

A monthly newsletter brought to you by the Master Wellness Program

January 2019

## Top stories in this newsletter



**Our star fruits and  
veggies of the  
month!**



**Considering Going  
Meatless?**



**Dress for success!**



**Recipes and  
Activities**

## Star of the month



### **Beans, beans, the magical fruit!**

The featured food group this month is the legume (beans). They are known as black, cranberry, chickpeas (garbanzo), great northern, kidney, navy, red, pink and pinto and are one of the most nutritious foods to add to your diet. They are an excellent source of plant-based protein and fiber, increase satiety and control the appetite. Beans are cholesterol-free, sodium-free and contain only 115 calories per ½ cup.

The soluble fiber in legumes trap cholesterol in the digestive tract which helps lower LDL (bad cholesterol) as well as reduce the risk of colon and rectal cancer. Those with diabetes have better glycemic control with regular legume consumption. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend that we consume ½ cup per day.

- Legumes in your meal plan will stretch your food budget.
- Beans cooked from dry = 15 cents per ½ cup serving
- Canned beans = 28 cents per ½ cup serving versus beef roast = 98 cents per 3 oz. serving

An interesting fact about the legume is that they contribute to soil health by converting atmospheric nitrogen into a form of nitrogen that plants can use. In other words, growing legumes improves the soil to grow other crops!

Cooking dry beans is not difficult.

- Rinse under cold, running water and place beans in a pot
- Add 10 cups of water for 2 cups of beans
- Bring to a boil and boil for 2-3 minutes
- Remove from heat, cover and let stand for 4-24 hours
- Drain and discard soaking water (this removes oligosaccharides that produce gas)
- Rinse with cool water, then simmer till soft.

However, if you are short on time, use canned beans in your recipe. Just make sure to rinse them well to remove sodium in the canning liquid.

Source: *The Bean Institute*

[www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)

---

**Are You Considering Going Meatless? Here are the facts.**

**Eat  
More  
Veggies**

With the beginning of each new year, we are motivated to improve our lives and make some changes that will benefit our overall health. Possibly you started walking or joined an exercise class. (If you did, keep up the good work!)

You may also be looking at what you are eating and thinking about making some changes to your diet. Should you decide to go meatless, note that there is research to prove that a well-planned meatless diet has many benefits.

- Reduces risk of chronic disease (diabetes, heart disease, cancer)
- Lowers your intake of saturated fat and cholesterol
- Can help you maintain a healthy weight
- Can help maintain healthy blood sugar levels and blood pressure
- Produces less dietary acid load
- Can suppress inflammation

The National Institutes of Health state “the long term health of vegetarians appears to be good and for some diseases and medical conditions, it may be better than that of comparable omnivores.” The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics position paper on vegetarian diets agrees. They state that a well-planned vegetarian diet is nutritionally adequate and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases.

Does a meatless diet equate to a tasteless diet? Not at all!! A well-planned vegetarian diet includes an abundance of tasty, nutrient dense foods. Your plate will be filled with vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, and healthy fats such as olive oil and avocado. If you choose a lacto-ovo vegetarian diet, you will also enjoy low fat dairy and eggs. The foods in a vegetarian diet provide a powerhouse of nutrients including phytonutrients, soluble and insoluble fiber, protein, vitamins, and minerals along with complex carbohydrates.

What does a vegetarian eat in a day? Here is an appetizing, sample menu.

**Breakfast – Oatmeal with flaxseed, chopped walnuts and fruit**

**Lunch – Grilled vegetable and hummus wrap in a whole grain tortilla with a cup of mushroom barley soup**

**Dinner – Garden salad with mixed greens, fresh vegetables, avocado and olive oil vinaigrette with a black bean burger on a toasted whole grain bun**

**Snack – Almonds and fresh fruit**

Let's look at some myths that you have heard about the vegetarian diet.

⇒ Vegetarians do not eat enough protein.

**FACT:** The vegetarian diet includes many sources of protein from legumes (beans, lentils, peas, peanuts), soy products, whole grains, nuts, seeds and (for lacto-ovo vegetarians) low fat or fat free dairy and eggs.

⇒ Eating soy increases the risk of breast cancer.

**FACT:** There is no soy-cancer link. Also, the soy in the vegetarian diet helps meet the daily protein and calcium requirements. Less processed sources of soy are better choices such as tofu, edamame and tempeh.

⇒ Without meat in my diet, I will always be hungry.

**FACT:** The vegetarian diet includes whole grains (quinoa, barley, brown rice, oats, whole grain pasta, whole grain bread) which provide energy from complex carbohydrates. The whole grains also include fiber which helps you feel full.

Not yet convinced that this is for you? Then try eating a vegetarian diet just one day each week. There are many resources available on the internet with menu and recipe ideas.

Other good resources include:

**Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics** [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

**The Vegetarian Resource Group** [www.vrg.org](http://www.vrg.org)

**Meatless Monday** [www.meatlessmonday.com](http://www.meatlessmonday.com)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22155490>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5633358/>

Still unsure? No way you can enjoy vegetables? May be there is a way. Check out our next month issue about retraining your....taste buds!

## **Dress for success!**



Hopefully Santa brought you those new and well fitting sport shoes we talked about last month. There is one more thing you need before stepping in the gym... proper workout clothes!

Getting in regular exercise is important for your overall health and mental wellbeing. But the clothes you choose can actually have a pretty big impact on your performance. You might think that as you're going to get hot and sweaty anyway you could just slip into a worn-out cotton t-shirt, beat up shorts and hit the gym. Studies have shown the positive impact of wearing the right clothes for your workplace is valid at the gym too. Besides helping you get into the right mindset to tackle a gym session, the right clothes provide a host of other benefits as well.

### **Breathable**

You're going to be sweating during your workouts, wearing breathable fabrics that "wick" away moisture and keep you feeling cool and dry is going to make a tremendous difference in how you feel. There are many breathable synthetic fabrics that allow the sweat to be evaporated quickly from the skin, keeping your body cool without soaking your clothes and leaving you feeling sweaty and uncomfortable. Cotton shirts and pants, on the other hand, absorb the sweat, and they don't pull it away from the skin or help it to evaporate quickly. That's why cotton workout clothes can feel heavy and wet as you exercise.

### **Comfortable**

One of the main benefits of wearing the right workout gear is comfort. The worst thing you can do is wear clothing or shoes that aren't comfortable. When you choose articles of clothing that provide you comfort in terms of the fabric and style, you'll feel confident in what you're wearing, which allows you to direct your full attention to your workout instead of feeling self-conscious. Plus, it won't cause you any discomfort that negatively impacts your performance.

### **Range of motion**

Keep in mind that you don't want any clothing that gets in the way of the activity. The wrong workout clothes will wind up holding you back. A pair of skinny jeans for example would not be breathable, comfortable and will also restrain your movements. For better performance, choose flexible clothing that allows your body to move freely. Don't go for anything too tight or fitted if you feel it's holding you back.

### **Protection from the environment**

Your workout clothes can also help protect you from the environment. If you're planning to exercise outside in the summer when it's hot, loose clothing and breathable fabrics are incredibly important. It's going to help keep your body cool so you don't get overheated. Plus, you'll want to opt for lighter colors to reflect the sun's rays away from your body. Newer fabrics will also provide UV protection. If you are wearing a cap, make sure it's not too tight around your head but also ensure it won't fall off or slip.

When it's very cold outside, you'll need to dress warmly, but keep in mind that you'll be exercising and boosting your heart rate and your body temperature. Dress in layers that you can remove. Keep sweat-wicking clothing on your inner layer, and put an insulating layer on top that provides ventilation, allowing the

easy regulation of your body temperature. Cover your head, ears, and hands to protect them from the cold. Nothing can ruin an outdoor workout faster than getting soaked in the rain or caught in a strong wind. Wear an outer layer that protects your skin from the elements.

### **Buy good quality**

Good quality workout clothes can be a little pricey. However, the right gear is typically going to be extra durable, allowing you to get plenty of use out of it. Here are a few tips for tight budget. Check your local resale or consignment shop for good deals on quality brands; go to outlet stores; pick tops and bottoms that you can mix and match. Showy patterns and intricate designs are fun but are usually hard to coordinate and can look outdated faster. When you've reached the goal you have set, you can reward yourself with some cool new workout clothes during a sale event.

### **Protect your investment**

Because it is an investment, taking care of your workout gear is key. Gym clothes should be washed after every workout. Don't throw sweaty clothes in your hamper. Let them air dry first then toss them in the hamper. If you don't, this can result in a musty odor that is difficult to remove.

Avoid fabric softeners. Many of the sweat-wicking and compression materials don't do well with the softener and it will shorten the life of your garments. If you want your clothes to smell good, try a scented laundry detergent instead.

Hot water and heat can break down the fabric your clothes are made with and lead to shrinkage or affect the stretching fabrics. When washing your workout clothes, make sure you use cold water. When it comes to drying them, air drying is your best option. Air dry them either by hanging them to dry or laying them flat — drying on low heat if it's a must.

### **Get the Right Fit**

To make sure that your workout clothes fit your body and the workout that you have planned, consider these tips:

You should wear clothes that are loose and comfortable. But if you are running or biking, avoid wide-leg or loose pants that could get tangled up in the pedals or your feet.

For activities such as yoga or Pilates, stretchy, fitted fabrics that wick away sweat are a good choice.

Avoid fabrics that don't breathe. Never wear clothing made out of rubber-based or plastic-based materials, which keep sweat from evaporating and keep your body temperature too high during a workout. Try to stay away from rough fabrics that could irritate your skin during a workout with repetitive movements.

Wearing workout clothes that make you feel confident is extremely important. Whether you are more comfortable in loose clothing or feel like you have more flexibility and range of motion in more form-fitting pieces, always choose what is right for you. Help yourself reach your goal: Dress for success!

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/fitness/choosing-workout-clothes.aspx>,  
<https://endeavorathletic.com/blogs/news/benefits-of-wearing-right-workout-gear>

## Recipes and Activities



### Feed the birds!

The weather is getting cold and nature has slowed down. Our feathered friends have less insects and seeds to eat. Let's help out. They will repay us later in the season by keeping in check pests so we don't need to buy pesticides. Don't forget to provide fresh water.

Here are a few ideas for building homemade and inexpensive birdfeeders that even kids will love to make.

### Bird seed cookies

These feeders are festive and easy to make.

You will need:

2 cups bird seed (any type)

cookie cutters

1 packet unflavored gelatin

2 tablespoons cold water

1/3 cup boiling water

string

skewer

non-stick cooking spray

Spray your cookie cutters with non-stick spray to make the cookies easier to pop out.

Empty 1 package of unflavored gelatin into a bowl with 2 tablespoons of cold water. Let this sit for 1 minute. Add 1/3 cup of boiling water to the gelatin, stirring for a few minutes or until the gelatin is dissolved. This is the binder that keeps seeds together. Next add 2 cups of bird seed to the gelatin and mix thoroughly. Cover a tray with wax paper (parchment paper will work too), lay out your desired cookie cutters. Fill the cookie cutters with the mixture and press into shape firmly. The mixture gets really sticky. Cover the top of the cookie cutters with another piece of wax paper to help you press the mixture firmly without getting seeds all over your hands. You want to make sure the seeds are packed very tightly – it's part of what makes the feeders stay together well. Make a small hole in each cookie with the skewer for the string. Don't place the hole too close to the edges. Place in the refrigerator for a few hours to allow the seed mixture to set. Leave them at room temperature overnight flipping them so both sides can dry out. Carefully pop the cookies out of their molds and thread a string through the hole. Hang the ornaments from a tree, pole, or hook outside your windows and watch the birds.

You can also make birdfeeders that reuses material, like a **water bottle bird feeder**.

You will need :

water bottle

scissors

wooden spoons

bird seeds

o ring or hook

wire or twine

Screw an o ring or a hook on the plastic cap of the bottle. You can also drill 2 holes and have a wire or

twine go through. Poke holes in the water bottle where the spoons will go through. Once the spoons are in place, cut a slightly bigger hole above the wider part of the spoons so the birds can perch and reach in to get seeds. Fill with seeds. You can insert one or two spoons depending on the size of the bottle.

Check these other fun recycling ideas:

- \* If you have dried gourds at home, maybe leftover from fall decoration, you can use them to make a bird-feeder (make sure they are thoroughly dried). Simply cut the gourd in half (a bread knife works well) and clean out the seeds (save them to plant). Use a fine drill bit and make 3 holes at the top of the gourd spacing them evenly. Feed 3 pieces of thin wire through each hole. Twist each wire to fasten it to the gourd. Once the wires are attached to the gourd, bring all of them together to create the hanger. Fill the gourd with bird seeds. You can also drill tiny holes at the bottom of the gourd and add a small coffee filter to cover the holes. This will allow the water to drain in case of rain.
- \* When you make fresh-squeezed orange juice or eat grapefruits, use your leftovers to make cup bird-feeders. Let them dry up in your fridge first and follow the instruction for the gourd bird feeder.
- \* Don't throw the mesh produce bags away. Use them to make simple suet feeders!

<https://happyhooligans.ca/32-homemade-bird-feeders/>

<http://www.birdsleuth.org/diy-feeders/>



### **Black Bean Burger**

- 15 ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 green bell pepper
- 1/2 small onion
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2/3 cup whole wheat breadcrumbs
- 1 Tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- desired burger toppings: lettuce, tomato, etc.

### **Instructions**

#### **To make the burger:**

1. Place rinsed and drained black beans in a bowl. If needed, blot them with a paper towel to remove any extra moisture. Place in a large bowl and mash well with a fork.
2. Place the bell pepper, onion and garlic in a food processor and process until finely minced.
3. Transfer mixture to a fine mesh strainer to remove the excess water. (Remove as much moisture as you can-if it's too wet, the burger won't hold together as well.)
4. Add the strained vegetable mixture to the bowl with the black beans. Add the chili powder, cumin and salt and pepper and stir to combine.
5. Add beaten egg and mix. Stir in bread crumbs. Form mixture into 4 patties.

**At this point you can choose to:**

1. Grill the burgers on a well oiled grill for about 4-5 minutes on each side.
2. Bake them at 375°F on a lightly oiled baking sheet, for 10 minutes on each side.
3. Cook them on your stove using a grill pan, for 4-5 minutes on each side.
4. Refrigerate them for later.
5. Freeze them, covered, in a freezer bag for a quick weeknight dinner in the future.

Serve burgers on a whole wheat bun topped with lettuce, tomato, avocado, or any other desired toppings!

Calories 237, Total Fat 2g, Cholesterol 32mg, Sodium 183mg, Dietary Fiber 11g, Protein 12g

---

**Are you ready to dust off those walking shoes and walk across Texas?**

*Walk Across Texas* is a free eight week walking program for teams of eight people designed to help establish the habit of regular physical activity. Members do not need to walk together but can if they want.



**WALK  
ACROSS TEXAS!**  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

One member needs to be the team captain. Members of a team combine their mileage each week. Teams compete to see which one reaches the opposite state line first or walks the most miles during the eight week program. You do not need to form a complete team to participate!! Get your family members, friends, school, coworkers involved! Everyone keeps track of their daily mileage. To register your team go to <http://howdyhealth.org/programs/>. Since 1996, thousands of Texans have participated in Walk Across Texas! Join the fun! Contact Melisa Rhodes at (903) 567-4149 or email [melisa.rhodes@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:melisa.rhodes@ag.tamu.edu) for more information.

**LET'S**



---

Melisa Rhodes, Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service Van Zandt County  
235 East Groves St, Canton, Texas 75103  
(903) 567-4149  
[melisa.rhodes@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:melisa.rhodes@ag.tamu.edu)

*The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.*