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FITNESS and NUTRITION TIPS

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9 FOODS YOU SHOULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT

BLUEBERRIES: These petite powerhouses boast ellagic acid, a known cancer fighter, and tannins that thwart urinary tract infections, as well as four grams of fiber per cup—all for only 85 calories. Blueberries hold exceptional antioxidant prowess and particular promise for preserving brain health. Eating berries of any kind twice a day lowers blood pressure, increases high-density lipoproteins (HDLs, the “good Cholesterol”), and reduces the risk of dangerous blood clots.

KALE: Kale and its cruciferous cousins cauliflower, broccoli, and Brussels sprouts supply several cancer-busting phytonutrients. This leafy vegetable is an excellent source of the mineral magnesium, important for nervous system functioning, energy production, and defending against free radicals, and it's off the charts in vitamin K, needed for proper blood clotting and bone health.

LENTILS: Eating lentils and other legumes is linked to less risk of cancer and type 2 diabetes, improved blood glucose levels and better weight control. Like all legumes, fresh or canned, lentils serve up ample protein, folate, fiber, and iron. 3 cups of legumes a week are recommended.

QUINOA: This pseudo-grain (really a seed) was the cornerstone of the Incan diet and is still prized for its protein content...liked to that of milk. Quinoa is rich in fiber, iron, potassium and magnesium. It is gluten-free.

BROWN RICE: Brown rice eaters are more likely to weigh less and less likely to have high blood pressure or metabolic syndrome than people who don't eat rice. Brown rice is a whole grain, abundant in magnesium, phytonutrients, and fiber. It is gluten-free.

SARDINES: Sardines offer a boatload of benefits, supplying omega-3 fatty acids that boost heart health by calming inflammation, promoting normal heart rhythm, keeping blood triglycerides in check and thwarting harmful blood clots. Recent research suggests that eating fatty fish like sardines sustains or improves muscle strength in older adults and preserve cognitive functioning with age. Sardines help shore up your skeleton with abundant calcium.

SUNFLOWER SEEDS: These gems are particularly rich in phytosterols, plant compounds that curb cholesterol. For 180 calories, an ounce of sunflower seed kernels is a good source of folate, iron and zinc. Sunflower seeds pack a healthful 37% of the daily value for vitamin E plus hefty doses of selenium and copper, all help shield cells from damage that could lead to heart disease or cancer.

SWEET POTATO: You can't hide its nutrition; that orange flesh broadcasts beta-carotene, the plucky plant compound that squelches free radicals, boosts immunity and which the body converts to vitamin A. A recent Dutch study indicated that older adults with high blood levels of beta-carotene suffered fewer upper respiratory infections like the common cold. They also serve as a fat free source of vitamin E, which helps prevent low-density lipoproteins (LDL's or “bad” cholesterol) from becoming “stickier” and more likely to clog the arteries to your heart and brain.

TEA: Drinking tea can be calming; a recent Chinese study suggests that people who drank the most black tea were 71% less likely to develop Parkinson's disease than those who sipped the least. Researchers in Egypt found that drinking green tea when taking antibiotics significantly increases the drug's effectiveness, even against drug resistant bacteria.

HOW FIT ARE YOU ?

One way to determine your fitness level is to take the Adult Fitness Test from the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, at www.adultfitnessstest.org. It involves three components; aerobic or cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and endurance, and flexibility.

The website provides instructions on how to perform each test. You need a watch with a second hand, a mat or rug, masking tape, and a tape measure or yardstick. It helps to work with a partner. After entering your results on line, the site calculates a fitness score and a ranking within your age group. There are also guidelines on how to improve your fitness with different exercise programs. You can thus get a baseline fitness score and then follow your progress. The test is for healthy adults so be aware of the precautions and consult your doctor first if you have any medical conditions. Stop if you experience any unusual symptoms such as chest discomfort, excessive shortness of breath, or pain.

LIGHT EXERCISE BEATS THE COUCH FOR FIGHTING FATIGUE

Constantly tired? Get up off the couch and move! Two new studies add to the growing body of evidence that light exercise can do more to replenish energy levels and beat the “blahs” than taking it easy. A team of researchers at the University of Georgia found that regular, low intensity workouts-such as a leisurely stroll- boosted participants’ energy levels by 20%, as measured by a commonly used health survey. Light workouts fought fatigue even more, decreasing feelings of fatigue by 65%. The study was published in *Psychotherapy and Psychomatics*. Improvements to both body and mind-particularly for post menopausal woman- were echoed in a study by researchers at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Louisiana. This study concluded that as little as 10 minutes of exercise a day improved not only metabolism and aerobic capacity, but also significantly enhanced the subjects’ quality of life.

The National Institute of Health recommends 150 minutes per week of exercise.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY ALL 5 WARNING SYMPTOMS OF A STROKE ?

According to a recent CDC survey, only about 44% of people can. The 5 symptoms are all sudden...call 911 immediately for anyone with even one of these symptoms.

1. Confusion or trouble speaking
2. Numbness or weakness of the face, an arm or a leg; especially on one side
3. Trouble seeing
4. Trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance
5. Severe headache with no known cause

EXERCISE BY THE YARD

Just 30 minutes a day of physical activity helps keep you healthy .That includes yard work and gardening, which can give you a cardiovascular workout and strengthen your bones and muscles. Digging, weeding, raking, and pushing a mower or spreader can burn more energy than a brisk walk. Here are some tips on how to get more out of your yard work...

- ✓ Space out your yard work rather than doing it in seasonal marathons.
- ✓ Allow at least half an hour for each workout.
- ✓ Use an old fashion manual mower or a power mower that is not self propelled.
- ✓ Use a rake, not a power leaf blower.
- ✓ Change positions and tools often when planting and weeding.
- ✓ Take breaks for other kinds of exercise...think of yard work / gardening as cross training.

IS ORGANIC MORE NUTRITIOUS ?

According to a review of research by the British Nutrition Foundation “few differences in nutrient composition between organic and non-organic food have been reported.” and these few differences are “unlikely to have any impact on human health.” The real reason to buy organic is that organic farming makes use of crop rotation and good animal husbandry to control pests and diseases. The benefits are ecological rather than nutritional.