

TOPHEALTH®

We Care About Your Health

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

DECEMBER 2010

The Power of Plants

New for 2010:

In its Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the USDA recommends “a more plant-based diet.” Cutting back on animal-based foods may help prevent or treat chronic diseases such as heart



disease, diabetes and possibly cancer, but you don't need to go “cold turkey” on meats to reap health benefits.

Top six tips for a more plant-based diet:

1. Replace meat with beans or legumes in strongly flavored dishes.

Prepare a bean Bolognese sauce, use refried beans in tacos or add soy crumbles (with a ground-beef texture) to chili.

2. Try the vegetarian convenience foods in your supermarket's produce section, such as meatless sausage. Add your favorite condiments to veggie burgers and enjoy a hearty treat.

3. Ask your restaurant server for meatless options when eating out. Italian, Asian and Indian cuisines often have many selections.

4. Get free vegetarian recipes on the Internet or from recipe books at the library. Have a vegetarian potluck and ask your guests to bring copies of their recipes with them.

5. Use ingredients with a meaty “umami” (pronounced oo-ma-me) flavor such as mushrooms, tomatoes and soy sauce. Try a baked stuffed Portabella mushroom or tomato bisque soup.

6. Add pureed tofu, avocado or potato to dishes to give a creamy richness to soups or sauces.

TOPHEALTH TO YOU!

Go online for a year-end roundup of *TopHealth* takeaways before the holidays. Plus, take our featured self-assessment at www.personalbest.com/extras/yearend10.



Giving the Gift of Good Health

The holidays can be joyous, but they also lend themselves to frazzled feelings and extra pounds. Why not give your loved ones gifts that can help them stay trim, fit and relaxed throughout the season?

Turn the page for great ideas!

■ DR. ZORBA'S LONGEVITY CORNER

Mind Your Vitamins. New research shows that vitamin D might help keep your brain healthy. **Take a look:**

- Older adults with low levels of vitamin D were more likely to suffer heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, obesity and mental deterioration.
- People with extremely low levels of vitamin D were much more likely to experience a decline in their ability to organize and plan tasks.

Suggestion for brain health? Take at least 1,000 units of vitamin D daily. Ask your health care provider to check your vitamin D level if you're unsure whether you should be taking a supplement.

DOs & DON'Ts of Holiday Weight Gain



Gaining weight over the holidays is easy. To keep the pounds off, **try some of these tips so you'll weigh the same after New Year's as you did before Thanksgiving:**

- ✓ Do be a choosy guest. Attend only the events that you can enjoy without pressure or stress.
- ✓ Don't pick a party just for the food and drinks.
- ✓ Do eat first. Have a light snack — an apple, carrots and celery, broth — before you show up.
- ✓ Don't show up to a buffet on an empty stomach.
- ✓ Do start with a healthy salad, light soup or vegetables.
- ✓ Don't take a full slice of cake or pie. A couple of bites can satisfy your sweet tooth.
- ✓ Do maintain your exercise routine regardless of the weather or a hectic schedule.
- ✓ Don't let other people's requests cause you to lose sight of your health goals.
- ✓ Do stay engaged in conversation.
- ✓ Don't loiter near the food table, where you'll be inclined to eat more.
- ✓ Do keep healthy snacks and lunches at work.
- ✓ Don't feel obligated to try every cookie or candy that's passed around at work.
- ✓ Do cook healthier versions of standard holiday fare.

Remember: Seasonal treats can be part of the fun, but enjoying the holidays is truly about caring and togetherness.

Relief for Cold & Flu Symptoms Without Meds

While over-the-counter medications can help treat cold and flu symptoms, many self-care measures can also bring relief. Consider alternatives for treating your symptoms without popping a pill. *Keep this chart as a quick reference tool for the next time cold or flu symptoms strike:*



SALTY SOLUTIONS

Gargle with a half teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of warm water to relieve a sore or scratchy throat. Try saline nasal spray to rinse away nasal congestion. Premixed spray or nasal irrigators are available at your local drugstore.

STEAM TREATMENT

Create your own sauna by taking a hot shower with the bathroom door closed. The steam can help open airways and moisten irritated sinuses. Alternatively, you can lean over a bowl of steaming water with a towel draped over your head. Adding a teaspoon of menthol rub or a few drops of eucalyptus oil to the water can make breathing easier.

HEALING FOODS

Hot, caffeine-free drinks and soups can soothe throats and ease congestion, thereby preventing sinus infections. Stay well hydrated by drinking at least 64 ounces per day. Hard candy or tea with honey may help quiet persistent coughing.

HOT OR COLD?

Apply hot, moist compresses on cheeks and sinuses to ease pain caused by congestion. Cold compresses can make you feel more comfortable when you have a fever.

GET YOUR REST

A good night's sleep boosts the immune system and gives the body time to heal. If a stuffy nose keeps you awake, prop up your head with an extra pillow and use a warm mist humidifier to moisten the air.

➔ **BABY CARE:** Cold medications for infants have recently been discontinued. A number of pain relief products have also been recalled. Fortunately, some of the suggestions above (such as a humidifier) can help tiny tots too. Recall information is available at www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm218437.htm.

Get Healthy – Save Money. People who have a healthy diet and remain fit can save a lot of money on life and health insurance as well as co-pays and out-of-pocket expenses. Keeping your blood pressure down and your blood sugar stable means fewer trips to the doctor and fewer prescriptions for expensive medications. As an added benefit, you'll feel great and have more energy.

Attitude Counts? Would you believe that changing your attitude can lower your cancer risk? But how? A recent study found that people who had fatalistic thoughts about cancer — “Everything causes cancer” or “There’s nothing I can do anyway” — were less likely to take cancer prevention measures which could save their lives. **TopHealth takeaway:** Lifestyle changes can help control cancer risk — try healthful eating, exercising, quitting tobacco, curbing or quitting alcohol use, and getting proper screenings from your health care provider.

“The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, nor to worry about the future, but to live the present moment wisely and earnestly.” ~ Buddha

Giving the Gift of Good Health

Ideas for Exercise & Movement:

- Gym membership
- Series of tennis or golf lessons
- Gift certificate from an athletic shoe or sporting goods store
- Consultation with a personal trainer
- Exercise DVD or active video game
- Membership in a hiking or outdoor exploration club

Ideas for Healthy Eating:

- Gift certificate from a health food store or restaurant
- Share at the local community farm
- Cooking class or nutrition consultation certificate
- Cookbook with health-conscious recipes
- A subscription to a fruit-of-the-month club or fruit basket
- Gift certificate for farm stand produce

Ideas for Relaxation:

- Yoga class
- CD of calming music
- Meditation app for cell phone or MP3 player
- Weekend at a spa
- Book on healthy lifestyles
- Session of massage or acupuncture



NEXT MONTH: Healthy Weight Goal Setting

WELL CONNECTIONS: Take a QuikRisk™ Self Assessment at www.personalbest.com/extras/yearend10.