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WESTSIDE WELLNESS

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Back To Basics
August 2009



matters

CREATING A CULTURE OF WELLNESS

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August 3, 2009

Back Tip: Back pain is second only to the common cold as an affliction of mankind. Bend your knees not your back. Learn proper lifting techniques and use them: Your leg muscles are around ten times stronger than your arms, so bend your knees when picking things up. Remember that many people put their backs out while doing seemingly harmless things like making up a bed or taking out the trash. The rule is, straight back, bent knees.

Wellness Recipe: Yogurt Popsicles

Ingredients:

- 1 cup plain low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- 1 banana, sliced
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup fruit juice or fruit chunks

1. Blend ingredients together and pour into small paper cups. 2. Freeze. 3. Place a plastic spoon or popsicle stick in each cup when yogurt mixture is half frozen. 4. To serve, turn cup upside-down and run hot water over it until the popsicle slips out. Keep the cups to use as a holder. Makes 4-5 small popsicles. [For a simpler version, pour fat-free or low-fat drinkable yogurt (or regular yogurt) into a paper cup. Add a stick and freeze. Peel the cup and eat.]

August 4, 2009

Back Tip: The most prevalent cause of backache is overweight/obesity. Carrying excess poundage puts a strain on the back, on both the bones and the soft tissue (muscles, ligaments, and joint tissues).

Developing a healthy attitude and learning to move your body properly while you do daily activities – particularly those involving heavy lifting, pushing, or pulling – are sometimes part of the treatment plan for people with back pain. Other behavior changes that might help pain include adopting healthy habits, such as exercise, relaxation, and regular sleep, and dropping bad habits, such as smoking and eating poorly.

Wellness Recipe: Spinach and Pimento Omelet

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Number of Servings: 4

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 0.75

Ingredients:

- 1 box (10 oz) frozen spinach, thawed & dry
- 1 cup chopped pimentos
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1/4 cup chopped scallions
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 2 cups fat-free egg substitute
- 2 tsp trans fat-free margarine
- 1/2 cup diced tomatoes

Directions: Chop spinach; place in medium bowl and add the pimentos and thyme. In a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat, sauté the scallions in olive oil until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the spinach mixture and warm through. Return to the bowl, add mozzarella, and set aside. In another medium bowl, whisk together the eggs and water. Place the frying pan over medium-high heat and let stand for about 2 minutes. Add 1 tsp margarine and swirl the pan to distribute it. Add half of the eggs (1 cup egg substitute). Lift and rotate the pan so that the eggs are evenly distributed. As the eggs set around the edges, lift them to allow uncooked portions to flow underneath. When the eggs are mostly set but not dry (in 2 to 3 minutes), spread half of the spinach mixture over the eggs. Use a spatula to fold the omelet in half. Cut in half and transfer to individual dishes. Repeat with the remaining 1 tsp margarine, eggs and spinach mixture. Sprinkle each serving with about 2 Tbsp tomatoes. Nutrition Facts Spinach and Pimento Omelet Serving Size 1/4 recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 130 Calories from Fat 30 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 4g 5% Saturated Fat 1g 3% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 330mg 14% Total Carbohydrate 9g 3% Dietary Fiber 4g 16% Sugars 5g Protein 17g Vitamin A 210% Vitamin C 100% Calcium 20% Iron 25% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 5, 2009

Back Tip: Weakness of muscles from lack of exercise is another important cause of backache. Eating right also helps. Calcium and Vitamin D can prevent and relive back pain. To maintain strong bones, eat calcium-rich foods.

Wellness Recipe: Tortilla Pizzas

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Number of Servings: 6

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients:

12 small corn or flour tortillas

Vegetable Oil or Margarine

1 (16oz) can refried beans

1/4 cup chopped onion

2 ounces fresh or canned green chili peppers, diced

6 Tbsp red taco sauce

3 cups chopped vegetables, such as broccoli, mushrooms, spinach, and bell peppers

1/2 cup (2oz) shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

1/2 cup chopped cilantro (optional)

Directions: Brush one side of each of two tortillas with water. Press the wet sides of the tortillas together to form a thick crust for the pizza. Brush the outside of the tortillas with a small amount of oil or margarine. Evenly brown both sides in a heated frying pan. Repeat with the rest of the tortillas. Set aside. Heat refried beans, chopped onion, and half of the diced chili peppers together in a medium saucepan, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat. Spread about 1/3 cup of the bean mixture on each tortilla pizza. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of taco sauce, then top with 1/2 cup of the chopped vegetables, 1 teaspoon of diced chili peppers, and 1 tablespoon of shredded cheese for each pizza. Return to frying pan and heat until cheese melts. Top with cilantro, if desired. Serve immediately. Nutrition Facts Tortilla Pizzas Serving Size 1 pizza Amount Per Serving Calories 270 Calories from Fat 60 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 7g 11% Saturated Fat 2g 8% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 5mg 2% Sodium 370mg 15% Total Carbohydrate 42g 14% Dietary Fiber 7g 28% Sugars 2g Protein 9g Vitamin A 30% Vitamin C 30% Calcium 15% Iron 15% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 6, 2009

Back Tip: The excess weight in front of the spine, on the abdomen and chest, leads to pulling the body forward, causing the back muscles to be under a strain to hold the body erect. Save your back, when lifting, and divide the load wherever possible. The extra trip(s) will burn calories and protect your back.

Wellness Recipe: Bow Tie Pasta with Roasted Garlic and Eggplant

Preparation Time: 1 hour, 40 minutes

Number of Servings: 6

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients:

1 package (12 oz) dried large bow tie pasta

2 Tbsp fresh parsley

1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

1 bulb garlic, roasted

6 cups eggplant, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes

1/2 cup balsamic vinegar

4 Tbsp olive oil

1/4 tsp dried oregano

1/2 tsp fresh ground pepper

3 cups (about 3 medium) chopped tomatoes

Directions: Separate roasted garlic cloves, peel, and set aside. In a medium bowl, combine eggplant, vinegar, 3 Tbsp olive oil, oregano, and pepper. Mix thoroughly and marinate in the refrigerator for 1 hour. Place eggplant mixture, with liquid, on a baking pan. Bake in a preheated 425°F oven for 25 minutes. Stir every 5 to 6 minutes. About 10 minutes before eggplant is completely cooked, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a skillet. Add tomatoes and garlic. Sauté for 5 minutes. At the same time, cook pasta in a pot of boiling water according to package instructions. Drain and divide cooked pasta on 4 serving plates. Cover pasta with roasted eggplant. Cover with equal portions of tomato-garlic mixture and top with parsley. Serve immediately sprinkled with Parmesan cheese. Nutrition Facts Bow Tie Pasta with Roasted Garlic and Eggplant Serving Size 1/6 recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 370 Calories from Fat 100 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 11g 17% Saturated Fat 2g 10% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 5mg 2% Sodium 65mg 3% Total Carbohydrate 58g 19% Dietary Fiber 5g 20% Sugars 10g Protein 11g Vitamin A 20% Vitamin C 25% Calcium 8% Iron 15% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 7, 2009

Back Tip: A diet high in calories and fat, combined with an inactive lifestyle, can gradually lead to obesity and place an unnecessary and ongoing stress on the back. Keep moving. Prolonged bed rest isn't a good idea for back pain. Light activity speeds healing and recovery. If your back hurts, stop the aggravating activities, but try to keep up activities that aren't painful.

Wellness Recipe: Asparagus with Sole

Preparation Time: 1 hour

Number of Servings: 4

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 0.50

Ingredients:

1 lb asparagus

1 lb Sole fillets (4 pieces approximately the same size)

1/4 tsp salt

1/2 tsp grated lemon or lime peel

4 Tbsp lemon or lime freshly squeezed juice

1/8 tsp Black pepper

1 Tbsp finely chopped chives

1 tsp mustard

Directions: Cut asparagus into 3 inch lengths. Cook in 2-quart saucepan in lightly salted water for 5 minutes, drain. Set aside. Season the skin side of the sole fillets with salt and lemon or lime peel. Place asparagus spears at one end of each fillet. Roll up fillets with asparagus spears inside and secure with plain round toothpicks. Place in a 2-quart oven-safe casserole dish liberally sprayed with non-stick cooking spray. In a small bowl combine remaining ingredients and pour over fish. Bake in a 400°F oven for approximately 15 to 20 minutes or until fish flakes easily. Baste fish every 7 minutes. Nutrition Facts Asparagus with Sole Serving Size 1/4 recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 130 Calories from Fat 15 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 2g 2% Saturated Fat 0g 0% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 55mg 18% Sodium 270mg 11% Total Carbohydrate 6g 2% Dietary Fiber 2g 8% Sugars 2g Protein 24g Vitamin A 25% Vitamin C 30% Calcium 4% Iron 8% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie

August 10, 2009

Back Tip: Although smoking may not directly cause back pain, it increases your risk of developing low back pain and low back pain with sciatica. (Sciatica is back pain that radiates to the hip and/or leg due to pressure on a nerve.) Your body may not be able to get enough nutrients to the discs in your back if you smoke. Smoker's cough may also cause back pain. People who smoke are slow to heal, so back pain may last longer.

Wellness Recipe: Red and Yellow Pepper Omelets

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Number of Servings: 2

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients: 1 tsp olive oil

4 egg whites

1/2 tsp dried basil

2 tsp grated Parmesan cheese, divided

1 sweet red pepper, thinly sliced

1 yellow pepper, thinly sliced

1/4 tsp black pepper

Directions: In a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat, warm oil; add the red peppers and yellow peppers; cook, stirring frequently for 4 to 5 minutes. Keep warm over low heat. In a small bowl, lightly whisk together the egg whites, basil and black pepper. Coat a small non-stick frying pan with non-stick spray. Warm over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Add half of the egg mixture, swirling the pan to evenly coat the bottom. Cook for 30 seconds or until the eggs are set. Carefully loosen and flip; cook for 1 minute, or until firm. Sprinkle half of the peppers over the eggs. Fold to enclose the filling. Transfer to a plate. Sprinkle with 1 tsp of the Parmesan cheese. Repeat with the remaining egg mixture, peppers and 1 tsp Parmesan cheese. Nutrition Facts Red and Yellow Pepper Omelets Serving Size 1 omelet Amount Per Serving Calories 90 Calories from Fat 30 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 3g 5% Saturated Fat 1g 3% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 140mg 6% Total Carbohydrate 8g 3% Dietary Fiber 2g 8% Sugars 4g Protein 9g Vitamin A 40% Vitamin C 310% Calcium 4% Iron 4% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 11, 2009

Back Tip: The first attack of low back pain typically occurs between the ages of 30 and 40. Back pain becomes more common with age. Bending over and picking up a 10 pound object puts 100 pounds of pressure on your back due to the waist acting like a fulcrum. If you are 25 lbs overweight, add an additional 250 lbs of pressure is placed on your back every time you bend over.

Wellness Recipe: Broccoli Soup

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Number of Servings: 4

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients:

3 cups chopped broccoli (or 2 10-ounce packages frozen broccoli)

1/2 cup diced celery

1/2 cup chopped onion

1 cup low sodium chicken broth

2 cups nonfat milk

2 Tbsp cornstarch

1/4 tsp salt

Dash pepper

Dash ground thyme

1/4 cup grated Swiss cheese

Directions: Place vegetables and broth in saucepan. Bring to boil, reduce heat, cover, and cook until vegetables are tender (about 8 minutes). Mix milk, cornstarch, salt, pepper, and thyme; add to cooked vegetables. Cook, stirring constantly, until soup is lightly thickened and mixture just begins to boil. Remove from heat. Add cheese and stir until melted. Nutrition Facts Broccoli Soup Serving Size 1/4 of recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 140 Calories from Fat 25 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 3g 5% Saturated Fat 2g 8% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 10mg 3% Sodium 270mg 11% Total Carbohydrate 20g 7% Dietary Fiber 5g 20% Sugars 9g Protein 11g Vitamin A 35% Vitamin C 140% Calcium 30% Iron 8% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 12, 2009

Back Tip: One of the best things you can do to prevent back pain is to exercise regularly and keep your back muscles strong. If you hurt your back, apply cold, then heat. Sources of heat and cold, such as a hot bath and hot or cold compresses, can soothe sore and inflamed muscles. Use cold treatment first. Immediately after injuring your back, apply ice several times a day, for up to 20 minutes at a time. Put the ice in a bag, then wrap the bag in a cloth or towel to keep a thin barrier between the ice and your skin. Use ice for as long as spasms persist. After spasms and acute pain subside, you can apply heat from a heating pad or heat lamp to help loosen tight muscles. Limit each heat application to 20 minutes.

Wellness Recipe: Chicken Mole with Vegetables

Preparation Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Number of Servings: 6

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients:

3 pounds chicken drumsticks and thighs, skin removed

3 cups canned reduced-sodium chicken broth

6 dried guajillo chilies, seeded

6 tomatillos, husks removed, washed and chopped

1 onion, chopped

5 cloves garlic, peeled

2 tsp ground cumin

3 cups water

4 chayotes, peeled and chopped

3/4 pound green beans, trimmed

Directions: Place chicken and broth in a large pot. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes. In a large pan, cook chilies over low heat, turning frequently, until they change color and become fragrant. Stir in tomatillos, onion, garlic, cumin and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Cook, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Remove pan from heat. Let cool. Place chili-tomatillo mixture (mole) in a blender container. Puree until smooth. Return pureed mixture to pan. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 5 minutes. Stir the thickened mole into chicken and broth. Simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, bring 2 cups water to a boil over high heat. Add chayotes and green beans. Cook 5 minutes. Drain. Serve with chicken and mole. Nutrition Facts Chicken Mole with Vegetables Serving Size 1/6 of recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 380 Calories from Fat 90 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 10g 15% Saturated Fat 3g 13% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 180mg 60% Sodium 240mg 10% Total Carbohydrate 20g 7% Dietary Fiber 6g 24% Sugars 8g Protein 52g Vitamin A 25% Vitamin C 220% Calcium 10% Iron 25% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 13, 2009

Back Tip: Avoid twisting your back, pivot and move you feet in the direction of travel. Eating to maintain a healthy weight – or to lose weight, if you are overweight – is the best way you can avoid placing unnecessary stress and strain on your back.

Wellness Recipe: Beef Barley and Lima Bean Soup

Preparation Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Number of Servings: 6

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 0.75

Ingredients:

1 cup chopped onion

1 cup chopped carrots

1 can low sodium (14.5 oz) beef broth

1 lb lean beef stew meat, cut in 1/2 inch cubes

4 cups water

1/4 cup dry pearl barley

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp pepper

3 cups cooked (1 cup dry) large lima beans or 2 cans (15 oz each) butter beans, drained

2 Tbsp minced parsley

Directions: Place onion and carrots in a large dry saucepan. Cook over high heat, stirring frequently until vegetables start to brown and stick. Add 1/2 cup broth; stir to release brown bits. Cook until liquid evaporates and vegetables begin to stick again, about 5 minutes. Add 1/2 cup broth and continue cooking until liquid evaporates and vegetables are soft and golden brown. Add meat and cook until no longer pink. Stir in remaining broth, water, barley, salt and pepper. Simmer, covered, 25 minutes. Add beans and parsley; cook 10 minutes or until barley is soft. Nutrition Facts Beef Barley and Lima Bean Soup Serving Size 1/6 of recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 280 Calories from Fat 60 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 6g 9% Saturated Fat 2g 10% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 45mg 15% Sodium 270mg 11% Total Carbohydrate 31g 10% Dietary Fiber 9g 36% Sugars 5g Protein 24g Vitamin A 70% Vitamin C 8% Calcium 4% Iron 25% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 14, 2009

Back Tip: A common type of back pain is a slipped disc. Symptoms include:

-Back pain that spreads to the buttocks and legs, when the herniated disk is in your lower back

-Neck pain that spreads to the shoulders and upper arms, when the herniated disk is in your upper back

-Tingling or numbness

-Muscle spasms or weakness

With treatment, most people recover. It can take a long time. Treatments include rest, pain and anti-inflammatory medicines, physical therapy and sometimes surgery. Losing weight can help, too. Increased weight causes wear and tear of the disks and facet joints.

Wellness Recipe: Black-eyed pea salad

Preparation Time: 9 hours, 15 minutes

Number of Servings: 6

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 0.50

Ingredients: Salad

1-1/2 cup water

1 medium onion, cut in half

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp cayenne pepper

16 oz package frozen black-eyed peas

1/3 cup red onion rings

4 cups leaf lettuce

Dressing

1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper

3 Tbsp chopped parsley

1/2 cup red wine vinegar

1/4 cup water

1 tsp olive oil

1/4 tsp salt

1/4 tsp black pepper

1 garlic clove, minced

1/8 tsp hot sauce

Directions: Salad Combine water, onion, salt, and cayenne pepper, in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil. Add peas and return to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 40-45 minutes or until peas are tender. Remove and discard onion; drain well. Rinse with cold water, and drain again. Transfer to a medium bowl; set aside. Pour dressing over peas, tossing gently to coat. Cover and refrigerate 8 hours, stirring occasionally. Add red onion just before serving. Serve over lettuce leaves on individual plates. Dressing To prepare dressing combine all ingredients and mix until well combined. Nutrition Facts Black-eyed pea salad Serving Size 1/6 recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 140 Calories from Fat 10 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 2g 2% Saturated Fat 0g 0% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 320mg 13% Total Carbohydrate 24g 8% Dietary Fiber 5g 20% Sugars 2g Protein 8g Vitamin A 30% Vitamin C 40% Calcium 6% Iron 10% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 17, 2009

Back Tip: Abdominal strength is the glue that keeps your back strong. Abdominal muscles support the back, and without the assistance of back and stomach muscles, your spine would collapse. Strong abdominal muscles are critical to general health, good fitness, and a strong, pain-free back.

Wellness Recipe: Black Bean, Pasta, and Artichoke Heart Medley

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Number of Servings: 12

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 0.50

Ingredients:

1 tbsp olive oil

1 cup sliced green onions

1/2 tsp oregano

1/2 tsp basil

1/4 tsp salt

1/8 tsp black pepper

1/8 tsp cayenne pepper

1 garlic clove, minced

2 14-1/2 oz cans no-added-salt whole tomatoes, undrained and chopped

15 oz can black beans, rinsed and drained

4 cups hot cooked pasta (any shape)

14 oz can artichoke hearts, drained and quartered

Directions: Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add green onions and sauté 5 minutes. Add oregano, basil, salt, peppers, garlic, and tomatoes; cover and simmer 10 minutes. Add beans; cover and simmer an additional 5 minutes. Combine bean mixture, hot cooked pasta, and artichoke hearts in a large bowl. Toss well. Serve warm or at room temperature. Nutrition Facts Black Bean, Pasta, and Artichoke Heart Medley Serving Size 1/12 of recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 120 Calories from Fat 15 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 2g 3% Saturated Fat 0g 0% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 330mg 14% Total Carbohydrate 21g 7% Dietary Fiber 3g 12% Sugars 2g Protein 5g Vitamin A 4% Vitamin C 15% Calcium 4% Iron 15% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 18, 2009

Back Tip: When lifting, never bend down from the waist, lower and raise yourself at the knees. Keep your back straight and hold the object close to your body. If you are going to carry anything any distance that may be heavy, make sure that your way is clear. You do not want to be dodging around things when you are carrying.

Four out of five adults have at least one bout of back pain sometime during life. In fact, back pain is one of the most common reasons for health care visits and missed work.

Wellness Recipe: Curried Mustard Greens & Garbanzo Beans with Sweet Potatoes

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Number of Servings: 4

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients:

2 medium sweet potatoes peeled and sliced thin

1 medium onion cut in half and sliced thin

2 medium cloves garlic, sliced

1/2 cup + 1 Tbsp low-sodium chicken or low-sodium vegetable broth

1/2 tsp curry powder

1/4 tsp turmeric

2 cups chopped and rinsed mustard greens

1 15 oz can sodium free diced tomatoes

1 15 oz can garbanzo beans, drained

2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

salt and white pepper to taste

Directions: Steam peeled and sliced sweet potatoes for approximately 5 – 8 minutes. While steaming potatoes, slice onion and garlic. Heat 1 Tbsp broth in 12 inch skillet. Sauté onion in broth over medium heat for about 4-5 minutes stirring frequently, until translucent. Add garlic, curry powder, turmeric, and mustard greens. Cook, stirring occasionally until mustard greens are wilted, about 5 minutes. Add garbanzo beans, diced tomatoes, salt and pepper. Cook for another 5 minutes. Mash sweet potatoes with olive oil, salt and pepper. If you need to thin potatoes, add a little more broth. Serve mustard greens with mashed sweet potatoes. Nutrition Facts Curried Mustard Greens & Garbanzo Beans with Sweet Potatoes Serving Size 1/4 of recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 300 Calories from Fat 70 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 8g 12% Saturated Fat 1g 5% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 600mg 25% Total Carbohydrate 50g 17% Dietary Fiber 9g 36% Sugars 8g Protein 8g Vitamin A 260% Vitamin C 50% Calcium 8% Iron 15% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 19, 2009

Back Tip: Poor posture over time can lead to muscle imbalances, pain or discomfort. Sit and stand properly. Your lower back bears most of the weight and stress of your body. Back pain most often occurs from strained back muscles and ligaments, from improper or heavy lifting, or after a sudden awkward movement.

Wellness Recipe: Baba Ghanoush (Eggplant Dip)

Preparation Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Number of Servings: 8

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 0.75

Ingredients:

2 large eggplants (1 1/4 lbs)

2 Tbsp tahini

4 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed

3 Tbsp fresh lemon juice or more to taste

4 Tbsp cold water

1/4 tsp salt

1/8 tsp freshly ground black pepper

1/2 tsp olive oil

1 cup chopped tomato

1/2 cup diced onion

Parsley sprigs to garnish (optional)

Directions: Pierce the eggplants in several places with a toothpick or fork. Wrap each eggplant in aluminum foil and place on a gas grill or in the oven at 500°F. Cook until the eggplants collapse and begin to release a lot of steam, about 10-15 minutes. Remove the foil and place the eggplants into a bowl of cold water. Peel while eggplants are still hot and allow them to drain in a colander until cool. Squeeze pulp to remove any bitter juices and mash the eggplant to a puree. In a food processor, mix tahini, garlic, onion, tomato, lemon juice, and water until mixture is concentrated. With the blender running, add the peeled eggplant, salt, pepper, and olive oil. Serve in a shallow dish and garnish with black pepper, tomatoes, and parsley. Nutrition Facts Baba Ghanoush (Eggplant Dip) Serving Size 1/8 of recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 70 Calories from Fat 25 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 3g 4% Saturated Fat 0g 0% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 80mg 3% Total Carbohydrate 11g 4% Dietary Fiber 5g 20% Sugars 4g Protein 2g Vitamin A 4% Vitamin C 15% Calcium 4% Iron 4% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 20, 2009

Back Tip: Do not sleep on your face. Sleep on your back if possible, with knees raised on a pillow. If you sleep on your side, a pillow between the knees is a big help.

Wellness Recipe: Artichoke Heart and Asparagus Salad with Strawberry Dressing

Preparation Time: 4 hours, 20 minutes

Number of Servings: 6

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients:

Salad

6 lettuce leaves

6 artichokes (small), prepared and cooked as directed for whole artichokes

1 lb fresh asparagus spears, cooked and chilled

1/3 cup shredded carrot

Dressing

1/2 cup buttermilk

1 cup fresh sliced strawberries

2 tsp honey

1/4 tsp allspice

Directions: Salad On six salad plates, arrange lettuce leaves. Halve artichokes lengthwise; remove center petals and fuzzy centers and discard. Remove outer leaves of artichokes and reserve to use as a garnish for the salad. Trim out hearts and slice thinly. Arrange artichoke slices on lettuce leaves with asparagus spears and shredded carrot. Add a few artichoke leaves for garnish. Dressing For dressing, in blender or food processor container, measure all dressing ingredients. Cover and process until mixture is smooth. Spoon dressing over salads to serve. Serving suggestion: Salad can be prepared ahead; cover arranged salad plates and chill up to 4 hours before serving time. Spoon on dressing just before serving. Nutrition Facts Artichoke Heart and Asparagus Salad with Strawberry Dressing Serving Size 1/6 recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 130 Calories from Fat 5 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 0g 0% Saturated Fat 0g 0% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 290mg 12% Total Carbohydrate 30g 10% Dietary Fiber 13g 52% Sugars 9g Protein 10g Vitamin A 45% Vitamin C 80% Calcium 10% Iron 25% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 21, 2009

Back Tip: Exercise. Regular low-impact aerobic activities — those that don't strain or jolt your back — can increase strength and endurance in your back and allow your muscles to function better. Walking and swimming are good choices. Talk with your doctor about which activities are best for you.

Pain felt in your lower back may come from the spine, muscles, nerves, or other structures in that region. It may also radiate from other areas like your mid or upper back, a hernia in the groin, or a problem in the testicles or ovaries. If your back pain is severe or doesn't improve after three days, you should call your health care provider.

Wellness Recipe: Celery and Apple Steam-Fry with Honey-Mustard Sauce

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Number of Servings: 4

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients:

1 cup water

4 cups celery, diagonally sliced 1/2" thick

2 cups diced sweet red apples (approx. 2 medium)

2 Tbsp Dijon-style mustard

1 Tbsp honey

1 tsp cornstarch

1/8 tsp ground black pepper

1/4 cup chopped and toasted walnuts

Directions: In a large skillet bring water to a boil. Add celery and apples; cook and stir until crisp-tender, about 8 minutes. In a small bowl combine mustard, honey, cornstarch and black pepper with 2 Tbsp water. Add to celery mixture, stirring constantly; cook and stir until clear and thickened, about 1 minute. Stir in walnuts, if desired. Nutrition Facts Celery and Apple Steam-Fry with Honey-Mustard Sauce Serving Size 1/4 recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 130 Calories from Fat 45 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 5g 8% Saturated Fat 1g 3% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 280mg 12% Total Carbohydrate 20g 7% Dietary Fiber 4g 16% Sugars 13g Protein 2g Vitamin A 15% Vitamin C 15% Calcium 6% Iron 4% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 24, 2009

Back Tip: Smokers have diminished oxygen levels in their spinal tissues, which can hinder the healing process.

In about 85% of acute back pain cases, the exact cause cannot be identified. Among the possible causes, are strains, sprains and injuries, often after making an abrupt movement or lifting a heavy object. A sedentary lifestyle, obesity, joint problems, osteoarthritis and tumors in adjacent organs can also be the underlying cause of a backache.

Wellness Recipe: Tuna Bean Salad

Preparation Time: 4 hours, 15 minutes

Number of Servings: 6

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients:

Salad

3 medium green bell peppers

3 medium red bell peppers

2 15 oz, cans white beans, rinsed and drained

2 6 oz cans, water packed tuna, drained

1/2 cup sliced ripe olives

1 head lettuce

2 medium tomatoes cut into wedges

Dressing

1/2 tsp grated lemon peel

1/3 cup lemon juice

1/4 cup olive oil

2 Tbsp fresh chopped parsley

1 tsp rosemary

1 Tbsp Dijon mustard

Directions: Salad Set oven to broil. Place bell peppers on broiler pan. Broil with tops 4 to 5 inches from heat about minutes on each side or until skin blisters and browns. Remove from oven. Wrap in towel; let stand 5 minutes. Remove skin, stems, seeds, and membranes of the peppers. Cut peppers into 1/4-inch slices. Toss peppers, beans, tuna, olives, and dressing in a bowl. Cover and chill for 4 hours, stirring occasionally. Spoon salad onto lettuce leaves and garnish with tomato wedges. Dressing Mix all dressing ingredients thoroughly in a tightly covered container. Nutrition Facts Tuna Bean Salad Serving Size 1/6 salad Amount Per Serving Calories 370 Calories from Fat 100 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 12g 18% Saturated Fat 2g 8% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 15mg 5% Sodium 170mg 7% Total Carbohydrate 42g 14% Dietary Fiber 9g 36% Sugars 3g Protein 27g Vitamin A 70% Vitamin C 300% Calcium 15% Iron 35% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 25, 2009

Back Tip: Stand smart. Maintain a neutral pelvic position. If you must stand for long periods of time, alternate placing your feet on a low footstool to take some of the load off your lower back.

Back pain can occur at any point along the spine, but the most common site is the lower back, also called the lumbar region. This is because the lower part of the back bears the weight of the upper body plus any weight you are carrying. It also twists and bends more than the upper back does.

Wellness Recipe: Pasta Primavera

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Number of Servings: 2

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.50

Ingredients:

1 cup broccoli florets

1 cup sliced carrots

1 cup sliced zucchini

1 cup macaroni or rotini pasta

1 Tbsp flour (for sauce)

1 Tbsp margarine (for sauce)

1 cup skim milk (for sauce)

1/4 tsp dried basil (for sauce)

1/8 tsp black pepper (for sauce)

2 Tbsp Parmesan cheese (for sauce)

Directions: Steam vegetables until crisp-tender, and cook macaroni according to package directions. In a small saucepan, melt margarine and blend in flour. Gradually stir in milk and seasoning. (Do not add cheese at this time.) Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until sauce thickens. Remove from heat and blend in cheese. Pour over hot vegetables. Add macaroni and mix together. Nutrition Facts Pasta Primavera Serving Size 1/2 of recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 360 Calories from Fat 80 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 8g 12% Saturated Fat 2g 10% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 5mg 2% Sodium 200mg 8% Total Carbohydrate 56g 19% Dietary Fiber 5g 20% Sugars 11g Protein 15g Vitamin A 180% Vitamin C 80% Calcium 25% Iron 15% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 26, 2009

Back Tip: Sit smart. Choose a seat with good lower back support, arm rests and a swivel base. Consider placing a pillow or rolled towel in the small of your back to maintain its normal curve. Keep your knees and hips level.

Bed rest for more than a few days is not recommended, as this can reduce your muscle strength. When the pain lessens, activity levels must be increased gradually and carefully.

Wellness Recipe: Vegetarian Split Pea Soup

Preparation Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

Number of Servings: 6

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients:

1-1/2 cups split peas

6 cups water

1 medium onion, diced

2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced

1/4 tsp garlic powder

1/4 tsp dried parsley

2 medium carrots, grated

Directions: In a large pot, combine split peas and water, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Cover and let simmer until tender (1 hour). Add onion, potato, garlic powder, dried parsley, and carrots. Cover and simmer for 1 hour. Transfer soup mixture in batches to a blender, and puree until smooth. Return to heat and warm through. Serve. Nutrition Facts Vegetarian Split Pea Soup Serving Size 1/6 recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 210 Calories from Fat 5 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 1g 1% Saturated Fat 0g 0% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 25mg 1% Total Carbohydrate 41g 14% Dietary Fiber 12g 48% Sugars 6g Protein 12g Vitamin A 70% Vitamin C 10% Calcium 4% Iron 10% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 27, 2009

Back Tip: Lift smart. Let your legs do the work. Move straight up and down. Keep your back straight and bend only at the knees. Hold the load close to your body. Avoid lifting and twisting simultaneously. Find a lifting partner if the object is heavy or awkward. Back braces can relieve strain and support your back temporarily. But prolonged use may result in weakened muscles, so the use of this must be limited to less than a week.

Wellness Recipe: Soba Peanut Noodles with Shrimp

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Number of Servings: 6

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 1.00

Ingredients:

8 ounces soba noodles or whole-wheat spaghetti

1/4 cup natural crunchy peanut butter

4 cups shredded cabbage

2 cups shredded carrots

1 cup edamame, shelled and thawed

1 Tbsp grated fresh ginger

2 garlic cloves, minced

1/2 cup chicken broth

1 pound of shrimp, peeled and uncooked

2 Tbsp Hoisin sauce

2 tsp chili sauce or 1 tsp red chili paste

1/4 cup chopped cilantro (optional)

Non-stick cooking spray

Directions: Cook noodles. Drain and rinse. Set aside in large mixing bowl. In a small saucepan, combine garlic, ginger, chicken broth, peanut butter, hoisin sauce, and chili sauce. Cook on low heat stirring until peanut butter is blended. Spray non-stick spray in large frying pan. Add cabbage, carrots, and edamame. Cook for about 5 minutes. Add shrimp and sauce mixture and cook until shrimp turn pink, about 5 minutes. Pour mixture over noodles and mix until noodles are well coated. Top with fresh cilantro (optional) and serve. Nutrition Facts Soba Peanut Noodles with Shrimp Serving Size 1/6 of recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 360 Calories from Fat 70 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 8g 12% Saturated Fat 1g 5% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 115mg 38% Sodium 460mg 19% Total Carbohydrate 46g 15% Dietary Fiber 6g 24% Sugars 6g Protein 29g Vitamin A 130% Vitamin C 40% Calcium 10% Iron 20% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 28, 2009

Back Tip: Sleep smart. People with back pain have commonly been told to use a firm mattress, but recent studies indicate that a medium-firm mattress might be better. Use pillows for support, but don't use a pillow that forces your neck up at a severe angle.

The back's system of bones, muscles, ligaments, tendons and nerves work together to bear the weight of your body and the loads you carry. The structure of the back provides considerable strength and flexibility, but because the spine is so central to the body's movements, even small amounts of damage can often cause pain.

Wellness Recipe: Moroccan Lentil Salad

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Number of Servings: 4

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 2.00

Ingredients:

1-1/4 cups uncooked lentils

2-1/2 cups water

3 Tbsp lemon juice

1-1/2 Tbsp olive oil

1/2 tsp thyme

1/2 tsp mint flakes

1/4 tsp salt

1/8 tsp black pepper

1 garlic clove

1-1/2 cup quartered cherry tomatoes

1 cup diced cucumber

1/2 cup crumbled reduced-fat feta cheese

1 cup thinly sliced celery

4 cups romaine lettuce leaves

Directions: Place lentils and water in a large saucepan; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes or until tender. Drain well, and set aside. Combine lemon juice, olive oil, thyme, mint, salt, pepper, and garlic in a medium bowl; stir with a wire whisk until blended. Add lentils, tomatoes, cucumber, cheese, and celery to dressing mixture; toss gently to coat. Serve on plates lined with romaine lettuce. Nutrition Facts Moroccan Lentil Salad Serving Size 1/4 recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 310 Calories from Fat 70 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 8g 12% Saturated Fat 3g 13% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 5mg 2% Sodium 570mg 24% Total Carbohydrate 42g 14% Dietary Fiber 16g 64% Sugars 6g Protein 21g Vitamin A 80% Vitamin C 50% Calcium 15% Iron 40% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

August 31, 2009

Back Tip: Back Fitness Essentials
To enhance your back fitness and reduce the risk of injury, remember your back and improve your habits.

Posture - flawed posture stresses the back

Lifting - overestimating what your back can do

Relaxing - tension causes muscles spasms

Flexibility - a lack of flexibility contributes to stiffness

Strength - muscles thrive on work - use it or lose it

Wellness Recipe: Apple Carrot Salad

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Number of Servings: 6

Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 0.50

Ingredients:

1 cup shredded carrot

3 (medium) unpared and diced apples

1 Tbsp lemon juice

1/2 cup raisins

1/3 cup low-fat mayonnaise

Directions: Combine all ingredients. Chill thoroughly. Serve on salad greens. Nutrition Facts Apple Carrot Salad Serving Size 1/6 recipe Amount Per Serving Calories 110 Calories from Fat 10 % Daily Value (DV)* Total Fat 1g 2% Saturated Fat 0g 0% Trans Fat 0g 0% Cholesterol 0mg 0% Sodium 140mg 6% Total Carbohydrate 25g 8% Dietary Fiber 3g 12% Sugars 20g Protein 1g Vitamin A 45% Vitamin C 10% Calcium 2% Iron 2% * Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.