Food and Fitness

Is Our Food Safe?

We've come a long way— from worrying about salmonella in raw eggs to dealing with E.Coli in fresh spinach and salmonella in peanut butter. How safe is our food supply and what can we do to protect ourselves?

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) reports that while the USA has one of the safest food supplies in the world an estimated 76,000 people per year get sick with foodborne illness. Fears have grown over the safety of imported food to the extent that country of origin labeling is beginning to be required on some foods.

The Partnership for Food Safety Education

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Flu and Your Immune System

A flu shot is the best way to get ready for flu season. But there are other ways to boost your immune system.

In August 2007 the University of California at Berkeley released a study stating that a compound in broccoli, cabbage, and kale—indole-

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Happy Halloween

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Web sites of interest:

- cdc.gov/foodsafety
- fightbac.org
- befoodsafe.org
- webmd.com

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Trying to Gain Weight?

It seems everyone is on a weight loss diet except you. Perhaps you've experienced a recent illness or surgery that has resulted in a significant unintentional weight loss. Your doctor and your family are trying to coax you to eat more, but you just don't have the appetite.

It's all about calories. You have to sneak more calories into less volume to get it done. Try these tips:

- Plan larger feedings earlier in the day
- Replace non-caloric beverages like water, tea, and coffee with caloric beverages like juice and milk.
- Keep a can of your favorite nuts next to the chair where you read the newspaper or watch TV and snack on them.

- Use a can of chilled nutritional supplement like Boost Plus® or Ensure Plus® midmorning AND mid-afternoon. They come in a wide variety of flavors. Think of it as a medication to be taken regularly at 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.
- Snack on dried fruits
- Take a multivitamin/mineral supplement—it won't give you calories but may help with appetite
- Ask your doctor about medications that can stimulate the appetite.
- Remember, there's no magic pill for weight gain or weight loss. It's all in the calories.

Is Our Food Safe? (continued)

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recognizes the consumer as the most important link to food safety. Celebrating the 10th anniversary of their campaign in September 2007, they provide specific tips for consumers on how safely to handle foods to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

- Clean—wash hands and surfaces often
- Separate—don't cross contaminate
- Cook—to proper temperatures
- Chill—refrigerate promptly
- Visit www.fightbac.org

Salt—A Learned Flavor Habit

Does it cause high blood pressure? Not by itself. But if you're already experiencing a blood pressure reading greater than 120/80, you could benefit from controlling your sodium intake.

Sodium is the problematic component of table salt that causes fluid retention, raises the blood pressure, and can contribute to congestive heart failure.

If your doctor has advised you to lower your sodium intake, get rid of the salt shaker. But that will take care of only 25% of the problem. The greatest part of the problem comes from what manufacturers add to our food—not for preservation of the food, but because we have learned to like the flavor of salt and continue to buy salted foods!

Ask your doctor how low your sodium intake should be. Or simply limit it to1500-2000 mg sodium per day to help control your blood pressure.

To evaluate the sodium content of a packaged food, first look at the "**Ingredient list".** If salt has been added, the sodium content of a serving will likely be in the hundreds of milligrams. If salt has not been added, plant foods will contain zero to 60 mg. sodium per serving. Unsalted animal foods (milk, fish, chicken) may contain 50-150 mg per serving.

If you do use table salt, consider that it contains about 600 mg. sodium per 1/4 teaspoon. To add more flavor and zero sodium to unsalted food try basil, parsley, green onions, garlic, rosemary, lemon, lime and vinegar.

Flu and Your Immune System (continued)

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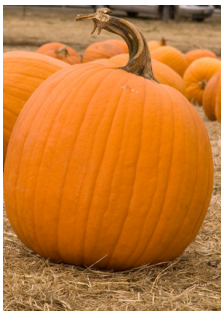
3-carbinol—produces chemicals capable of stimulating the immune system in mice. Other food nutrients have been touted as immune modulators as well—selenium from seafood, Vitamin E from whole grains, Vitamin C from fruits and vegetables, omega 3 fatty acids from seafood and nuts, and carotenoids from deep yellow and orange vegetables like yams, pumpkins, and carrrots.



Recipe Corner

Broccoli Peanut Stir Fry

Boost your immune system with broccoli.

3 cups cooked brown rice
1 tsp vegetable oil
2 tsp minced garlic
1 cup sliced mushrooms
1 cup sliced carrots
1 cup frozen thawed spinach
1 cup broccoli florets
1/2 cup orange juice
1 tsp corn starch
1/2 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp sesame oil
4 Tbsp light soy sauce
1/4 cup chopped peanuts

(May add leafy greens, peppers, baby corn for more color and more nutrition.)

Heat the vegetable oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté the garlic and mushrooms until golden, about 1 or 2 minutes. Add the carrots and spinach and cook for 3 minutes. Mix the orange juice with the cornstarch, ginger and sesame oil. Add this mixture, with the broccoli, to the skillet. Cook and stir until the broccoli is tender, about 3 minutes; add the peanuts. Serve hot over brown rice.

Makes 4 1-cup servings.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 327, Protein 13 g, Carbohydrate 54 g, Total fat 7 g, Trans fat 0 g, Saturated fat 1 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 376 mg, Dietary fiber 6 g.

Pumpkin-Apple Butter

2 apples, halved and cored
1 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
2 Tbs. brown sugar

1 cup orange juice
15 oz. canned pumpkin or 2 cups cooked fresh pumpkin

Cook apples, spices, sugar and orange juice in microwave in a covered glass container for 15 minutes. Add pumpkin and puree in food processor.

Makes 8 1/3-cup servings.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 60, Protein 1 g, Carbohydrate 14 g, Total fat 0 g, Trans fat 0 g, Saturated fat 0 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 3 mg, Dietary fiber 3 g.

Recipes from Communicating Food and Health at www.foodandhealth.com

Happy Halloween

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Food and Fitness

Concerned About Artificial Sweeteners?

In September 2007 the FDA warned the Hain food company against the use of stevia in some of its Celestial Seasonings teas. Stevia is a South American herb sold as a low-calorie sweetener, not as yet approved for use in the USA by the FDA due to safety concerns regarding kidney, heart and blood sugar health.

Other FDA approved sugar alternatives include sucralose (Splenda ®), aspartame (Equal®), and saccharine (Sweet'n'Low®). While some consumers have campaigned against the use of these alternative sweeteners, many find them a viable substitute for sugar. Sugar alternatives can decrease calorie intake for weight loss and carbohydrate intake for those with diabetes.

Visit the individual companies' websites for recipes using sugar alternatives in place of sugar.