FRESH News

February 2014

"Food For Thought"

Eating well is good for your mental and physical health. The brain requires nutrients just like your heart, lungs, and muscles. Here are seven foods that help keep your grey matter happy!

1. Opt for whole grains: Like everything else in your body, the brain cannot work without energy. The ability to concentrate and focus requires an adequate, steady supply of energy in the form of glucose in our blood to the brain. Choosing whole grains with a low glycemic index (GI) helps release glucose slowly into the bloodstream keeping you mentally alert throughout the day. Opt for brown cereals, wheat bran, grainy bread and brown pasta. **2. Eat oily fish:** Essential fatty acids (EFAs) cannot be made by the body and must be obtained through diet. The most effective omega-3 fats occur naturally in oily fish as eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) such as: salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, and sardines. Other good sources include linseeds (flaxseed) oil, pumpkin seeds, walnut oil, and soy beans. They are good for healthy brain function, as well as the heart, joints, and overall wellbeing.
3. Binge on blueberries: Evidence accumulated at Tufts University suggest that the consumption of blueberries may be effective in improving or delaying short term memory loss. **4. Eat more tomatoes:** There is good evidence to suggest that lycopene, a powerful antioxidant found in tomatoes, can help protect against free radical damage to cells which occurs in the development of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. **5. Get a blackcurrant boost:** Vitamin C has long been thought to have the power to increase mental agility. One of the best sources of this vital vitamin are blackcurrants.
6. Pick up pumpkin seeds: Just a handful a day is all you need to get your recommended daily amount of zinc, vital for enhancing memory and thinking skills. **7. Bet on broccoli:** A great source of vitamin K which is known to enhance cognitive function and improve brainpower.

Monthly Crunch

Lemon

How to Select

- Choose lemons that are heavy in size with firm, thin, smooth skin.

How to Store

- Refrigerate lemons for up to 2 weeks.

Nutritional Benefits

- Fat free
- Saturated fat free
- Sodium free
- Cholesterol free
- Low calorie
- High in Vitamin C

Artichoke

How to Select

- Choose plump artichoke heads that are heavy in size with tightly closed leaves.
- Pull back one leaf to check heart for black blemishes.
- During the winter a white, blistered or bronze appearance does not affect quality.

How to Store

- Refrigerate artichokes in plastic bag up to 1 week.
- Keep dry to prevent mold growth.

Nutritional Benefits

- Good source of dietary fiber
- Good source of vitamin C
- Good source of folate
- Good source of magnesium

A BITE OF THE SEASON

Lemon and Cilantro Shrimp

Ingredients

- 20 jumbo shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 6 lemons, zested
- 2 cups chopped fresh cilantro
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced
- Salt to taste
- Ground black pepper to taste

Yields: 4 servings

Preparation

1. In a bowl, toss shrimp with lemon zest and cilantro to coat.
2. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Sprinkle oil with salt, then stir in the shrimp, lemon zest, and cilantro. Cook, stirring every 5 minutes or until shrimp is opaque. Transfer to a serving bowl, drizzle with remaining oil, lemon zest, and olive oil from the skillet. Squeeze lemon juice over shrimp, season with pepper, and serve immediately.

Find this recipe and others at http://www.allrecipes.com

Mushroom Artichoke Sandwiches

Ingredients

- 1 (12 inch) French baguette
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 12 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 (14 ounce) can quartered artichoke hearts in water, drained
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 teaspoons garlic and onion seasoning
- Salt and pepper to taste

Yields: 2 sandwiches

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Slice the baguette in half lengthwise, split open, and toast in the preheated oven until lightly browned, 7 to 9 minutes.
3. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat, and cook and stir the mushrooms and artichoke hearts until the mushrooms have given up their liquid and have started to brown, about 10 minutes. Stir in the Parmesan cheese, garlic and onion seasoning, and salt and pepper, and cook and stir until the mixture has thickened, about 5 more minutes.
4. Fill the toasted bread with the mushroom filling, close the sandwich, cut in two, and serve.

Find this recipe and others at http://www.allrecipes.com

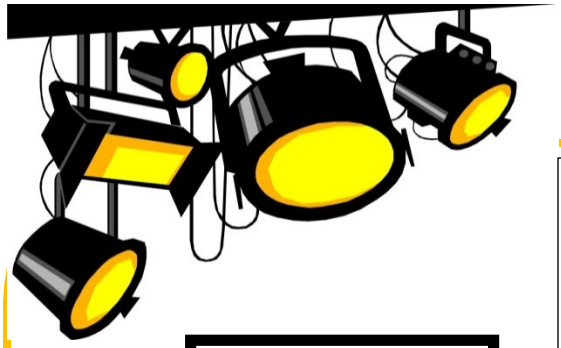
Champions for Change
Arizona Nutrition Network

Below are fruit and veggie trivia questions to ask students:

1. I am a shiny fruit and I come in red, green and even yellow. "An _____ a day keeps the doctor away."
2. I look like a miniature tree. I am green and fluffy on the top and have a light green stem.
3. I look like a mini cabbage. I am round, green and about the size of a golf ball.
4. I have a tan, rough-textured skin, but am light orange on the inside. I am round and am often included in a fruit salad.
5. I am a lot like an orange. I am the same color, but a little bit smaller.
6. I have a dark green skin, but am very light on the inside. You can make pickles out of me.
7. I am a yellow vegetable. I can come on a cob, frozen or as kernels in a can.
8. I am a huge, juicy fruit. I am green on the outside and red or pink on the inside with black seeds!
9. I am leafy and green. You can find me in a salad or on top of your favorite sandwich.
10. I am an orange, crunchy vegetable and rabbits love me.
11. I am round and can be white, yellow or red (purple). Your mom probably cries when she chops me!
12. I am watery, crunchy and green. I have leafy tops and even have ribs!
13. I can either be green, red or yellow. I am hollow on the inside with many seeds. You can find me in fajitas too!
14. I am considered "smelly" but very flavorful. I can also be ground into a spice! I have many cloves inside one bulb.
15. I am soft, red and used to make ketchup, salsa, pizza sauce, and many more things too!

Answer Key:
1. Apple 2. Broccoli 3. Brussels Sprouts 4. Cantaloupe 5. Tangerine 6. Cucumbers 7. Corn 8. Watermelon 9. Lettuce 10. Carrots 11. Onion 12. Celery 13. Bell peppers 14. Garlic 15. Tomatoes

For more fun games, visit EatWellBeWell.org.



In the Spotlight

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The School Food Team would like to take the opportunity to proudly introduce Amal Hammoud, Nutritionist, with Arizona Nutrition Network (AzNN). Amal provides nutrition expertise to the AzNN and partners in the areas of technical assistance, training, curriculum and lesson plan development. For nutrition education resources and tips visit the AzNN website at www.eatwellbewell.org.

Who they are:
AzNN is a program of the Arizona Department of Health Services that promotes health and nutrition to people who are participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or who are eligible to participate.

Their mission:
To shape food consumption in a positive way, promote health, and reduce disease among all people living in Arizona.

What they do: The Arizona Nutrition Network helps its partners to provide nutrition education through statewide campaigns and informational materials.

How they work: The Arizona Nutrition Network is an Arizona program with statewide partners that include health departments, Native American tribes, school districts, food banks, and non-profit agencies.

Tasty Tidbits

February is…

National Cherry Month

National Food Days & Weeks in February:

3rd National Carrot Day
4th Homemade Soup Day
9th – 15th National Pancake week
16th National Almond Day
20th Clam Chowder Day
27th National Strawberry Day

Local Produce in February:

Fruits: Red Blush Grapefruit, Lemons, Canary Melons, Blood Oranges, Mandarin Oranges, Navel Oranges, Minneola Tangelos, Orlando Tangelos.

Vegetables: Artichokes, Arugula, Asparagus, Beets, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Cucumber, Collard Greens, Kale, Lettuce, Radishes, Spinach, Swiss Chard, Turnip.

FRESH FRUIT & VEGETABLE PROGRAM

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