



Chef Charles Says...



January

Pick a Better...Sugar

Extra sugar has been linked to the growing obesity epidemic and related illnesses. But how much is too much? The American Heart Association has proposed specific guidelines: Most women should consume no more than 25 grams (about 6 teaspoons) of added sugars a day; most men, no more than 37.5 grams (about 9 teaspoons). With 4 calories per gram of sugar, that is no more than 100 calories of added sugars for women, and no more than 150 for men.

It is easy to go over these limits, and most American do. In fact, the average American consumes about 90 grams (22 teaspoons) of

added sugar a day which equals 335 calories. Common sources of added sugar are sodas, other sweetened beverages like fruit drinks, desserts, candy, and breakfast cereals. Many other foods, even ketchup, have sugar added as well.

Of course, some sugars are found naturally in foods such as lactose in milk and fructose in fruits. These sugars are okay, since they are accompanied by other healthful substances in the food. But nutrition labels do not distinguish between natural and added sugar. To tell if sugar has been added, check the ingredient list for any form of sugar.



Common Added Sugar Ingredients

- ◆ Brown sugar
- ◆ Corn syrup
- ◆ High fructose corn syrup
- ◆ Malt syrup
- ◆ Honey
- ◆ Molasses
- ◆ Agave nectar
- ◆ Evaporated cane juice
- ◆ Fruit juice concentrate
- ◆ Sucrose
- ◆ Glucose
- ◆ Raw sugar

Congregate Meal sites are now offering more fruit for dessert as a way to increase nutrition of the meals and reduce added sugar.

Get The News



Low Vitamin D Increases Health Risk for Older Adults

Low levels of vitamin D appear to increase the risk of death in older adults.

Skin produces vitamin D when directly exposed to the sun. But older people, particularly those living in northern regions, rarely obtain sufficient sun exposure for adequate vitamin D production and need supplements to achieve healthy vitamin D levels. Increasingly, evidence points to health risks from inadequate vitamin D. According to a recent study, after taking into account a variety of factors that could influence the results, low vitamin D was independently associated with an increased risk of death from any cause, but particularly from heart disease in this report. Current vitamin D recommendations for people 71 years and older are 600 IU and this may be inadequate. More study is needed to determine the amount needed. For now, older adults should discuss with their doctor what their level of vitamin D is and how they can safely increase their intake of the vitamin. Source: *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, September 2009



Developed by:

Iowa Department of Public Health, www.idph.state.ia.us/nutritionnetwork
Iowa State University Extension, www.extension.iastate.edu
Iowa Department on Aging, www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs

Information & resources for seniors with home & family questions - ISU AnswerLine 1-800-262-3804

Chef Charles Asks the Questions

Meet Carlene Russell

Carlene Russell is a registered and licensed dietitian with a special interest in older adults. She works in the Iowa Department on Aging which is located one block from the State Capitol in Des Moines. Her department administers the Older Americans Act programs of which the nutrition program is the largest. In collaboration with 13 Iowa Area Agencies on Aging, the department served 1.6 million congregate and 1.3 million home delivered meals last year.

Carlene please tell us about your job at the department.

I manage the nutrition program which includes making sure that healthy meals are provided, and nutrition education and health promotion programs are available to help older Iowans stay as healthy as possible. It is well known that for older adults, eating healthy and being physically activity are keys to enjoying a higher quality of life. Participating in a Chef Charles Program can give you good ideas for how to do this. Participating in a congregate meal program can provide you with 1/3 of the nutrition you need for the day (including your fruits and vegetables that you may not always eat at home) so the congregate meal should be viewed as an investment in your health.

If you had to pick your favorite meal of the day, what would it be?

Breakfast is my favorite meal. It is a part of my morning ritual. It is funny how we develop habits. Several years ago, as I was trying to incorporate my nutrition knowledge into action I chose to improve my breakfast, and it has now become a one bowl habit. I start with thicker cut oatmeal, cooking it in the microwave with skim milk rather than water. During the last 30 seconds of cooking, I add ½ cup of frozen blueberries. Then I add either ½ cup of fresh strawberries when they are in season or ½ of a banana and ⅓ cup of walnuts. I top this with more skim milk.

Why do older adults need to pay special attention to breakfast?

As we age, our bodies need fewer calories. So if we balance the calories with what is needed to maintain a healthy weight, we need to eat smart. The best foods to help do this are the ones that have the most nutrition and the least number of calories which means the food is nutrient dense. Many breakfast items are nutrient dense foods. Having breakfast in the morning “breaks-the-fast” and causes an increase in the metabolism rate. During the night we typically go 8-10 hours without eating. During this time body metabolism rate slows down. Having breakfast in the morning breaks the fast and causes an increase the metabolism rate. Breakfast eaters have a better chance to have a healthy weight but also to consume the nutrients they need for good health.

Be Active

Maintaining your strength may help keep you out of the hospital. A study of 3,000 70-80 year olds found that 55 percent had been hospitalized at least once in the previous five years. The study found those people with the lowest muscle density and weakest grip strength were more likely to be



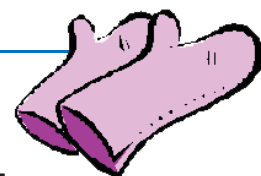
the ones being hospitalized. To stay strong, get involved in strength training at least two days a week and do aerobic exercise, like walking most days.

Source: *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, Vol. 57, Page 1411.



Handle Hot Dishes Safely

Never use a dish towel to move a hot dish from the oven to the table. It would be easy to burn your hand. Pot holders need to have adequate padding to protect your hands. Inspect a pot holder after washing it to make sure the padding is still going to protect you.



SPINACH VEGETABLE DIP

- 1 cup frozen spinach
- 16 oz low-fat sour cream
- 8 oz frozen peppers or ½ cup fresh peppers
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tbsp dry ranch dressing mix

1. Cut one clove of garlic into tiny pieces. Place a pan on the stove and spray with non-stick spray. Lightly brown garlic.

2. Place frozen spinach and peppers in pan with the garlic. You may want to rinse the frozen spinach with warm water in a colander to start the thawing process. Cook the vegetables till tender and the water evaporates stirring continuously. Do not cover pan when cooking to allow evaporation. Cook approximately 10 minutes on medium heat. Let stand for 5-10 minutes to cool.

3. Chop mixture on a cutting board until the peppers are cut into tiny pieces.

4. Stir sour cream into dry ranch mix.

5. In a refrigerator storage container cut the 2nd clove of garlic into very tiny pieces and place in sour cream. Mix with vegetables.

6. Add black pepper or paprika if desired.

7. Refrigerate for an hour or more (the longer, the better).



Note: A serving is approximately 2 tablespoons. Calories-41; 2 gm fat; 30 mg sodium; 11% vitamin C; 5% calcium; 88mg potassium

Pick a better snack



AGAVE NECTAR
BROWN SUGAR
CORN SYRUP
EVAPORATED CANE JUICE
FRUIT JUICE CONCENTRATE
GLUCOSE
HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP
HONEY
MALT SYRUP
MOLASSES
RAW SUGAR
SUCROSE

LIMIT ADDED SUGAR FOR BETTER HEALTH.

Food Safety

Kitchen Safety Tips

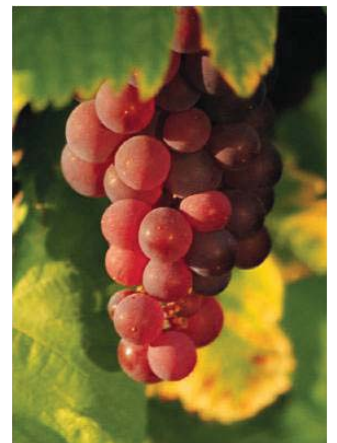
Keep your kitchen safe by following these ideas:

- ◆ Stay in the kitchen while something is cooking. If you must leave, take a reminder like a pot holder or a wooden spoon. This will remind you to go back to the kitchen.
- ◆ Keep things that can burn, like paper towels or pot holders away from the cooking area.
- ◆ Keep handles of pots on the stove turned inward. Cook on back burners when possible.
- ◆ Look closely at your kitchen floor. Are there any items that can trip you when you are carrying hot food to the table?
- ◆ Keep appliance cords away from the edge of the counter. It is helpful that newer small appliances are required to have short electrical cords.



Grapes and Grains

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- 2 cups cooked barley (do not overcook)
- 1 ½ cups seedless, halved grapes
- ½ cup sliced celery
- ¼ cup sliced green onion
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper



In mixing bowl, whisk together oil, lemon and orange juices. Add barley, grapes, celery, and onions, tossing to coat. Season with salt and pepper; chill until serving time.

Makes 4 - ½ cup servings. Each ½ cup serving provides 203 calories; 7 gm fat; 3 gm protein; 34 gm carbohydrates; 4 gm fiber; 14 mg sodium; 248 mg Potassium. Recipe courtesy of Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH).

