

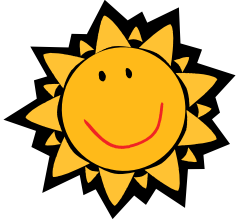
Lincoln County Homemakers News and Clues

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The Sunny Side of Vitamin D!



June – summer, sun and vitamin D! In 1919, when British physician and pharmacologist Sir Edward Mellanby was asked to investigate the cause of rickets—a bone disease characterized by pain, skeletal deformity, impaired growth and weakness—he discovered vitamin D.

Vitamin D is often called the “sunshine vitamin” because our bodies can actually make it when our skin is exposed to the sun. About 10 – 15 minutes of sun exposure per day on our face, hands and arms without sunscreen is enough to meet our needs. Sunscreens with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 8 or more appear to block vitamin D-producing UV rays, although in practice people generally do not apply sufficient amounts, cover all sun-exposed skin or reapply sunscreen regularly. For the days and weeks that we do not get enough sun exposure, vitamin D, which is a fat-soluble vitamin, is stored in our fat cells.

Vitamin D has long been recognized for its role in enhancing calcium absorption, thus promoting good bone and teeth health. Adequate Intake (AI)—a level sufficient to maintain healthy blood levels—for vitamin D are:

- ages 19 – 50: 200 International Units (IU)
- ages 51 – 69: 400 IU
- age 70 and older: 600 IU

New research, though, is uncovering other non-traditional functions and benefits of vitamin D. Adequate vitamin D levels are now thought to reduce the risk of breast, colon and prostate cancers. Vitamin D may play a preventative role in developing multiple sclerosis, diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis.

In addition, cross-sectional studies in older adults show vitamin D **deficiency** is associated with low mood and worsened cognitive performance, as well as a greater severity of dementia. Vitamin D insufficiency has also been linked to an increased risk of tuberculosis, pneumonia and gingivitis.

Dietary sources of vitamin D include fortified milk, cheese and yogurt; fatty fish such as salmon, tuna and sardines; and other fortified foods such as orange juice, margarine and certain breakfast cereals.

Following are a few simple ways to boost your vitamin D intake:

- Drink at least two cups of vitamin D-fortified milk a day.
- Use milk instead of water when making hot chocolate, soups and sauces.
- Choose vitamin D-fortified yogurts and cheeses whenever possible.
- Check labels and choose breakfast cereals that are fortified with vitamin D.
- Flake tuna on top of a salad for a hearty lunch or make tuna salad sandwiches.
- If you drink soy beverages, choose a vitamin D-fortified brand.
- Grill or bake salmon for a vitamin D-rich meal once a week.

Papaya ~ Taste the Tropics!

June is *Papaya Month* - so come on, taste the tropics! Papaya, a fruit thought to be native to Central America, gives an exotic touch to savory dishes and desserts.



There are two main types of papaya. The Hawaiian—also known as Solo—is found most often in supermarkets. These papayas are pear shaped, weigh about one pound each and have yellow skin when ripe. The flesh is bright orange or pinkish depending on the variety. The Mexican (or it might be called Caribbean or Asian) is usually found in Latino supermarkets. Mexican papayas are much larger than Hawaiian papayas and can weigh up to 20 pounds each and be over 15 inches long.

When shopping for a ripe papaya, look for skin that is turning from green to yellow. You should also be able to press your thumb slightly into the flesh. If it's too soft or mushy, or if it has a sweet smell to it, the papaya is overripe.

To prepare your papaya, rinse under cool water to remove any dust or dirt. Place on a cutting board and, using a large, sharp knife, cut the papaya in half lengthwise. Separate into two sections.

Using a large spoon, scrape out the seeds. Try not to cut too deeply with your spoon or you may lose quite a bit of the fruit. Papaya seeds have a peppery flavor to them and can be used for salad dressings and other dishes.

To peel a papaya, hold it vertically and run a knife downward along the skin in long slices (think – peeling a potato!) Again, try not to slice too deeply or you will lose a lot of the fruit.

Papaya can be sliced into wedges as thick or thin as you like, then placed in a dessert bowl and served as is. Or squeeze a little lime juice over your papaya—this brings out the tropical flavors! Or combine fresh papaya with other fruit in a fresh fruit salad. Papaya wedges are great to serve for breakfast—they look terrific on the side of a plate!

Leftover papaya can be stored in a covered container in the refrigerator and will keep for up to one week.

Try this recipe for a delicious taste of the tropics!

Papaya Passion

Ingredients:

1/2 cup	Yields: 2 servings
1/2 cup	plain fat-free yogurt
3/4 cup	nonfat milk
1/2 cup	papaya – chopped and chilled
1 tablespoon	strawberries – chilled
1/2 cup	honey
	small ice cubes or crushed ice

Directions:

Combine all ingredients in blender, cover and blend until nearly smooth.

Nutritional analysis per one-cup serving:

119 calories	0.4 g total fat
82 mg sodium	2 mg cholesterol
24.2 g carbohydrates	6.2 g protein

Happy Sunny Summer!

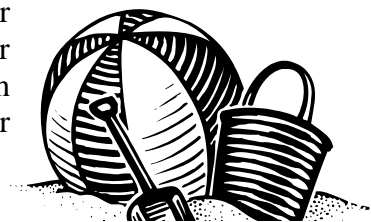
Sincerely,



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