A Newsletter for the Patients of Healthcare Providers

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Live Healthy—Be Happy

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A Practical Guide to Nutrition & Exercise for Maintaining Health and Vitality

Build Your Body with Proteins

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Healthy proteins are found in these foods:

- **Wild fish:** salmon, sardines, mackerel, herring, cod, snapper, escolar, ahi tuna, mahi mahi and many others. Canned fish provides an inexpensive and healthy protein source for a meal. Some fish are extremely low in fat content. Cold water fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines, and tuna provide Omegs-3 fats that are beneficial to your health.
- Poultry, including chicken, turkey, quail, Cornish hens.
- Wild game, such as deer, moose, and elk
- Grass-fed beef and lamb
- Dairy products, including cottage cheese, plain yogurts, milk, and other cheeses.
- Plant proteins, such as legumes (beans, lentils) and tempeh, miso, and tofu.
- Other excellent protein sources that make great snacks are raw (not roasted or salted) nuts and seeds, such as almonds, walnuts, pecans, cashews, sunflower and pumpkin seeds.

Why Your Body Needs Protein

Wild Salmon— a high quality protein containing healthy Omega-3 fats.

Proteins are essential to our health because of the many vital functions that they perform in our bodies. Here are some of the reasons why we need proteins in our diets:

Proteins Create our Structure
Muscles, tendons, ligaments, cartilage, and bone (including our teeth) are composed of collagen, a strong, fibrous protein tissue. Without adequate protein, we would be unable to repair the damage to these tissues that we incur on a daily basis. Children require adequate protein to grow normally.

Supporting Life Functions
Proteins are the primary component of enzymes, molecules that make possible all of the chemical reactions that our bodies perform 24 hours each day. Enzymes are required to digest our food; to create hormones; to produce energy from the food we eat; to clot our blood; and to perform many other essential life functions.

Protection from Illness
Proteins form an essential component of our immune system. Antibodies that protect us from disease are made from proteins.

Transport
Proteins also transport important substances throughout our bodies. An example is hemoglobin, a transport protein that carries oxygen to all of our cells.

Brain Function
Protein is necessary for the production of brain chemicals that support a positive mood, alertness, good memory, concentration, and restful sleep.

Types of Proteins Found in Foods

Proteins are large molecules composed of **amino acids**. Our body requires about 20 amino acids to perform all of its functions. Although we are able to manufacture some of these amino acids from other amino acids, we cannot make nine amino acids and must obtain them from food. When a protein food contains all nine of these "essential" amino acids, it is classified as a **complete protein**. When a food does not contain adequate quantities of each of these nine amino acids, it is classified as an **incomplete protein**.

All proteins that come from animal sources, including dairy foods and eggs, are complete proteins.

All proteins that come from plant sources, except for soy, are incomplete proteins.

Combining plant proteins is a way to provide adequate quantities of the essential amino acids (see reverse side for details).

Marsha Sendar maintains a private practice in Santa Rosa providing physical therapy services, nutrition consultation, healthy exercise, and stress management instruction, and teaches classes at various locations in Sonoma County. For more information, or to receive a copy of the newsletter, contact Marsha at 707-570-2090, or send an email to marsha@marshasendar.com.

Tips for Preparing Protein Foods

Use care when charbroiling meats because this process can damage their proteins and produce cancer –causing chemicals.

Slow-cooked roasts prepared with vegetables and potatoes are a healthy and delicious way to prepare less expensive, tougher cuts of meat. Set a crock pot on low in the morning, and come home to a delicious dinner.

Pan sauté fish filets in a small amount of olive oil with herbs and spices for a quick and delicious way to prepare fish.

Roast a whole chicken once per week for delicious leftovers.

Ground turkey meat makes delicious burgers. Season them with herbs, and add onions, garlic, and arugula to make a great burger that you can pan sauté or broil.

Obtaining Adequate Protein from a Vegetarian Diet

Vegetarians who consume eggs and dairy products, in addition to plant sources of protein, will have no trouble consuming enough "complete" protein to satisfy their body's protein needs. Vegetarians who do not eat eggs or dairy products (vegans) will need to eat larger quantities of "complementary" proteins and include soy foods in their diet. Complementary proteins are plant protein foods that provide adequate quantities of the essential amino acids when they are combined. They are typically legumes (beans, lentils) and whole grains (rice, corn, whole wheat). Some examples are the traditional combinations of rice and beans, corn and beans, and chickpeas and couscous. Vegans can also consume nuts and seeds to increase protein intake.
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Protein Quality

A word about protein quality: It is best to eat animal protein foods that come from animals that have not been fed growth hormones and antibiotics. The best sources are free-range and organic meats and poultry; wild fish; eggs from free-range chickens, especially those fed Omega-3 feed; and organic dairy products.

Recipe: A Basic Frittata

A frittata is a type of omelet. It is easy to prepare and allows you to be as creative as you wish. A large cast iron frying pan works best because you will be putting the pan in a low broil oven very briefly at the end.

Basic Ingredients:
6-8 eggs, beaten in a bowl with salt and pepper and your favorite herbs
Olive oil (mixing in a little butter when you add the eggs is tasty)
1/3 to 1/2 c. of grated organic cheese - choose your favorite.

Fillings: Anything goes! Here are some ideas:
Chopped red onion
Chopped garlic
Chopped mushrooms, especially shiitakes
Chopped zucchini, while in season
Chopped sweet bell peppers (red, yellow, orange) in season
Chopped swiss chard
Spinach
Sun-dried tomatoes—really adds great flavor
Your favorites herbs and spices

Heat olive oil in cast iron plan over medium flame. Add slower-cooking veggies first, then others. Saute until almost done. Add beaten eggs and grated cheese. Push grated cheese below the surface. Allow eggs to set, moving ingredients around as needed. Once eggs are set, place plan under low broiler for 1-2 min. Keep an eye on it so that the eggs fluff up, but don't burn. A great, quick meal served with a fresh, mixed salad.