good source of dietary fiber, vitamin C and potassium. This soft fruit (yes, not a vegetable or nut) is also a great source of vitamin E, a potent antioxidant. Avocados provide another antioxidant called lutein which helps to prevent macular degeneration.

Like olive oil, the fat in the avocado is predominantly monounsaturated fat. This fat does not raise bad cholesterol or lower good cholesterol, making it good for heart health.

Most of the avocados we consume come from the Mexican state of Michoacan. In the lush mountains of South-



western Mexico, they grow to creamy perfection. Almost all avocados grown in Mexico are Hass, a variety usually available in supermarkets in the United States.

Avocados are also good for the environment! A mature avocado tree absorbs up to two and a half tons of carbon dioxide per year, enough to offset emissions produced from 26,000 automobile miles. This makes avocados a more "environmentally friendly" fat source than dairy foods, since a single cow produces the equivalent of almost three tons of carbon dioxide per year. So next time try some guacamole instead of sour cream on your taco or soup and you'll be doing the environment a favor!

To select a perfect avocado, make sure the "button" or tip of the stem is still attached. If the avocado is ripe, the button may have fallen off. If the remaining indentation is green, the avocado should be okay. If it is black you may have an avocado that is already past its prime!

A hard, green avocado will need about a week to ripen. Leave it at room temperature until its skin has turned from green to black and it yields to a gentle pressure. If it's green-black it will only take a few days.

This month we include two avocado recipes modified from those of Rick Bayless, a chef responsible for introducing many Americans to authentic Mexican cuisine.

Mr. Bayless has restaurants in Chicago and San Francisco and numerous cookbooks.

Recipe Corner

Sopa de Tortilla

This is an excellent way to use leftover chips the day after a party! Serves 8-10.

Ingredients:

2-3 large dried Mexican chiles (peppers)

1 15 oz. can diced tomatoes, fire roasted, un-drained

3 Tablespoons olive oil

1 medium white onion, sliced

3 cloves garlic, peeled

4 cups chicken broth

4 cups water

3 skinned and boneless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces

2 cups fresh spinach, kale or chard leaves, chopped coarsely

Salt to taste

Toppings:

1 large ripe avocado, sliced lengthwise

2 cups broken tortilla chips

½ cup grated Mexican cheese such as Monterey Jack, asadero or mild cheddar

1 fresh lime, cut into wedges

Preparation:

Toast chiles in a heavy skillet over medium heat until the aroma fills your kitchen. Cool them, then remove the stems and seeds. Put them in the blender along with tomatoes and their juices.

Meanwhile, heat oil in a heavy soup pot over medium heat. Sauté onion and garlic in oil until golden, stirring frequently, about ten minutes. Add sautéed onion and garlic to the mixture in the blender, retaining oil in skillet. Process all ingredients until smooth.

Return the soup pot to medium heat and then add puree from blender. Stir until thickened to consistency of tomato paste, about five minutes. Then add broth and water, cooking over low heat.

Using the same skillet in which onions were prepared, sauté chicken pieces for about five minutes in remaining oil. Add to soup pot and simmer for about thirty minutes. Just before serving, add spinach to soup and cook, stirring until greens are wilted. Season with salt to taste.

Ladle the soup into bowls. Divide avocado, tortilla chips and cheese among bowls. Serve hot with lime wedges.

Recipe Corner

Roasted Garlic Guacamole with Garnishes

Ingredients:

6 large cloves garlic, unpeeled

6 ripe medium-sized avocados

½ cup coarsely chopped cilantro

4 tablespoons fresh lime juice

Salt to taste

One dash of Tabasco or other hot sauce

Preparation:

Place unpeeled garlic cloves in a dry skillet over low-medium heat. Cook, turning occasionally, until soft and blackened in spots, ten to fifteen minutes.

Cool, then slip off skins and finely chop.

Scoop avocado flesh into a large bowl. Add the garlic, cilantro, and lime

juice. Mash everything together and season with salt and Tabasco to taste.

Transfer to a serving dish and place plastic wrap directly on the surface of the guacamole. Can be refrigerated up to a day.

Hispanics add the avocado pit to the center of the serving dish. They say it keeps the guacamole from turning dark. Lime juice may also help prevent darkening.

Garnishes

¾ cup Mexican queso fresco Mexican cheese, farmer's cheese, feta or romano, finely grated or crumbled

3/4 cup toasted pumpkin seeds, pine nuts or chopped pecans

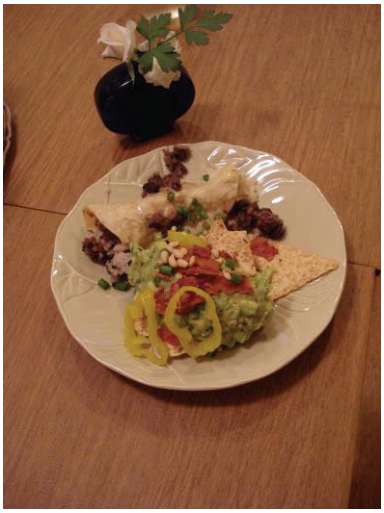
¾ cup sliced pickled jalapenos

Chopped green onions

Diced tomatoes

1 16 oz. bag baked tortilla chips

Choose garnishes that are colorful and available. Scoop garnishes into several small bowls and serve with a large bowl of tortilla chips. Encourage guests to spoon a little guacamole on a chip and top with garnishes that appeal.



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*Contributors: Catherine Townsend (Mar/Apr 2010 eatingwell.com) and Betsy Greer (*http://caloriecount.about.com/activities-lawn-garden-ac8)

Live Long, Age Strong: Protein Packs Power!

1 c. oatmeal (6)

1 slice toast (3)

8 oz. sk. milk (8)

Green Salad with 3 oz. chick. breast (21)

1 oz. cheese (7)

6 Triscuits (3)

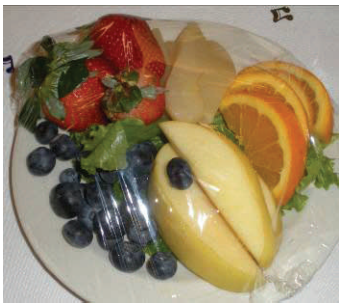
Yogurt (6)

3 oz. fish (21)

Sweet potato (2)

Broccoli (2)

Asparagus (2)

Protein is a nutrient needed to maintain muscle, hormones, enzymes and blood components. Healthy older adults need about 70 grams protein per day.

This can be achieved by eating 3 low fat dairy servings (21 g), 6 oz. fish or chicken (42 g) , and 6 whole grain servings (18 g) with vegetables and fruits for complete, balanced nutrition. See side bar for sample day. Remember to add 3 fruits for complete nutrition.