



Nutrition News You Can Use

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Cut back on liquid calorie intake

As you head off into the summer sun and begin to thirst for a nice, tall, cool drink, consider this... High-calorie beverages sweetened with sugar such as: soft drinks, fruit drinks, and fruit punch may be a bigger culprit than food itself, when it comes to weight loss.

Over the last 30 years, there has been a daily per capita increase of 150-300 calories and a corresponding increase in overweight and obese Americans. Researchers have found that liquid calories do not provide the same satiety as calories from solid food and theorize that the increase weight gain could be linked to an increase in liquid calorie intake. Two recently published studies have examined liquid calorie intake of adults and children and teens. The adult study looked at liquid calorie intake of overweight and obese adults. It was conducted at four sites – Louisiana State University's School of Public Health, John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Duke University and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Researchers analyzed the dietary intake (liquid and solid calorie intake) of 800 subjects that were weighed before monitoring began (baseline), and after 6 months and 18 months of monitoring. They found that the liquid calories subjects consumed fell into seven categories, based on calorie content and nutritional composition:

- Sugar-sweetened beverages (regular soft drinks, fruit drinks, fruit punch, or high-calorie beverages sweetened with sugar)
- Diet drinks (diet soda and other "diet" drinks sweetened with artificial sweeteners)
- Milk (whole, 2%, 1%, and skim milk)
- 100% juice
- Coffee and tea with sugar
- Coffee and tea without sugar
- Alcoholic beverages

At baseline, subjects consumed approximately 20% of their calories (356 calories/day) as liquid calories and sugar-sweetened beverages were the leading source of liquid calories (131 calories). They were given dietary information and physical activity tips to help them lose weight. The main finding of the study was that reducing liquid calorie intake resulted in a greater weight loss than reducing solid calorie intake. Subjects who decreased their liquid calorie intake by 100 calories per day lost 0.67 pounds at 6 months and 0.44 pounds at 18 months. Those who decreased their intake of sugar-sweetened beverages by one serving per day (12 ounces or approximately 140 calories/day) lost the most weight – 1.1 pounds at 6 months and 1.5 pounds at 18 months. Lead researchers Dr. Liwei Chen and Dr. Benjamin Caballero recommended adults reduce their intake of sugar-sweetened beverages either as a way to lose weight or avoid excess weight gain. The entire study was published in the April 2009 issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

The second study examined the liquid calorie intake of approximately 3,000 children and teens between the ages of 2-19. The data is from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) national survey called the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) that contains detailed questions

about diet. The most recent NHANES covers the years 2003-2004. The results showed that this age group consumed approximately 2,100 calories per day of which 255 calories came from sugar-sweetened beverages. Sugar-sweetened beverages were identified as regular soda, sports drinks, fruit drinks, and punches, low-calorie drinks, sweetened tea, and other sweetened beverages. Lead researcher Claire Wang and colleagues analyzed the data and found that when the children eliminated the sugar-sweetened beverages from their diet, they did not make up these calories by eating or drinking other food or beverage items. Wang stated "The evidence is now clear that replacing these liquid calories with calorie-free beverage alternative both at home and in schools represents a key strategy to eliminate excess calories and prevent childhood obesity."

So what can we do to address the excess intake of 'liquid calories'?

- *Go with water.* Women should drink up to 9 servings of water a day and men should consume about 13 servings per day.
- *Unsweetened coffee and tea.* As long as you are not adding any type of sweetener, coffee and tea can have some positive health benefits. Consume no more than 4 servings of coffee and 8 servings of tea per day.
- *Skim/lowfat milk or fortified unsweetened soy drinks.* Consume 2 to 3 servings daily.
- *Diet soft drinks and coffee or tea sweetened with artificial sweetener.* Even though these drinks are calorie free, they may condition a preference for sweetness. Because of this, they are to be used in moderation – no more than 4 servings per day.

Keep in mind that obesity is a serious complex problem that is best addressed by living a balanced lifestyle. Consume a variety of foods and beverages in moderation and engage in regular physical activity. Remember ALL calories count, regardless of their source.

Healthy eating - Healthy you!

Increasingly, consumers want fast, easy and good-tasting foods to fit a busy lifestyle. Whether it's fast-food, take-out or a sit-down restaurant, eating out has become part of the American lifestyle.

Today, food is available almost everywhere we go – schools, businesses, convenience stores, bookstores, supermarkets, vending machines, sports and cultural events and recreation centers. Even fitness centers offer food and drink.

The following tips will help you make wise food choices for Healthy Eating, Healthy You.

- Take time to look over the menu and make careful selections.
- Choose fried foods only sometimes – go for grilled, broiled or steamed foods more often.
- Order the regular or kid-size portion instead of the mega-size serving.
- Make milk or low-fat shake your beverage of choice for an extra calcium boost.
- Try a side salad instead of fries.
- Split your order. Share fries or an extra large sandwich with a friend.
- Boost the nutrients in all kinds of sandwiches by adding tomato, peppers and other vegetables.
- In place of fries or fried onions rings, order corn on the cob, green beans, baked beans or rice.
- A baked potato offers more fiber and fewer calories than fries; just



go easy on the sour cream and butter. Top your potato with broccoli, a small amount of cheese or salsa.

- At the deli or sub shop, choose lean beef, ham, turkey or chicken on whole-grain bread.
- For a lighter meal, order an appetizer for your entrée.
- Go easy on condiments, special sauces and dressings on sandwiches and salads. Ask for mustard, ketchup, salsa or low-fat spreads and dressings.
- Enjoy ethnic foods such as Chinese stir-fry, vegetable-stuffed pita or Mexican burrito. Go easy on the sour cream, cheese and guacamole.
- At the salad bar, pile on the dark leafy greens, carrots, peppers and other fresh vegetables. Lighten up on mayonnaise-based salads and high fat toppings.
- Restaurant portions too large? Take home half the main course for another meal.
- Order salad with dressing on the side so you can control how much is added.
- Eat your lower-calorie food first. Soup or salad is a good choice.
- Pass up all-you-can-eat specials, buffets and unlimited salad bars, if you tend to eat too much.
- If you do choose the buffet, fill up on salad and vegetables first. Take no more than two trips, and use the small plate which holds less food.
- Try a smoothie made with juice, fruit and yogurt for a light lunch or snack.
- For dessert, choose fresh fruit or a container of fruit chunks if available. Or, share dessert with a friend.
- If you eat pizza, top it with vegetables. If you add meat, make it lean ham, Canadian bacon, chicken or shrimp.
- Instead of a doughnut, order an English muffin, bagel or a plain soft-baked pretzel. Lightly spread the cream cheese or margarine – or just use jam or jelly.
- Be size wise about muffins, bagels, croissants and biscuits. A jumbo muffin has twice the fat grams and calories as the regular size.
- Eat yogurt and fruit for a quick on-the-run breakfast to start your day.
- Build a better breakfast sandwich –replace the bacon or sausage with Canadian bacon or ham and order your sandwich on an English muffin, bagel or bun.
- For a good, quick breakfast, eat dry cereal and milk. Make the cereal whole-grain or bran and you'll get fiber along with B vitamins and complex carbohydrates.
- Fresh fruit is already packaged to go. Eat a variety of seasonal fruits.

Produce safety tips

In light of recent contaminated produce outbreaks, the FDA is emphasizing advice to consumers on how to reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses from fresh produce.

Buying

Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.

When selecting fresh-cut produce—such as half a watermelon or bagged mixed salad greens—choose only those items that have been refrigerated or surrounded by ice.

Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat, poultry, and seafood products when packing them to take home from the market.

Storage

Strawberries, lettuce, herbs, mushrooms, and other perishable fruits and vegetables can best be maintained by storing in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40 degrees F or below. If you're not sure whether an item should be refrigerated to maintain quality, ask your grocer.

All produce that is purchased pre-cut or peeled should be refrigerated within two hours to maintain both quality and safety.

Keep refrigerators set at 40 degrees F or below. Use a refrigerator thermometer to check!

Preparation

Many pre-cut, bagged produce items like lettuce are pre-washed. If so, it will be stated on the packaging. This pre-washed, bagged produce can be used without further washing.

As an extra measure of caution, you can wash the produce again just before you use it. Pre-cut or pre-washed produce in open bags should be washed before using.

Begin with clean hands. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.

Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits and vegetables before preparing or eating. Produce that looks rotten should be discarded.

All unpacked fruits and vegetables, as well as those packaged and not marked pre-washed, should be thoroughly washed before eating. This suggestion includes produce grown conventionally or organically at home, or produce that is purchased from a grocery store or farmer's market. Wash fruits and vegetables under running water just before eating, cutting, or cooking.

Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it is still important to wash it first.

Washing fruits and vegetables with soap or detergent or using commercial produce washes is not recommended.

Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush. Drying produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel may further reduce bacteria that may be present.

Separation

Keep fruits and vegetables that will be eaten raw separate from other foods, such as raw meat, poultry, or seafood, and from kitchen utensils used for those products.



Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot water and soap between the preparation of raw meat, poultry, and seafood products and the preparation of produce that will not be cooked.

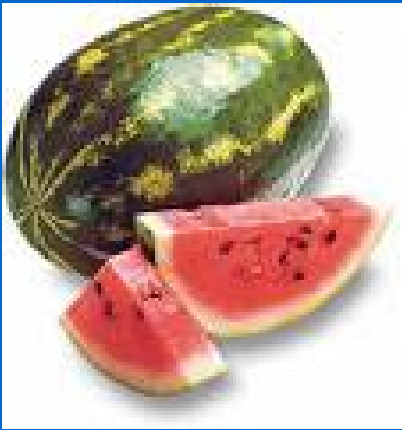
For added protection, kitchen sanitizers can be used on cutting boards and countertops periodically. Try a solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach to one quart of water.

If you use plastic or other nonporous cutting boards, run them through the dishwasher after use

Watermelon 101

History

Going back 5000 years to the ancient history of Egypt, watermelons played an important role in the burial tombs of kings to nourish them in the afterlife. The watermelon originated from the Kalahari Desert of Africa and then made its way along the Mediterranean Sea and by the 10th century it could be found in China. It is uncertain when the watermelon made its way to the United States, but food historian John Egerton believes it came with the African slaves. Today the U.S. is the fourth ranked country in the world growing watermelons with 44 states growing the fruit, predominantly in Florida, Texas, California, Georgia, and Arizona.



Watermelon Facts

Watermelons are grown in rows in sand or sandy loams. Bees pollinate the watermelon plant and one month later a vine is produced. A melon is produced and is ready to be harvested within 90 days. The harvest is done by hand due to the watermelon's fragile surface. The peak production occurs in May, June, July, and August, but watermelons can be found from April through November.

There are many varieties of watermelons and 1200 varieties are grown worldwide. In the United States, about 200-300 varieties can be found of which 50 are popular.

How do you choose a watermelon?

- The watermelon should be firm and free from bruises, cuts, and dents.
- Watermelons consist of 92% water. Therefore, the watermelon should weigh from 5-30 lbs.
- A creamy yellow spot indicates the area where the watermelon was sitting on the ground and was ripening in the sun.

Nutrition Facts per 1 cup: calories: 51, carbohydrates: 11.5 g, protein: 1 g, fat: <1 g, cholesterol: 0 mg, fiber: <1 g, sodium: 3 mg, potassium: 186 mg, vitamin A: 59 RE, vitamin C: 15 mg

Make your salad pop!

Sometimes people think green salad = lettuce = blah. Not so. The only limits to exciting salads are limits of the imagination.

Begin with salad greens. Enhance the eye appeal and nutrition of a salad by adding colorful fruits and vegetables. Keep it light by limiting the amount of salad dressing to about 1 tablespoon per 1 1/2 to 2 cups of greens. Then make the flavor really POP by adding some of the following ingredients. You can either put them atop or mix them in with your salad.

While some of these salad additions are higher in fat than others, just small amounts (about 1 tablespoon) can give extra flavor without too many calories. Also, many provide a nutrition boost! Add from one to three of these flavor accents, depending on how many other ingredients are in your salad.

1. Artichoke hearts: marinated

Enjoy the tangy taste of sliced marinated artichoke hearts in your salad. It's as easy as opening a jar and adding as desired.

2. Cheese: Parmesan

If your experience with Parmesan cheese is limited to shaking it from a can, try using a vegetable peeler to shave about a tablespoon per serving from a block of cheese. Or, sprinkle freshly grated Parmesan on salads. As just a small amount kicks up the flavor, you may find you can afford trying some of the more expensive Parmesan cheeses. Add flavor and bone-building calcium, too!

Cook's Tip: Storing Cheeses

According to the American Dairy Association <www.ilovecheese.com>, larger blocks of cheese tend to keep longer than shredded cheese.

3. Croutons

Add crunch, flavor and fiber with homemade whole grain croutons. Enjoy the recipe at the end of this article.

4. Dried fruit: cherries, cranberries, raisins

Add these dried fruits for their flavor. Benefit from their antioxidants that may help protect against cancer and heart disease.

5. Fresh herbs: basil, chives, dill, parsley

Toss small basil leaves or chopped larger ones in with your greens. Try chopped fresh dill. Add some minced chives or parsley. Start with about a teaspoon of herbs per person and adjust according to taste preference. Herbs boost flavor without increasing calories. Researchers also are finding many culinary herbs (both fresh and dried) have antioxidants that may help protect against such diseases as cancer and heart disease.

6. Fresh fruit: apples and pears

Slice apples with their skins into salads. The skin adds eye appeal and important dietary fiber, as well. Research shows an apple a day may indeed help keep the doctor away by helping reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer.

Some commonly available apples that may be especially tasty in salads include Braeburn, Fuji, Gala, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Jonathan, Red Delicious and Winesap.

The juicy sweetness of pear slices, skin included, also tastes great in salads. Pears continue to ripen after they're picked. To determine if a pear is ripe, gently press it at the stem end. Most types yield to pressure when ripe.



To speed the ripening of pears, put them in a ripening bowl or in a loosely closed brown paper bag at room temperature. Or, just set them in a pretty bowl on your counter and enjoy their appearance as they ripen. Plastic bags don't work for ripening. Refrigerate when ripe in an open or a perforated plastic bag in your refrigerator crisper drawer. (If you don't have access to commercial perforated bags, use a sharp object to make several small holes in a regular plastic bag.)

Store fruits in a refrigerator crisper drawer separate from the one in which you store vegetables. Fruits give off ethylene gas which can shorten the storage life of vegetables. Some vegetables give off odors that can be absorbed by fruits and affect their quality.

For more information on handling fresh fruits and vegetables, check "Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for Better Taste" by the University of California, Davis Postharvest Technology Research and Information Center at postharvest.ucdavis.edu/Produce/Storage/FVstorage.pdf and "Proper Care and Handling of Fruits and Vegetables from Purchase" by Penn State University at foodsafety.cas.psu.edu/PDFs/ProprCareFrt=Veg10=31=00.pdf

Cook's Tip: Keep Cut Fruit from Browning

Keep cut fruits, such as apples, pears, bananas and peaches, from turning brown by coating them with an acidic juice such as lemon, orange or pineapple juice. Or use a commercial anti-darkening preparation with fruits, such as Ever-Fresh (TM) or Fruit-Fresh (R), and follow the manufacturer's directions.

Cut fruits as close to serving time as possible. Cover and refrigerate cut fruit until ready to serve. Refrigerate peeled/cut fruits and vegetables so the TOTAL time they're at room temperature is less than 2 hours.

7. Olives: black or green

Add extra oomph with olives. For ease of eating and to distribute their flavor throughout the salad, pit and slice olives before placing them in your salad (see directions below for pitting olives).

About a tablespoon of olives per serving should be sufficient. According to the USDA National Nutrient Database <www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/index.html>, a tablespoon of canned ripe olives provides about 10 calories.

Experiment with different types for different flavors. For example, many people enjoy the rich flavor of kalamata olives, a black olive frequently found in Greek salad, pasta and pizza recipes. (By the way, did you know olives are a FRUIT?)

Cook's Tip: Pitting Olives

Several methods have been suggested for pitting olives. Here are two of the most common -- you might experiment to find which is most convenient for you.

1. If you already have a cherry pitter, you might try this on your olives also. This is the easiest method for pitting olives. Cherry/olive pitters are available in the kitchen gadgets section of many stores. Or, you can search for a source on the Internet by putting the words "cherry/olive pitter" into your favorite search engine.
2. A second method is use a rolling pin to lightly roll over olives to loosen the pits. Then pick out the pits. The resulting pitted olive may not look as good with this method as when you use a cherry/olive pitter.

8. Nuts: toasted almonds and walnuts

Though almonds are a source of fat and calories, they contain mostly unsaturated fat that may help protect against heart disease. They also provide vitamin E, a nutrient that may be good for your heart. Almonds have about 7 calories apiece.

Likewise, the fat in walnuts is mostly unsaturated. Walnuts also provide heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. A tablespoon or two of walnuts adds just 50 to 100 calories to a meal.

Toast nuts to crisp their texture and bring out their rich aroma and taste. See toasting directions at the end of this article.

For more information about using nuts in recipes, check the International Tree Nut Council's Web site at www.nuthealth.org/consumer/recipebook.pdf

9. Onions: red

Slip thin slices of sweet red onions into salads.

Cook's Tip: Storing Onions

Aboutproduce.com <www.aboutproduce.com> recommends storing onions before they're peeled at room temperature in a "cool, dry well-ventilated area" and "Do not store whole onions in plastic."

"Cut onions can be stored in sealable containers and refrigerated for 2 to 3 days," aboutproduce.com says.

10. Oranges

Sliced oranges juice up the flavor of salads and add brightness with their sunny color. Plus, they give you a healthy dose of vitamin C and folate.

11. Sunflower seeds: toasted

Add some vitamin E by tossing a tablespoon of sunflower seeds per serving into

salads. One tablespoon provides about 50 calories and mostly unsaturated fat. Toast them for extra flavor -- directions are given at the end of this article.

12. Radishes

Thinly slice radishes and sprinkle into salads for their crisp texture and peppery flavor.

If the leafy radish tops are attached, remove them before storing. Radishes don't keep as well if their tops are left on. Store unwashed radishes in an open or perforated plastic bag in a refrigerator crisper drawer that is separate from the one in which you store fruits. Wash radishes and trim their roots just before using.

(Here's a fun fact on radishes from aboutproduce.com -- Radishes were so highly esteemed by the ancient Greeks that they made small gold replicas of them in connection with Apollo worship.)

Homemade Whole Wheat Croutons

Whole grain bread*

Olive oil OR olive oil-flavored/garlic-flavored cooking spray

* If desired, use a low sodium bread; check with your grocery store or local health food stores as to availability in your area.

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

If using olive oil: Lightly brush top side of bread with olive oil. Cut into 1/2-inch cubes and spread in a single layer on an ungreased baking sheet.

If using a cooking spray: Cut bread into 1/2-inch cubes and spread in a single layer on an ungreased baking sheet. Spray bread cubes lightly with an olive oil-flavored or garlic-flavored cooking spray.

2. Bake on the middle shelf of the oven for 10 minutes or until browned and crisp.
3. Enjoy! These taste best if eaten the same day they're made.

Toasted Nuts or Sunflower Seeds

Oven Method

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Toast walnuts BEFORE chopping them into smaller pieces. Almonds may be toasted whole, sliced or slivered.
2. Place nuts/seeds in a single layer in an ungreased shallow pan or RIMMED baking sheet such as a cookie sheet or jelly roll pan. (DO NOT use a baking sheet without sides. You may have nuts or seeds all over the oven if you accidentally tip the sheet when removing it from the oven.)
3. Bake 5 to 10 minutes or until they are GOLDEN brown. A toasted nut or seed may look more GOLDEN than BROWN. They will continue to brown slightly after they're removed from the oven. Stir once or twice or shake the pan during toasting to aid in even browning. Sliced and slivered almonds will toast faster than whole almonds.
4. Remove from pan to cool.

NOTE: The first time you try toasting nuts or seeds, it's better to err on the side of under-toasting than over-toasting. As nuts and seeds toast, you'll notice a change in their fragrance as well as their color.

Stove-top Toasting

Stove-top toasting works well for small batches of nuts. With this method, the parts of the nuts or seeds touching the skillet may become darkest, unlike the oven method where the nuts/seeds become more of an overall golden color.

1. Toast walnuts BEFORE chopping them into smaller pieces. Almonds may be toasted whole, slivered or sliced.
2. Heat nuts or seeds in a dry, heavy skillet over medium heat for 1 to 2 minutes or until they're golden brown and they give off a rich, toasty fragrance. Watch closely when using this method as it's easy to burn them. Whole almonds will take longer than slivered or sliced forms.
3. Stir or toss nuts or seeds frequently for even toasting.
4. Remove from pan to cool.

Storing Toasted Nuts and Sunflower Seeds

Rather than toast just a handful of nuts or seeds for one meal, make extra for later use. Store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Use within 1 to 2 weeks for best quality.

Adapted from "Salad Toppers" by Alice Henneman, University of Nebraska