August 2007
Volume 66

Food and Fitness

Inside this issue:

Sugar Alcohols	2
Tomatoes, Lycopene, and Cancer	3
Recipe Corner	4
Exercise for Seniors" Health	5

Soft Drinks and Heart Disease

Hot in the press in July is the report of an association between drinking soft drinks and developing the Metabolic Syndrome. The Metabolic Syndrome refers to having any 3 out of 5 risk factors for heart disease—large waist, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, low HDL cholesterol and high triglycerides.

This branch of the Framingham study observed over 9000 middle aged men and women over 4 years. Those who drank one or more soft drinks daily were more likely to develop the Metabolic Syndrome than those who drank less than one soft drink daily.

Does this mean that soft drinks can cause the Meta-

(Continued on page 2)

Web sites of interest:

- americanheart.org
- aicr.org
- cancer.gov
- ific.org
- seniorfitness.net

Vegetables and Breast Cancer

The media reported in July that a high intake of vegetables cannot decrease risk of breast cancer recurrence. In a study from University of California, San Diego, of 3000 breast cancer survivors half were advised to eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day and half were advised to eat 8 servings of fruits and

(Continued on page 3)

Sugar Alcohols

Is this the newest party beverage? In a word, no. Sugar alcohols are carbohydrates with a chemical structure that partially resembles sugar and partially resembles alcohol. However, they contain no ethanol, the alcohol of alcoholic beverages.

Sugar alcohols are used to sweeten foods in place of sucrose (table sugar). When sucrose is omitted the product can be labeled "sugar free". The result may be fewer calories and less carbohydrate than products made with regular sugar, but does not mean calorie free or carbohydrate free.

Examples of sugar alcohols you may have seen in product ingredients are sorbitol, mannitol, mallitol, and xylitol.

Sugar alcohols are commercially produced from sucrose, glucose, or starch. They are not digested in the mouth, so do not promote tooth decay. They are incompletely digested and absorbed into the blood. That which is not absorbed into the blood passes to the large intestine and is fermented by bacteria in the large intestine. The American Dietetic Association warns that consuming greater than 50 g/day of sorbitol or greater than 20 g/day of mannitol may cause diarrhea.

Products containing sugar alcohols often cost more than those sweetened with sugar, but may **not** have a significantly lower calorie or carbohydrate content. Check the Nutrition Facts label.

Soft Drinks and Heart Disease (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

bolic Syndrome? No, don't fret. An association is not a cause, and a single food cannot be branded as a health culprit.

To avoid developing the Metabolic Syndrome:

- Exercise daily—it lowers blood sugar, blood pressure, triglycerides, waist measure, and can raise HDL cholesterol.
- Choose a healthy diet with vegetables, fruits, nonfat dairy foods, nuts, and fish.

Tomatoes, Lycopene, and Cancer

Hard to prove, easy to eat. Recent reviews of the research related to lycopene in tomatoes and cancer prevention are at odds. In a July issue of the Journal of the National Cancer Institute experts say it cannot be conclusively proven that tomatoes reduce the risk of cancers of the prostate, stomach, pancreas, and ovaries. It is extremely hard to prove cause and effect in nutrition research. However, tomatoes continue to be a favorite in all summer gardens. And there are hundreds of research studies that indicate you should "eat your vegetables". Tomatoes are a good thing!

Vegetables and Breast Cancer (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

vegetables per day. All were advised to eat a low fat diet (15-20% of calories from fat).

Over time, while the women who ate more vegetables and fruits appeared to have no greater protection from cancer recurrence, neither did they achieve a low fat diet. Their fat intake was 27% of calories, as opposed to the goal of 15-20%. Though they reported eating fewer calories than the lower produce group, they gained weight as well. Higher fat diets and weight gain have been implicated as possible contributors to breast and other types of cancers.

So, what's the bottom line? True, vegetables are not a magic wand that will obliterate breast cancer recurrence when other nutrition and fitness variables are not covered.

To prevent cancer as well as cancer recurrence:

Maintain or achieve a healthy weight.

Eat a low fat diet.

Exercise regularly.

Eat a wide variety and a large amount of fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains.

Recipe Corner

Caprese Salad

2 large unrefrigerated, home grown, vine ripened tomatoes, sliced 1/4" thick

1/2# fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced

1 cup fresh basil

Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper

2 Tbs. dried capers

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

In a circular design layer tomato and mozzarella slices, alternating as in photo. Tear fresh basil leaves and sprinkle over top. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sprinkle capers over top. Drizzle olive oil over all. No vinegar! Serves 4.

Nutrition information per serving:

Calories 291, Fat 28 g, Protein 9 g, Carbohydrate 4 g, Saturated fat 9 g, Trans fat 0 g, Cholesterol 26 mg, Sodium 375 mg, Dietary fiber 1 g.

Recipe and photo from:

what'scookingamerica.net

Creamy Corn Chowder

2 Tbs. olive oil

1 small onion

1 cup finely chopped celery

1 cup raw carrots, chopped small

1 clove garlic, minced

2 1/2 cups water

2 vegetable broth cubes

2 cups fresh corn from cob

2 cups plain regular soy milk

1 Tbs. flour

2 Tbs. fresh parsley

1 tsp. garlic powder

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. black pepper

Heat oil in a large skillet. Add onion and celery. Sauté until wilted. Add carrots and garlic. Cook until garlic is golden. Set aside.

Bring water to boiling in a soup pot. Add broth cubes and corn.

Combine cold soy milk with flour. Add soy milk mixture and all rest of ingredients, including vegetables, to soup pot. Cook until carrots are tender. Serves 8.

Nutrition information per serving:

Calories 125, Fat 5 g, Protein 4 g, Carbohydrate 15 g, Saturated fat 1 g, Trans fat 0 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 802 mg, Dietary fiber 2 g.

Heartfit Building
3200 Chesterfield
Charleston, WV 25304

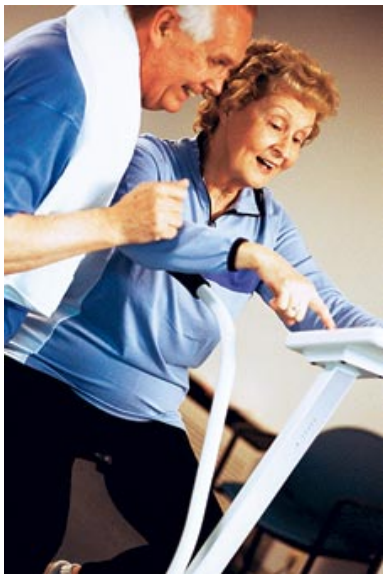
Phone:304-744-6466
Fax: 304-388-9422

www.state.wv.us/seniorservices/

Food and Fitness

This newsletter is created by Susan M. Poindexter, MS, RD, LD, Nutrition Consultant to the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services, and is funded in part by the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services.

Exercise for Seniors' Health



A recently published study from the Mayo Clinic Proceedings reported that high intensity walking helps older adults to control blood pressure and maintain thigh muscle strength. Moderate intensity walking was defined as walking 3.7 miles per hour. High intensity would be faster.

Varied forms of exercise are beneficial for seniors' health. Check with your senior center for available programs in these areas.

Endurance—walking riding a bike, swimming. Improves heart, lungs, and circulatory system

Strengthening—training with weights or elastic stretch bands to build and retain muscle tissue and strength

Stretching for flexibility and balance—toe touching, yoga, and all forms of stretching exercise.