



# Chef Charles Says...



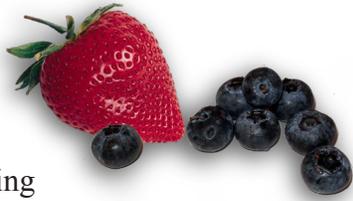
June

## Pick a Better... Berry

Berries taste great especially in the summer when they are most fresh. They are also developing a reputation as nutritional powerhouses with special health benefits. Growing research suggests that in addition to providing vitamins and minerals, berries contain a variety of other nutrients that keep us healthy.

Research has shown benefits for preventing urinary-tract infections, boosting memory, preventing some types of cancer, and protecting against heart disease. Combining the great taste and health benefits is a win-win for your table.

When shopping for berries look for plump, firm fruit with a sweet aroma. Store them unwashed in an airtight container in your refrigerator. Remember that whole berries tend to have more nutrients and fiber than juices and juice drinks, as well as fewer calories and less sugar.



## Food Safety

Having an orderly refrigerator is one step in keeping food safe. Place dated leftovers near the front of the refrigerator so you will not forget them. This will help limit the wasted food you must throw out. Cleaning out the refrigerator once a week, and storing odds and ends (half-eaten onions or left over salads) in clear containers makes it easy to see what you have.

The typical refrigerator serves as our own personal vending machine which we go to when our stomachs start growling or we are bored. In most homes, we reach for last night's leftovers perched on the top shelf in easy sight, instead of the fresh vegetables and fruits, bagged and buried in the crisper drawers. To make better use of your produce, make a list of what is in the crisper and check the list when you head for the refrigerator. Better yet, leave a bowl of whole produce on the counter for easy access. Remember that any cut fresh produce must be refrigerated to prevent spoilage.



## Planned Weight Loss Is Good For You If You Are Overweight

There is some debate about whether it is good for older adults to lose weight, even if they are overweight. Some studies have found an association between weight loss in older adults and risk of dying, but many of those studies did not distinguish between voluntary weight loss and involuntary weight loss that may be related to illness.

Just as in younger people, the prevalence of overweight has increased in the elderly. About 20 percent of people 65 and older are obese, and that is expected to continue rising as more baby boomers become senior citizens. Overweight is known to be associated with impairments in daily living, limitations in mobility and an increased risk for physical decline and frailty.



Developed by:

Iowa Department of Public Health, [www.idph.state.ia.us/nutritionnetwork](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/nutritionnetwork)  
Iowa Department on Aging, [www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs](http://www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs)

Information & resources for seniors with home & family questions

ISU AnswerLine 1-800-262-3804

## Chef Charles Asks the Questions

### I Am Overweight. Should I Try To Lose Weight?

Older adults who are overweight frequently face severe health risks, including high blood pressure, heart



disease and diabetes, which can be made worse when it is difficult to walk and move around. Research done at Washington University

studied 100 overweight older adults for a year. Results revealed that diet alone and exercise alone improved physical function. But, neither was as effective as diet and exercise together, which improved physical function by 21 percent.

In addition to improved physical function the study looked at quality of life, and again, those in the combined diet-exercise group had the biggest improvements. Strength, balance and walking speed all showed the most consistent improvement in the diet-exercise group.

It may be just as important for older people to

improve physical function and quality of life as to reverse or treat risk factors for cardiovascular disease, especially those who are obese. Combining exercise and diet change is not designed so much to extend life expectancy as it is to improve the quality of life during the remaining years, and to help older adults avoid being admitted to a nursing home.

A potential drawback of voluntary weight loss is that when older people lose fat, they also tend to lose muscle and bone. In this study, the researchers did find slight reductions in muscle and bone density among those who lost weight, but the decreases were smaller in the combined diet-exercise group than in those who dieted or exercised alone.

*The New England Journal of Medicine*, March 31, 2011

Although losing weight by changing diet and/or exercise is beneficial, when older adults do both, they get a greater improvement in physical function. Maintaining muscle is important for independence.

## Be Active

### Exercising Your Upper Body

Even if you are confined to a wheel-chair or cannot exercise your lower body due to an injury, surgery, or other challenges, you can still burn calories and keep your upper body muscles strong. Upper-body strength is particularly important whether you are pushing yourself in a wheelchair, or transitioning to crutches or a walker. Good posture requires strong back and abdominal muscles, and helps you avoid neck and shoul-

der pain. Neck and shoulder pain can happen when you spend hours using a walker or wheelchair.

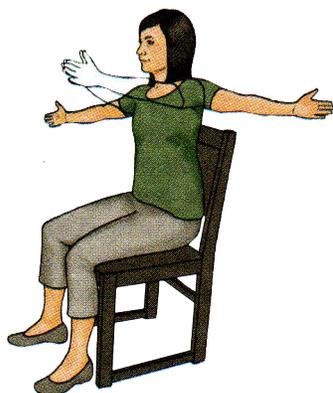
Stay as active as possible, working within the limits of your body. Exercise regularly if you can and remember that the muscles you cannot see (back, back of arms, and abdomen) are as important as those you can see.

Exercises source: *Food and Fitness Adviser*, 2011

#### Upper-Back Strengtheners:

Sit with your back straight and feet firmly planted on the floor. Extend your arms straight in front of you at chest level, palms facing each other. Squeeze your shoulder blades together as you extend your arms out to the side, turning your hands outward with thumbs pointing to the ceiling. Return to the start position.

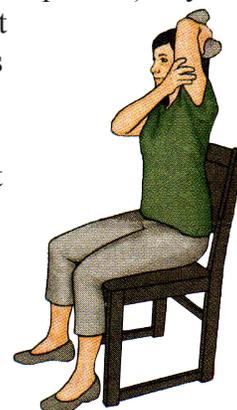
Do 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions each.



#### Triceps Strengtheners:

Sit with your back straight and feet firmly planted on the floor. Holding a free weight (2-4 pounds) in your left hand, bring your left arm straight up in the air, as close to your head as possible. Support your left arm with your right hand; slowly bring the weight back and down by bending at the elbow. Straighten your left arm back up to the starting position.

Do 10 repetitions, then repeat with the right arm. Do 2-3 sets.



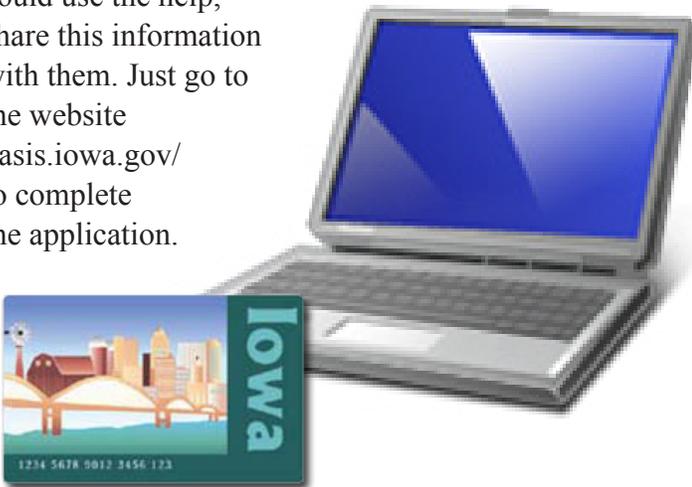
# Get the News

## Applying For Food Assistance Benefits Can Help You, Just Like Mary

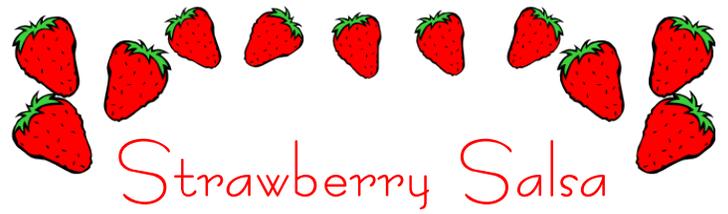
Mary, a resident of a senior high-rise apartment complex, did not have enough food to last the month. She just ran out of money. So, she went to the local food pantry for food to help her till the end of the month. While there, she learned how to apply on-line for the Iowa Food Assistance Program. Food Assistance benefits provides families and individuals with the ability to purchase the much needed food for their family. It took twenty minutes to fill out the application, and a phone conversation with a Department of Human Services staffer, and Mary had her EBT card within two weeks. Each month the credit for buying food is deposited in her EBT account, and she is ready for a grocery trip. If you knew it was that easy to receive help for food each month, would you take the time?

Mary's experience is a good example of how the Food Assistance program works. After filling out an application, you will have a meeting, generally by phone but sometimes face-to-face, with a Department of Human Services staffer in your county to verify your personal information. Before you have the meeting, you will receive a list of items you need to send or take with you to complete the application process. If you need help with food, consider applying for Food Assistance.

If you know people who could use the help, share this information with them. Just go to the website [oasis.iowa.gov/](http://oasis.iowa.gov/) to complete the application.



Iowa Food Assistance Program  
[oasis.iowa.gov/](http://oasis.iowa.gov/)



## Strawberry Salsa

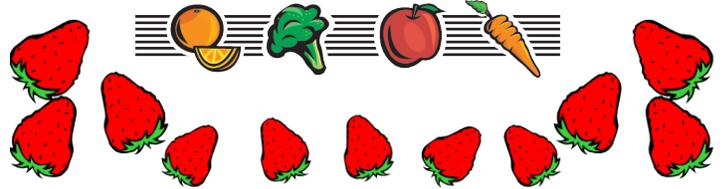
- 1 cup chopped strawberries
- 1/2 cup jicama
- 1 tablespoon diced green onion
- 1 tablespoon minced green bell pepper
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- Dash of black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon brown sugar
- Whole grain crackers, optional

Stir together strawberries, jicama, onion, green pepper, orange juice, black pepper and brown sugar. Serve at room temperature with vanilla wafers or whole grain crackers.

Serves 6 (1/4 cup each). Calories 16; Fat 0 mg; Sodium 1 mg; Carbohydrates; Fiber 1 g; Folate 8.5 mcg; Potassium 70 mg

Source: [www.hy-vee.com/recipes](http://www.hy-vee.com/recipes)

## Pick a better snack™



## Answers

NESNRTUIT  
 NUTRIENTS

HEATR IEDSEAS  
 HEART DISEASE

NCCRAE  
 CANCER

YIUARNR CARTT OFNSIECNTI  
 URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

BOSOT YMEOMR  
 BOOST MEMORY

VINMTSAI  
 VITAMINS

RIEFB  
 FIBER

BERRIES MAY HELP PREVENT SOME  
 HEALTH PROBLEMS AND TASTE GREAT!

A combination of diet and  
 exercise may contribute to  
 improved physical function and  
 quality of life.

n m i r f e  
 e e o e a y a o f l u i b a  
 p x r b u a l t i y n o o f i n c t i e n d o  
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