



THE Wellness JOURNEY

on the road to good health

March 2009

A MONTHLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER TO EDUCATE, INFORM AND MOTIVATE PARENTS, TEACHERS AND CAREGIVERS AND ENCOURAGE THEIR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AS THEY REINFORCE THE INFORMATION YOUTH RECEIVE THROUGH WELLNESS JOURNEY PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVITIES.

This spring, go green!

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When it comes to healthy eating, it's a great idea to go green. Green fruits and vegetables are loaded with vitamins and minerals and offer a host of health benefits.

Most vegetables are nutrient dense and loaded with good-for-you nutrients, but green vegetables and leafy greens pack a pile of health benefits into two important factors: flavonoids and folate.

Flavonoids are natural plant-based compounds. They have been shown to benefit the cardiovascular system, including lowering LDL cholesterol, reducing the risk of blood clots that lead to stroke and heart attack, and decreasing the body's inflammatory immune responses. Flavonoids also help keep arteries flexible. Two of the richest sources of flavonoids are green beans and broccoli.

Folate is a B vitamin that helps cells regenerate. While it helps in the production of healthy blood cells and the treatment of anemia, it is also a needed component in the making of DNA, the building blocks of cells. By preventing changes to DNA it also aids in the prevention of many types of cancer. Clinical studies have also shown that a lack of folate increases the risk for Alzheimer's, depression, and other forms of mental fatigue. Some of the best green food sources of folate are spinach, kale and asparagus.

More benefits to greens!

Green beans are high in Vitamins A and C, two potent anti-oxidants which do everything from protect us against cancer-causing free radicals, to promoting [collagen and elastin](#) production in the skin to help fight signs of aging.

Broccoli, while high in flavonoids, also contains important phytonutrients that aid in cancer prevention. Broccoli is high in calcium and vitamin C and in fiber that helps cleanse the colon and detoxify your system.

Spinach is not only packed full of folate, it has more than 13 different flavonoids that function as anti-cancer agents. It contains vitamins A and C, two of the most powerful anti-oxidants that also fight cardiovascular disease, cholesterol, and inflammation.

Kale is full of anti-oxidant vitamins A and C, as well as K. Vitamin K is best known for its blood clotting properties, but research has shown it is also important for bone health and for protecting us from free radical damage on the cellular level. It is also noted for improving lung function.

Asparagus is high in potassium and has a diuretic effect.

Looking for even more green veggie options?

Avocados, broccolini, Brussels sprouts, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, okra, peas, tomatillos and zucchini – the list goes on! All offer a range of nutritional benefits.

TESSA'S HEALTH TIPS

Brain Food: Eat more fish, which is high in protein, low in fats and loaded with omega 3 fatty acids.

[Sign up](#) now to receive the Wellness Journey Newsletter! You'll find ideas for fun family activities and healthy food choices delivered straight to your inbox each month!

The chances of developing colorectal cancer increase markedly after age 50. More than 90% of people diagnosed with colorectal cancer are older than 50. Know the [symptoms](#).

Accept the challenge & quit smoking today

20 minutes after quitting: Your heart rate and blood pressure drops.

2 weeks to 3 months after quitting: Your circulation improves and your lung function increases.

1 year after quitting: The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

Choose cereals made with whole grains (*Cheerios, Wheaties, Chex, Life, Grape Nuts, Mini Wheats, or Kashi brands*).

Good-for-you green fruits

Also in the produce aisle are all kinds of healthy green fruit choices. Green grapes and green apples may be your “go-to” fruits, but what about kiwifruit, honeydew, limes and green pears? They’re packed with nutritional punch, as well.

Raising green kids

It’s crucial for fruits and vegetables to play a starring role in your child’s meals. Better than any pill or supplement, these are your child’s most readily absorbed source of key vitamins, nutrients and fiber. They’re also one of your child’s best insurance policies against obesity and disease. Here are some ideas to get your child on the fruit and veggie track for life.

- Set a good example. The most important thing you can do is eat a wide variety of fruits and vegetables yourself. Kids will follow your example.
 - Break out the dips and dressings. Break out some trans-fat free dressing or [bean dip](#) with those broccoli florets and carrot sticks. Or sauté your carrots or Brussels sprouts in a bit of butter with a pinch of brown sugar, honey or balsamic vinegar – the combination of fat with a bit of sweetness is amazing.
 - Take it easy. Forcing a child to eat vegetables almost always backfires. Encourage children to try different foods but don’t require them to eat it. If they get used to the idea of a particular fruit or veggie on their plate, over time they’ll eat it.
 - Keep it simple. Often, too many flavors and textures can be a stumbling block. When it comes to any kid food, simpler is always better.
 - Get your kids involved. Getting kids involved in choosing, growing or cooking the family’s vegetables is a good idea. The more kids are involved in the selection and cooking process, the more excited they’ll be about what is on their plate.
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Log on to learn more!

"Go Green... With Veggies That Is! Green Vegetables Hold Keys to Health and Vitality!" - food-facts.suite101.com

"Eat Green Vegetables for Health: Healthy Eating from Vegetable Bounty" - food-facts.suite101.com

<http://food-home.kaboose.com/veggie-lover.html>

Super Snack

Ladybugs on a Log

2 celery stalks
2 tablespoons light cream cheese
2 tablespoons dried cranberries
½ teaspoon cinnamon

Wash and cut celery about 3 inches long. Spread cream cheese over celery. Place dried cranberries on the cream cheese. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

GET MOVING

March is a great month to get outside and get moving. As the days warm up, pull those bikes and inline skates out of storage.

Use the added daylight for a family game of basketball in the driveway, or a walk around the block.

Look for robins and the early signs of flowers in local parks and along the trails.

Get ready for baseball and softball season with a game of catch.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Healthy Lifestyles Conference

Comfort Suites, Burlington, Iowa
Wednesday, April 29th
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

For more information or to sign up, contact Nancy Hahn, 385-6523 or hahnn@hchc.org

Youth soccer

Sign up at the Mt. Pleasant Park & Rec Department, 385-1475.