

Curry's Nutrition Newsletter

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Another good reason to cut back high fat meals

High fat meals can increase inflammation of airways in asthma patients:

Asthma is prevalent in the Western countries. Many environmental factors are responsible for this condition. Recently, a group of researchers tried to find a correlation between the type of food intake and the incidence of asthma. The study reports that a high fat meal counteracts the relief provided by the asthma drugs by increasing inflammation in the airways. The study was conducted on two groups of people having asthma. One group was given a high-fat, high-calorie meal (1000 calories with 52% from fat alone) containing foods such as hamburgers and hash browns while the other group was given a low-fat, low-calorie meal of 200 calories of which 13% was only from fat. The inflammatory biomarkers were analyzed on their sputum (saliva) samples. There was an increase in all the inflammatory biomarkers that were studied in those eating high-fat meals. The results further indicated that people eating high-fat, high-calorie foods had lower response to bronchodilator drugs, leading to suppressed post-drug improvement in lung function, compared with those eating low-fat, low-calories meals. This is the first study showing the association between a high-fat meal and increased rate of airway inflammation. Therefore this finding is very important since further confirmed results may lead to conclusion that managing fat intake may also manage asthma attack.

Simple but effective ways to keep fit and healthy

It's that time of the year when kids are back in school. The winter is fast approaching with all the holiday shopping to be planned and shorter days to get everything done - getting kids ready for school, getting yourself to work, rushing to pick up kids, running errands - well, you get the picture. Amidst this entire hectic time schedule, it's hard to sneak in some gym time to shed off that extra pound before the holiday parties. Here are some simple but very effective ways to exercise right in your own home - yes, in your own home along with your daily chores! That way, you don't have to assign yourself some extra time for exercise to keep fit and healthy.

1. Remove that stool or chair from your kitchen island where you sit in between cooking or feeding your kids. Studies have found that you burn more calories while working standing on your feet compared to when doing the same by sitting. Make sure you spend more time on your two feet rather than sitting on that comfy rocking chair in your bedroom. A study from Mayo Clinic reported that people can burn about 350 calories more per day by moving, standing, and walking at least two hours extra than those spending time sitting. According to the scientists, this amount of calories lost may amount to about 35lbs weight loss in a year. Isn't it worth trying?
2. Fit in stretching exercises when watching your favorite TV show and get done with both in half the time!
3. Leave your water bottle downstairs and make several trips to the kitchen to drink water. Doing this will burn some more calories even when you're working on an important project in your office upstairs. Don't miss an opportunity when you can make the stairs work for your healthy life style.
4. Start having the habit of doing a squat every time you need to reach to the ground. Bending to pick up things from the floor causes a lot of stress on your back bone. A squat, on the other hand, lets you use your leg muscle more to make it strong. This also strengthens the muscles around the colon and thus helps to reduce straining that often leads to hernias, and diverticulitis. Experts also say that the squatting position is good for a pregnant woman and makes her ready for a normal delivery. So, do squat exercise a few minutes each day.
5. Don't feel guilty about not going to the gym to work on toning your muscles. Many studies have shown that lifting lighter weights for longer time results in similar muscle build up as with lifting heavy weights in the gym. So, get going with lifting some lighter weights available around you, right at the comfort of your home and work longer rather than spending that time going to the gym.
6. Plan to do some work in the yard during the weekends, such as fall cleaning. You will feel very fresh and happy working outside, tending to your yard.

Natural Healing Powers of Spices

Apart from imparting color, flavor, and taste to a dish, spices may also provide health-promoting benefits. Since ancient times, natural healers have used spices for treating many illnesses. In India, spices such as cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric are mentioned as early as in the Aryurveda (The Great Book of Science of Medicine in Hinduism) for their healing properties. Aryurveda from the Eastern world is now a part of Alternative Medicine in the Western world. Many scientific research reports are now validating the historic use of different spices for their health benefits.

Continued from last issue:

Coriander Seed

The coriander is a small, green leafy herb very similar to parsley. Both the green leaves and the dry seeds obtained from the coriander plant are used as common ingredients in many cuisines such as Indian, Chinese, Mexican, Middle-Eastern, and African. The dry seeds are usually used to grind to a powder and used either on its own or blended with other spices as in curry powder to be used as flavoring ingredient.

It is believed to help in digestion and provide relief from gas pain, bloated stomach, nausea, and vomiting. It is also a natural diuretic and anti-inflammatory agent. People with insomnia have been benefited with using coriander in any form since coriander is reported to increase production of "feel good" hormone "serotonin" which induces sleep, and calms down a restless mind. Other benefits associated with using this herb include relief from muscle pain, memory loss, intestinal worm infestation, and mild headaches. It is an effective remedy for foul breath.

Cumin Seed

It relieves pain and cramps in the abdomen due to flatulence by helping in digestion. It is also rich in antioxidants and functions as an anti-inflammatory agent.

Fennel Seeds

With its distinctive licorice flavor, it is enjoyed as such or as a spice while cooking.

In India, traditionally, it is used as a mouth freshener after each meal. Also, it is believed that chewing on these seeds helps in proper digestion after a heavy meal. Many people enjoy fennel infused tea as a digestive aid as well as a refreshing drink.

Fenugreek Seeds

Both fenugreek seeds and the leaves are used as spices. Apart from its culinary uses, it has an array of health benefits. Due to its estrogen like properties it can reduce the effect of hot flashes and mood fluctuations that are very common during menopause. It can also provide relief from arthritis, asthma, and bronchitis, improve digestion, maintain a healthy metabolism, treat sore throat, and cure acid reflux. But the most rewarding use of this spice is in controlling blood sugar and cholesterol levels. Many research reports indicate that regular consumption of fenugreek seeds aids in controlling type-2 diabetes.

Garlic

Garlic is most effective as an aid for digestion that gives relief from gas accumulation in the intestine. It is also an anti-inflammatory and is used for relieving joint pain, sinus headaches, and toothaches. Garlic is widely used for common cold, dry cough and congestion. After many trials conducted on patients with high blood pressure, scientists are of the opinion that garlic can be of clinical importance for patients with mild high blood pressure. However, garlic supplements function similarly to blood thinners such as Coumadin that requires the discussion with a physician before starting with garlic as a blood pressure remedy.

While there are many beliefs and proven results about health benefits of our common spices, one should be careful while using it. It is not advisable to use any single spice for its health benefits in large doses, which can prove to be toxic. One should always consult with the naturopath physician before using such alternative medicines. However, regular use of various spices in every day's cooking definitely will promote health.

(Spice list to be continued in subsequent issues)

Recipes

Double Chocolate Pumpkin Bars

(Yield: 20-24 bars)

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 tbsp cocoa powder
 - 3 ½ tsp. Curry's Signature Chai Latte Spice
 - 1 tsp. baking powder
 - ½ tsp of salt
 - 2 sticks of butter or margarine, at room temperature
 - 1 ¼ cup sugar
 - 1 tsp vanilla extract
 - 1 egg, beaten
 - 1 cup pumpkin puree
 - ½ cup chocolate chips
 - ½ cup white chocolate chips
- Frosting: Ready to use frosting of your choice (optional)

Procedure:

Preheat the oven to 325° F. Prepare a 9"X13" pan with non stick spray. You may use tin foil and overhang it for ease of removing the product after baking. Mix flour, cocoa powder, Chai Latte Spice, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl. Separately mix sugar and butter in a large bowl until smooth and creamy. Add beaten egg slowly with continuous mixing. Add pumpkin to the egg mixture and blend well. Add dry ingredients to this egg mixture until well blended. Do not over mix. Fold in the chocolate chips very lightly. Pour the mixture in to the prepared tin and bake it in the preheated oven for 35-40 min or until it is pulled from the sides and the tooth pick comes out clean. Remove onto a wire rack and let cool. Use the frosting over the bars and decorate according to your choice and cut into individual bars.

[Tip: you can substitute pumpkin puree with sweet potato puree for similar results]

Hot Spiced Cider Recipe

Ingredients:

1/2 gallon of apple cider
1 orange
2 tbsp Curry's Signature Chai Spice
1/4 cup brown sugar

Procedure:

Pour apple cider into a large saucepan, cover, and set the heat on medium-high. While cider is heating up, peel a couple of thick strips from the orange with a peeler. Place orange, orange peel strips, the Chai Spice, and the brown sugar into the sauce pan with the cider. Keep covered and heat the spiced cider mixture to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for about 20 minutes.

Use a fine mesh sieve to strain the hot spiced cider to remove the orange, and any spice grits that might sediment. For an adult version, spike it up with a touch of bourbon, brandy, or rum. Serve hot. Add a cinnamon stick to each cup for garnishing.

Oven Barbecued Chicken

(Serves 4)

Ingredients:

¼ cup water
2 tbsp cider vinegar
2 tbsp vegetable oil
½ cup tomato ketchup
Hot sauce (optional) to your taste
2 ½ tbsp Curry's Signature Tandoori Rub
Salt to taste
1 whole fryer cut into serving pieces
Vegetable oil spray
1-2 whole garlic pods with skin on

Procedure:

Preheat the oven to 350⁰F. Prepare a large baking pan by lightly spraying with vegetable oil. In a small saucepan combine all the ingredients except the chicken pieces and garlic pods and cook over medium heat. Simmer the mixture for about 10-12 min with continuous stirring until the mixture becomes slightly thick in consistency. Set aside. Rinse the chicken pieces, pat dry, and prick them slightly with a fork. Arrange the pieces on the baking pan. Pour half of the barbecue sauce over the chicken and brush smoothly on all sides. Arrange the garlic pods all around the chicken pieces. Spray the chicken with vegetable oil. Bake uncovered, basting the remaining sauce every 20 min. After ½ hour turn the pieces once and baste the other sides with the sauce. Continue baking until the chicken is well done and develops a nice brown color on all sides, about 50-60 min. Serve hot with a side of wild rice and lightly sautéed asparagus.

[Tip: This recipe can also be used for grilling your chicken. Marinade the chicken in the prepared barbecue sauce and grill over medium heat charcoal/electric grill. Use the remaining sauce to baste the pieces frequently. Grill it until the chicken is cooked but tender].