

# WELLNESS NEWS *YOU CAN USE*

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MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION  
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## BUYING CHOCOLATE

What's Valentine's Day without some CHOCOLATE? Choose chocolate wisely! Handpick some special shapes or exotic flavors of chocolate rather than just a box of everyday chocolates for a gift. This says you really care and have put some thought into the gift. Remember, just because it is expensive does not mean that it is high quality chocolate. Many countries have fine chocolate. Don't choose chocolate that has no cocoa butter fats, real chocolate has no fat other than the cocoa butter. Don't buy chocolates that have non-dairy fats or partially hydrogenated oils. Try to buy the very freshest chocolates that you can find. Even if the recipient is on a diet they will be tempted to try a special perfect chocolate.



## EXERCISE BECAUSE

- Active people are less likely to be depressed
- It lowers the risk of stroke
- It cuts the risk of heart attacks
- It lowers blood pressure
- It lowers your risk of type 2 diabetes
- It reduces the pain of arthritis

You don't have 30 minutes to exercise daily? Then break it up into shorter bursts, chasing the kids, walking the dog and climbing the stairs all count. (It is estimated that Americans spend about \$19 billion annually for gym memberships).

## MUSHROOMS, THE PRIMITIVE FOOD

Mushrooms are a fungus, and grow on decaying matter. This doesn't sound too pleasant but mushrooms add a great deal of flavor to many dishes. They can be served by themselves, pickled, sautéed, creamed, stuffed, baking, added to salads or pizza, used to flavor stocks, and mix well with meats, fish and grains.

Mushrooms also supply us with some key nutrients. They contain minerals and vitamins such as niacin, riboflavin, folate, B<sub>6</sub>, vitamin D, iron, potassium, and selenium. There is some research that indicates mushrooms boost the immune system.

Fresh mushrooms are very perishable so handle with care. Because they absorb water, don't wash until ready to use. Don't soak them in water or they become mushy. Try a toothbrush or a wet towel to gently remove the dirt rather than using water. Don't store them in a tightly wrapped plastic bag or the trapped moisture will make them spoil very quickly. Mushrooms can be frozen however they are better if sautéed in oil before freezing. They will be perfect in the freezer for about a month. The most popular mushroom in the U.S. is the white button representing about 90% of those consumed.

*All people smile in the same language!*



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Back pain is the second most common ailment in adults. Headaches is number one.
- Eat foods with high fiber to jump start a sluggish digestion system and stop constipation.
- A free range egg is an egg where the hen has access to the outdoors. A pasture raised egg implies that the hen has been raised outdoors and moved regularly to different grassy lots on the farm. The hens have a varied diet of foods.
- Have five to nine servings of fresh fruits and vegetables a day. Substitute canned, frozen or dried when fresh is not available.
- Drinking vegetable juice is a easy way to include more vegetables in your diet. Vegetable juice that includes tomatoes are good sources of lycopene, an antioxidant. Select a low-sodium variety.

## MAKE YOUR OWN SALAD BAR FOR YOUR NEXT PARTY

Provide romaine, leaf or whatever lettuce, spinach, watercress, greens with the leafy lettuce. Salad toppers, shredded carrots, shredded cabbage, garbanzo beans, broccoli, cauliflower, kidney beans, avocado, hard cooked eggs, tomatoes, sweet peppers, pea pods, mushrooms, olives, sunflower seeds, chopped nuts and raisins, plus anything else you like on salads. Any kind of meat, shrimp or leftover turkey cubes can be added. Think “A-meal-in-a-bowl”!!! Better yet ask the guests to bring one salad ingredient and have a “dump” salad. Provide several salad dressings, and a loaf of crusty bread and it’s party time. Then to



make the meal real simple—have an ice cream/frozen yogurt bar. Provide several toppings and your work is done!

## BAKING TIPS

- ✓ Use table salt for baking. Salt brings out the flavor of the other ingredients, even sweets.
- ✓ Don't tap or shake flour into the measuring cup. Gently spoon flour into the cup and level with a knife.
- ✓ Don't melt the butter when making cookies. When the recipe calls for softened butter it should be just soft enough to blend easily.



## GETTING THE D YOU NEED

Vitamin D may cut the risk of breast, colon, prostate and ovarian cancers according to new research. To keep strong bones your body needs calcium along with vitamin D to protect from bone disease. Vitamin D is thought to also lower blood pressure, besides colds and flu are worse when you are deprived of vitamin D. So for those of us that live in the north with very little sun from November to March we need to get vitamin D from a non-sun source.

- Eat oily fish such as salmon, sardines and tuna a few times a week.
- Look for vitamin D in milk, orange juice and other fruit juices, soy milk, butter substitutes, cereals and yogurts. These foods have been fortified with vitamin D.
- Talk to your health care provider to see if he/she recommends a vitamin D supplement. Too high a dose of supplements can be harmful and cause liver damage so get some advice of how much you should be taking.

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