Food and Fitness

“School Bells Ringing…..

...children singing, back to school again!” Fall is in the air! Sales tax holidays, shopping for school supplies, and 5:00 a.m. team sport practices signal the fast approaching new school year!

Are you taking care of grandchildren who need packed lunches and after school snacks?

Now is the time to stock up on staples needed for snacks and lunches:

Assorted fresh fruits for kabobs

Peanut butter or tuna salad for sandwiches on whole wheat bread

Baked chips and salsa

Grape tomatoes

Baby carrots

Homemade trail mix with nuts, whole grain cereal, pretzels, and dried fruit

Hummus on whole wheat crackers or pita

Low fat string cheese sticks

Low fat yogurt

Fresh grapes or cherries

Mini boxes of raisins

Chocolate soy milk

Low fat ice cream bars

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Web Sites of Interest:

- ewg.org
- ams.usda.gov
- cancer.org

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Organic Crops—Are They Healthier?

The jury is still out! A recent review of 55 studies conducted over the past 50 years examined whether organic produce was more nutritious. Nutrients evaluated included Vitamin C, potassium, calcium, zinc, copper, and magnesium. Alan Dangour of The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine reported after analyzing the studies that nutrient values for organically grown and conventionally grown crops are similar.

On the other hand, Richard Wiles of the Environmental Working Group says that the London group's study is flawed. He claims they failed to include results of 15 studies conducted since 2008 which concluded nutritional superiority of organically grown crops, especially with regard to Vitamin C and antioxidants.

According to the latest National Health and Nutrition Examination Studies (NHANES III) Americans simply don't eat enough vegetables and fruits, organic or not! In spite of the campaign to change this (5-A-Day for Better Health by the National Cancer Institute and Produce for Better Health) we still fall short of the 5-9 recommended servings per day of fruits and vegetables.

Tips for increasing fruit and vegetable intake:

Sprinkle berries over oatmeal or dry cereal.

Use frozen fruit with soy milk for a breakfast smoothie.

Eat an orange or banana before starting lunch.

Have a side salad or cup of vegetable soup with your lunch sandwich.

Put fresh peach slices in your yogurt for an afternoon snack.

Pile steamed broccoli,

salsa, and sautéed mushrooms onto your baked potato.

For more tips visit:

cancer.org

The USDA National Organic Program's guidelines for organic farming result in a product free of synthetic chemical pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and hormones. Products cannot be irradiated or genetically modified. These features may be worth the higher price to you.

Visit www.ams.usda.gov for more information.

To get a copy of the newest *Shoppers Guide to Pesticides* from Environmental Work Group visit their website at ewg.org.

Cooking for One—Three Easy Meals

Faced with having to cook for one, especially if never having cooked before, can be an awesome challenge! With a small arsenal of supplies and just a tad of kitchen savvy the task can be simplified. Recipes can sometimes be intimidating to the non-cook, so you don't need to follow a recipe!

Supplies to have on hand:

Frozen skinless chicken breasts

Frozen fish filets

Frozen stuffed pasta shells

Frozen chopped onions

Frozen chopped bell peppers

Frozen colorful vegetables—your choice

Frozen whole wheat dinner rolls

Brown rice

Jar of pasta sauce

Canned mandarin orange sections

Dried cranberries (craisins)

Fresh new potatoes

Fresh garlic

Bag of salad mix

Bag of slivered almonds

Bag of walnut pieces

Fresh or canned fruit

Light bottled salad dressings—your choice

Seasoning powder like Mrs. Dash or your choice

Dried parsley flakes and chives

Meat thermometer

Serve each of the following meals with fruit, a whole wheat dinner roll and a glass of skim milk for complete nutrition. You will actually want to cook enough for two—either invite a guest or have the "planned- overs" (leftovers) in a day or two!

Chicken Meal

Sprinkle seasoning over thawed chicken breasts. Bake in oven or toaster oven at 350 degrees (or grill over charcoal fire) until internal temperature reaches 165 degrees with a meat thermometer (about 15-20 minutes).

Wash and cut new

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Cooking for One... (continued)

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potatoes into quarters.

Place in glass baking dish. Add frozen chopped onion and bell pepper. Cover, and microwave on high until tender (about 8-10 minutes).

Add drained mandarin oranges to salad mix and serve with favorite bottled salad dressing

Fish Meal

Cook brown rice according to directions on package. It will take about an hour, so start this first. When rice is done stir in some slivered almonds, minced fresh garlic, and a sprinkle of dried parsley flakes and chives.

Sprinkle seasoning powder, dried parsley and chives onto fish filets. Bake in 350 degree oven until fish flakes with a fork (about 12-15 minutes)

Microwave frozen vegetables until done.

Pasta Meal

Pour stuffed pasta shells into glass baking dish. Pour pasta sauce over shells. Cover and bake according to package directions on pasta shells.

To prepared salad mix add walnut pieces and craisins and serve with your favorite dressing.

Invite someone over to dine with you and next time they'll invite you!

Stuff a baked potato with fresh steamed vegetables and salsa!

Parsley: Not Just a Garnish for a Pretty Plate!

According to Greek mythology, parsley has been around for a long time! It is said to have sprung up from the spilled blood of the Greek hero Archemorous, the herald of death, as he was devoured by serpents! Winners of the Olympian games of ancient Greece were decorated with parsley garlands. Maidens who entertained at feasts were decorated in the same way. Greek soldiers fed parsley to their horses to make them run faster. Parsley was also used to decorate tombs.

Romans and Greeks used the herb as a flavoring and a garnish. Hebrews used it during the celebration of Passover as a symbol of spring and rebirth. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, believed it would relieve rheumatism and kidney pain, and improve general health.

Besides being fantastically flavorful, parsley is an important herb for providing nutrients to the body. It's loaded with vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients. Parsley is a rich source of Vitamin C, containing 151 mg per 4 oz. Compare equal quantities of broccoli at 106 mg, green peppers at 91 mg, and fresh orange sections at 60 mg. Parsley also provides a large amount of Vitamin A, beta-carotene, dietary fiber, and calcium.

Parsley grows in most climates but thrives during the fall and spring months. If you start now with seeds you can enjoy fresh parsley in four weeks!

Recipe Corner

Fruit Kabobs

1 pound green grapes
1 pint strawberries
1 cantaloupe
1 fresh pineapple
1 package 3.5 inch plastic skewers

Wash grapes and strawberries and remove stems. Peel and remove core from cantaloupe and pineapple. Cut cantaloupe and pineapple into bite-sized pieces. Pierce and arrange fruit in sequence on skewers. Serve on a bed of lettuce. (These can be varied according to what's in season and your personal preferences. (See picture on page 1.) *(continued p. 6)*

Recipe Corner (continued)

Roasted Red Pepper Hummus

2 cloves garlic, minced
1 (15 ounce) can garbanzo beans, drained
1/3 cup sesame tahini*
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
/2 cup roasted red peppers

*Tahini is a paste made from sesame seeds and can be found in most grocery stores.

In an electric food processor, combine garlic, garbanzo beans, tahini, and lemon juice. Process until the mixture is smooth. Add roasted peppers and process until the peppers are finely chopped. Season with salt and pepper.

Hummus can be made a day ahead and kept refrigerated. Bring to room temperature before serving. Serve with whole grain pita bread for a high-fiber snack. Take it up a notch by adding crumbled feta cheese, black olives and chopped parsley!.

Daniel leyoub's Tabouli

1 cup cracked wheat or bulgur
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
2 cloves crushed garlic
Salt to taste
Black pepper freshly ground, to taste
¼ cup olive oil
2 bunches parsley, chopped ---about four cups
2 bunches green onions, both white and green parts sliced thinly
10 Roma tomatoes, diced finely

Cover cracked wheat with warm water and soak for 30 minutes. Squeeze out excess water. Mix in the lemon juice, olive oil, crushed garlic, salt and pepper. Allow this mixture to soften, about 30 minutes.

Chop parsley finely by hand. Combine the parsley, green onions and tomatoes with bulgur mixture. Serve with pita bread cut into triangles and browned lightly. Or serve with Romaine lettuce leaves, using them as scoops.

Pasta With a Punch!

2 cups grape tomatoes
1 medium zucchini, cut into small cubes
4 tablespoons Extra Virgin Olive Oil, divided
Salt and ground black pepper
1/2 pound whole wheat uncooked penne pasta
2 stalks celery, chopped
1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley
1/4 cup cilantro leaves
1/2 cup toasted pine nuts
Juice and zest of 1 lime

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Recipe Corner (continued)

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2 cloves garlic, minced
3 roasted red peppers
A few dashes hot sauce

Preheat oven to 400ºF. Arrange tomatoes, red peppers, and zucchini onto a baking sheet and drizzle with about 2 tablespoons olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast15 minutes.

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain thoroughly then return to pot.

Place the celery, parsley, cilantro, pine nuts, zest and juice of the lime and garlic into the bowl of a food processor. Pulse everything together. Add remaining olive oil while the machine is running until it forms a smooth pesto sauce. Set sauce aside. Combine the roasted vegetables and pesto sauce with the cooked pasta. Season with hot sauce. Toss well. Enjoy hot or cold. *(Adapted from the recipes of Rachael Ray)*

Parsley Article and Recipes contributed by Catherine Townsend