

## RESOLUTIONS FOR THE WHOLE YEAR

January 1st is the day most people make New Years Resolutions to be healthier, lose weight, exercise more or quit smoking. Those resolutions only last approximately six weeks and most people fall off the wagon. Instead of making drastic health changes; use a 12 month approach to eating which are small steps to becoming healthy. This can help you make life long changes for the better.

- January → Start by adding more fiber into your diet.
- February → Reduce your intake of saturated fat. Try choosing low-fat or non-fat dairy products.
- March → Remember to celebrate National Nutrition Month! Instead of sweets and junk food choose fruits and veggies.
- April → Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal.
- May → Watch or limit your intake of sodium. Try choosing "low-salt" or "no salt added" crackers, soups, nuts, canned vegetables, soy sauce, prepackaged dinners and deli meats.
- June → Celebrate fruit and vegetable month with extra fruits and vegetables. Also celebrate Louisiana Beef Month by choosing lean beef for meals.
- July → The recommendation for exercise is 2½ hours per week. Start exercising slowly and increase your time, distance and intensity.
- August → When packing you or your kids brown bag lunch, make sure it's healthy and a balanced meal.
- September → Increase your fiber intake and eat less saturated fat, trans fats and cholesterol.
- October → Try to eat a meatless meal each week. Plan menus that include pasta dishes, bean dishes, whole grains and a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- November → As the holidays approach try low-fat cooking techniques. Modify your favorite recipes in order to lower the fat and calorie content.
- December → The holiday season is in full swing. Try to maintain your weight by sticking to exercise, regular diet and

## 7 HEALTHY VALENTINE'S DAY TIPS

Valentine's Day is right around the corner and most people celebrate the occasion by either going out to dinner or buying candy for their sweetie. If going out to dinner will be on your agenda try these seven tips to help you not over do your diet and you can enjoy your Valentine's Day.

- 1—If dining out with your sweetheart, try to keep the bread basket out of your reach.
- 2—Modify your meals to make them healthier.
- 3—Try to eat a small salad either with lunch and dinner or before you eat your entrée.
- 4—Avoid getting appetizers, extras and even desserts if dining out; all those mean extra calories.
- 5—Don't forget about portion control. If dining out, box half of our entrée up. If dining at home, remember to control your intake.
- 6—Do not completely deprive yourself of foods because you will end up over doing it. Moderation is the key.



## SPOTLIGHT ON STRAWBERRIES

Strawberry season is right around the corner. In late February-early March at a farmers market or grocery store near you, Louisiana strawberries will be in supply. Strawberries are very nutritious and are high in antioxidants. The antioxidants in strawberries have been found to decrease the risk of heart disease, cancer and obesity; all good reasons to enjoy strawberries this season.

One-half cup of strawberries have approximately 45 calories, 84 mg of Vitamin C, 26 mg of folate and approximately 4 grams of fiber. They are fat-free too! Louisiana strawberry season runs from late February to mid-May. So make sure to include these Louisiana strawberries in you and your family's diet.

When purchasing strawberries look for berries with a full deep red color, bright luster but firm and plump. Avoid purchasing berries that have mold spots, large uncolored areas or wilted or brown stems. Do not wash berries until you are ready to eat them or use them in dishes as washing them and putting back in the fridge can promote spoilage and mold growth. Strawberries should be used as soon as possible and refrigerate them as soon as you come home from the store. One quart of strawberries yields approximately 3¾ cups of hulled whole berries or 2¼ cups sliced. Strawberries freeze well with or without sugar.



To freeze with sugar, sprinkle sugar over washed whole or sliced berries. Use ½ to ¾ cup sugar to 4-5 cups sliced berries. Turn berries gently with a spoon until all are coated with sugar. Let berries set 5-10 minutes to make their own juice. Add one teaspoon of commercial ascorbic acid to the sugar to protect the color. Pack in moisture proof freezer bags or containers. Fill containers leaving ½ inch headspace and place a crumpled piece of wax paper on top. Seal and label. Freeze.

To freeze berries without sugar, place whole berries in a single layer on a tray or cookie sheet; cover lightly and freeze quickly until firm. Remove from pan and package airtight in moisture proof freezer containers or bags. Freeze.

## CENTSIBLE FOOD BUYS FOR JANUARY-MARCH

|                    |               |                   |   |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|---|
| Dry beans and peas | Broccoli      | Chicken           | Greens (collards, spinach, mustard, turnip) |
| Cabbage            | Cauliflower   | Pork              | Pears                                       |
| Carrots            | Onions        | Shallots          | Apples                                      |
| Sweet potatoes     | Citrus fruits | Irish Potatoes    | Brussels Sprouts                            |
| Beets              | Strawberries  | Beef              | Rutabagas                                   |
| Lettuce            | Radishes      | English peas      |   |
| Fish               | Grapes        | Canned vegetables |   |

## FEBRUARY IS HEART HEALTH MONTH

February is heart health month reminding us to get our hearts checked and make heart healthy dietary choices. The following tips can help you be heart healthy:

- Try to keep total fat intake to about 20-35% of your calories eaten per day. For a person who eats a 2,000 calorie diet, that's 44-78 grams of fat per day.
- Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals, dried beans and peas.
- Try to use low-fat or fat-free dairy products in your diet.
- Use heart healthy cooking methods such as baking, broiling, grilling, steaming, stir-frying.
- Try to reduce your intake of processed and fast foods.
- To increase the omega 3 fatty acids in your diet try to eat fish two times per week.
- Try to decrease the sodium content in your diet.
- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes per day.
- If you are overweight try to lose weight; even a 5-10% weight loss can help with blood pressure numbers, blood sugar and cholesterol.
- Aim for your blood pressure to be less than 120/80 mmHg, cholesterol levels below 200.
- Remember these heart healthy habits for kids: Make sure they get at least 60 minutes of activity per day; get plenty of rest; eat healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, lean meats, fish and poultry, whole grains and low-fat dairy products.
- If your child is over the age of 2; make sure they are drinking low-fat milk.
- For everyone in your family, replace sugar sweetened beverages with water.
- Make sure to not use tobacco products and quit if you smoke or use chew tobacco.

## MARDI GRAS FOOD SAFETY

Mardi Gras is right around the corner and soon the carnival season will kick into high gear with parades, balls and festivities. If you and your family will celebrate the carnival season make sure food poisoning doesn't spoil your good time.

Foodborne illness or food poisoning symptoms often mimic the flu or a 24 hour virus because the symptoms are the same. By following a few food safety tips on the parade route you too, can prevent food poisoning from occurring.

- Have plenty of baby wipes, moist towelettes and hand sanitizer to keep your hands clean.
- Keep perishable foods on ice. Use one ice chest for drinks and the other for foods. Any foods like fried chicken, potato salad, ham, beef, fish or chicken sandwiches, deviled eggs or egg sandwiches must be kept on ice.
- If you are going to grill make sure you keep foods/meat on ice prior to grilling and once cooked put them in the cooler once you are finished with them.
- If you have babies or small children with you on the parade route, be sure to have plenty of supplies (bottles, cups, drinks, food) that they will need.
- If you will visit a street vendor for food items make sure they have proper equipment to keep food hot and refrigerated. Also check the cleanliness of their booth or cart.
- Remember the food safety principles of keep hot food hot; cold food cold; wash hands often; and equipment clean.

## HEALTHY BENEFITS OF NUTS

Nuts are heart healthy and can help reduce the incidence of heart disease. Eating one ounce of nuts more than five times per week can decrease heart disease by 25%.

Most people think that nuts are high in fat but they are high in unsaturated fats. Nuts are good sources of dietary fiber, magnesium, copper, folic acid, potassium and Vitamin E. Omega 3 fatty acids are heart healthy and found predominately in walnuts and almonds.

A serving of nuts is ½ ounce and is equivalent to one ounce of protein.

- Almonds— 11 nuts equal ½ ounce and contain 81 calories and 7 g fat.
- Brazil nuts—3 nuts equal ½ ounce and contain 93 calories and 9.5 g of fat.
- Cashews—9 nuts equal ½ ounce and contain 78 calories and 6 g fat.
- Hazel nuts—10 nuts equal ½ ounce and contain 88 calories and 9 grams of fat.
- Macadamia nuts—5 nuts equal ½ ounce and contain 100 calories and 11 g fat.
- Peanuts—14 nuts equal ½ ounce and have only 80 calories and 7 g fat.
- Pecans—9 halves equal ½ ounce and have 98 calories and 10 g fat.
- Pistachios—25 nuts equal ½ ounce and contain 80 calories and 6.5 g fat.
- Walnuts—7 halves equal ½ ounce and contain 92 calories and 9 g fat.

Nuts can be eaten alone or added to recipes for a change up. Be creative as they can be added to fruit, baked goods, cereals, yogurt, salads, fish, rice dishes and more. The most heart healthy nuts are almonds and walnuts followed by peanuts. So enjoy nuts and be heart healthy.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Our 11th Annual Health Fair will be held on Tuesday, April 15th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Abbeville Library located at 405 E. St. Victor St. The Health Fair is free of charge and will offer a variety of health screenings. For more information call 898-4335.

*For more information on any topic in this newsletter or any other topic please contact our office at :*

**337-898-4335**

**Cooperative Extension Service**

Vermilion Parish

1105 W. Port Street

Abbeville, LA 70510

Phone (337) 898-4335, Fax (337)893-7165

Website: [www.lsuagcenter.com](http://www.lsuagcenter.com)

This material is partially funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

## Next Issue Features:

**Beef Month, Crawfish Information, High Blood Pressure Awareness Month and Much More!!!**

Kindest Regards,

*Mandy G. Armentor, MS, RD, LDN*  
*Area Nutrition Agent*  
*Vermilion Parish Extension Service*