



## The Wellness Watch

promoting healthy lifestyles

November 2014—Volume XI

### Fiber for Health

Fiber is the indigestible portion of plant-based foods. It provides many benefits to our health.

**RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT 35 GRAMS OR MORE OF FIBER A DAY IS NEEDED TO HELP REDUCE THE RISK OF CHRONIC DISEASE, INCLUDING HEART DISEASE.**

#### SOME HEALTH BENEFITS OF FIBER

Numerous studies have consistently shown that a diet high in fiber and low in saturated (bad) fat:

- Reduces the incidence of certain cancers.
- Helps prevent or alleviate constipation.
- Reduces the risk of diverticulosis, a condition in which small pouches form in the colon wall.
- Can decrease the risk of developing diabetes by 28 percent. (by adding fiber-rich grains and cereals)
- Can lower cholesterol and decrease the risk of heart disease.
- Can help prevent weight gain by providing bulk (feeling fuller and eating less).

#### FITTING MORE FIBER INTO YOUR DIET

**>Read food labels** to find out the amount of dietary fiber the product contains in each serving.

**>Fill at least half of your plate with vegetables and fruit** — use mostly whole-grain breads and cereals. See [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov) for more information.

**>Start the day with whole-grain cereal that contains at least 5 grams of fiber per serving.** Add raisins, bananas or berries, which are all good sources of fiber.

**>Eat vegetables raw** — cooking vegetables may reduce fiber content by breaking down some of the fiber. When you do cook vegetables, cook only until they are tender but still firm to the bite.

**>Avoid peeling fruits and vegetables** — eating the skin and membranes ensures that you get every bit of fiber. Fruit and vegetable juice contain very little fiber.

**>Eat a lot of foods that contain unprocessed grains** — examples include bulgur, couscous or kasha and whole-grain breads, cereals and pasta.

**>Add beans to soups, stews and salads** a couple of times a week. Substitute legume-based dishes for those made with meat.

**>Keep fresh and dried fruit on hand for snacks.**

Note: A fiber supplement can help provide some fiber, but should not be a substitute for fiber-rich foods. Eating a wide variety of foods provides several types of fiber. High fiber foods also contain antioxidant vitamins, phytonutrients and other nutrients that may help reduce the risk of chronic disease.

#### SLOW GOING

A word of caution: Increase the fiber content of your diet slowly by adding a few grams at a time to allow your digestive tract to adjust; otherwise, abdominal cramps, gas, bloating, and diarrhea or constipation may result. To help minimize these effects:

- Drink at least 2 liters (8 cups) of fluid daily.
- Don't cook dried beans in the same water you used to soak them.
- Use enzyme products that help digest fiber, such as "Beano" or "Say Yes to Beans."

*Adapted from Publication No. (FDA) 98-2313 written by Ruth Papazian*

### Tech Corner

#### Relax Melodies: Sleep and Yoga



As we head into the holiday season it's easy to get overly busy and stressed. **Relax Melodies** will help you sleep like never before! Also, use it while exercising during yoga or meditation sessions, during a quick nap or just to relax and de-stress!

Ratings: 4.5 out of 5 for iPhone and Android.

# Keeping Healthy through the Holidays

Holidays are a time to enjoy food, family and festivities. But too much celebrating can lead to overeating, too little exercise and stress. Start planning now to work healthy choices into your holiday activities. There are many tips but let's start with de-stressing. Holidays can be a stressful time. You may be working, and feel the stress of managing your work duties along with additional commitments to your friends and family. You may feel the financial stress of gifts and the interpersonal stress of conflicts. Try to anticipate sources of stress and develop a plan to manage them. This may involve committing to fewer get-togethers or setting a tighter budget. Don't feel guilty; you have to take care of yourself before you can take care of others. More tips coming in December.

## Featured Food: Sweet Potatoes

Not only are sweet potatoes readily available, inexpensive, and delicious, they have many other benefits for your health.

- ◆ High in Fiber: A 1-cup, cubed serving provides 4 grams of fiber with only 144 calories.
- ◆ They are vitamin and mineral packed bundles: High in Vitamin B6 and carotenoids like beta carotene, good source of Vitamin C, Vitamin D, Iron, Magnesium and Potassium.
- ◆ Sweet potatoes are naturally sweet-tasting but their natural sugars are slowly released into the bloodstream, helping to ensure a balanced and regular source of energy, without the blood sugar spikes linked to fatigue and weight gain.
- ◆ They are versatile. Try them roasted, puréed, steamed, baked, or grilled. You can add them to soups and stews. Grill and place on top of leafy greens for a delicious salad or grilling them with onions and red peppers for amazing sandwich or wrap ingredients. Puree them and add to smoothies and baked goods.

Adapted with permission from [The Life Force Diet](#) by Michelle Schoffro Cook, PhD

### Featured Recipe:

Instead of the usual sugar and fat loaded sweet potato casserole, try this healthier version for a nice change:

#### Oven-Roasted Sweet Potatoes

##### Ingredients

7 cups (1-inch) cubed peeled  
sweet potatoes (about 2 pounds)  
Cooking spray  
1 tablespoon olive oil

3/4 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
4 cups coarsely chopped onion  
1 tablespoon butter, melted



##### Preparation

Preheat oven to 325°.

Place sweet potatoes in a shallow roasting pan coated with cooking spray. Drizzle with oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper; toss to coat. Bake at 325° for 30 minutes. Add onion; stir well. Bake an additional 30 minutes; remove from oven.

Yield: serves 12 (serving size: 1/2 cup)

Nutritional information per serving: Calories 120, Fat 2.4g, (Saturated 0.8g, Monounsaturated 1.1g, Polyunsaturated 0.3g), Protein 1.9g, Carbohydrates 23.5g, Fiber 3.3g, Cholesterol 3mg, Iron 0.6mg, Sodium 168mg, Calcium 29mg.