

NUTRITION NEWS

Optimal You Dietitians Bringing Nutrition Straight to You.



April 2021

Spring is here. Whether you're traveling or hoping to relax at home we hope you take a break to renew this month. This edition shares the latest nutrition news briefs, brings our first of three DIY gardening series, challenges you to start Feeling Fresh, and provides tips to cook with lentils. There's something for everyone in this timely issue!



TRENDS IN THE NEWS

Eating for mental health

While food alone cannot treat or cure depression, anxiety or stress, eating a minimally processed diet rich in antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, fiber, healthy fats and probiotics has been linked to better mental well-being.

Boost Immunity with food

COVID-19 reminded us health is transient, putting a focus on supporting our immune system. Purpose-driven ingredients such as olive oil to support heart health, vitamin C to boost the immune system, or probiotics to promote a healthy digestive system have been brought to the forefront of the food industry.

Climatarians

Consumers who choose a lower intake of animal products but don't eliminate them. Instead, purchasing animal products with a lower environmental footprint, such as swapping beef for chicken or eating a few plant-based meals each week. Focus is on buying locally grown produce and animal-based products to lower carbon emissions caused by long-distance food delivery. The goal of the climatarian diet is not an all-or-nothing approach, it's making small changes that collectively as a society make a large difference.

SMALL CHANGES, BIG RESULTS

Whether you consider yourself a climatarian, vegetarian or humanitarian you can positively affect your impact on the environment in many ways.

In our new "Keeping It Fresh" column this spring we'll introduce the basics of gardening beginning with planning and creating space. Whether you're limited to a small porch or live on a couple of acres, growing your own vegetables is a rewarding way to utilize your resources. Next month we'll share a planting guide with tips & tricks for a bountiful crop. In June as you reap the benefits of your harvest, we'll provide the basics of DIY composting.





KEEPING IT FRESH

Growing produce at home has seen a surge in popularity in the last decade from a desire to eat clean, save money and know exactly where your food comes from. Regardless of your motives, gardening is a stress-relieving hobby with bountiful benefits! The first step: consider your gardening space and needs as you read these options. Next month we hope you'll be reaching for your trowel and embracing your green thumb.



Maximize your space Start with a small piece of land that gets at least 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight daily and has access to water. Plant tallest plants in the northern-most edge, so they don't cast a shadow on other plants. Note: raised beds enable you to add good soil that won't get compacted when you reach across to seed, weed and harvest (instead of walking between rows) resulting in better-aerated and hydrated soil.

Raised Beds allow a vegetable garden in your backyard while also being functional. Grow different vegetables in each planter; plant root vegetables in one planter and lettuces in another. Separate vegetable beds help focus different types of care needed on specific vegetables. The raised beds (picture, top left) are bordered with wooden planks, keeping vegetables to their own area and your yard neat and tidy.



Divide and conquer A large divided bed (middle picture) works well for a small to medium-sized lawn and keeps the garden compact while still growing a variety of vegetables. Sectioned spaces are an easy and achievable alternative to multiple vegetable beds that require more space and effort to create. The divider is an inexpensive solution and can be purchased from hardware stores, or easily replicated at home with a few lengths of timber. Set the planks out in a grid shape then secure together with glue, screws, tack nails, or garden string.

Boxed vegetable gardens are ideal for small spaces. Container boxes can be kept on a windowsill, balcony, terrace, or in a small garden. The size of the box is chosen to suit space limitations. With container boxes growing a small selection of vegetables in a small space is achievable. You can also rotate your crops to grow different vegetables one after the other.

Where could your garden grow?

Hanging planters (above) are an excellent space-saving solution and keep different types separate which is beneficial if care such as frequency and amount of watering needed varies. Planters are best hung from metal frames for strength and stability as they can become heavy when filled. Build planters from wood, metal, or plastic, depending on the look and the amount of money you want to spend.

Tall planters are great to group together if you have the space required. Deep planters are perfect for growing root vegetables that require extra space, and the height saves your knees from tending to the needs of your plants. Tall planters are ideal for anyone with joint issues, as you could happily pull up a chair and enjoy gardening without running into stiff joints or aching muscle issues.

Pots are ideal space savers. Mismatched pots fit the popular rustic trend. Source containers from markets, friends and family, then watch your vegetables flourish in your mismatched pot collection. Best vegetables grown in pots; peppers (spicy or sweet) tomatoes (cherry or plum) if staked, fed and watered. Zucchini and summer squash if picked regularly once they produce.



OPTIMAL YOU PRESENTS

FEELING FRESH NUTRITION CHALLENGE

It's time to up your nutrition game! Our Feeling Fresh Challenge provides weekly Dietitian-led videos, tasks and recipes to move you toward a whole food, nutrient-dense diet. Join in and start to overhaul your diet while having fun in the kitchen.

Challenge runs: April 19 - May 14
Final Live Event: May 11, 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST

Email Sarah.Vaneerden@Amway.com
to register by April 15th.

LENTILS

BUDGET FRIENDLY BITES



Versatile Lentils

Lentils are a cost effective, pantry-stable and nutrient-dense addition to your kitchen. They cook fairly quickly, with boiling time ranging from 15–30 minutes depending on variety, and are quite versatile. Try your hand at a basic cooked lentil side dish, or try something new like a lentil soup, lentil burgers or lentil loaf. These nutrition stars are not only reserved for vegetarian diets, though they are a great source of plant-based protein.

A Rainbow of Choices

Brown lentils are most common, with an earthy flavor and firm texture. Red and yellow lentils are a bit different, because they are split. They “melt” into dishes more easily and have a slightly sweet and nutty taste. Green lentils vary in size and are quite mild. Two less common types include Puy, which are green but very small with a peppery flavor, and Beluga, a tiny black legume that is great in warm salads.

Good for Disease Prevention

Lentils are great for blood sugar control and healthy weight. Research shows that consuming lentils not only benefits the glucose response at that meal, but also the subsequent meal up to four hours later! The legume’s high fiber content make them perfect candidates for lowering heart disease risk and helping to maintain a healthy blood pressure.

Creamy Coconut Lentil Curry



Ingredients

- 1 TBSP coconut oil
- 1 TBSP each: cumin seeds, coriander seeds
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 28-ounce can of crushed tomatoes
- 2 TBSP ginger, chopped
- 1 TBSP turmeric
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 1 c dried brown lentils
- 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper, optional
- 3 c up of water
- 1 15-ounce can coconut milk
- A few handfuls of cherry tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped cilantro

Directions

Heat coconut oil in large pot over medium-high heat. Add the cumin and coriander seeds and toast until they start to brown, about 45 seconds.

Add the garlic and cook 2 minutes. Add crushed tomatoes, ginger, turmeric, and salt and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes. Add lentils, cayenne pepper, and water and bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover, simmer for 35-40 minutes, until lentils are soft. Stir a couple times and if the curry starts to look dry, add an extra 1/2 cup of water.

Once the lentils are cooked through and the curry is thick, add the coconut milk and cherry tomatoes and bring the pot back to a simmer for a couple minutes. Remove from heat and stir in cilantro.

Lentils: Nutrient Powerhouses

Lentils are a triple threat when it comes to nutrition, packing protein, fiber and iron into each serving, as well as other nutrients! Just 1/2 cup of lentils provides 12 g protein, 8 g fiber and 15% of your daily iron needs. Your body will also benefit from the potassium and folate found in these mighty legumes.



COMING UP!

Nutrition classes & events

4/19/2021—5/14/2010

Feeling Fresh Challenge

April 19—May 14

Our simple 4 week Feeling Fresh Nutrition Challenge will help start a diet overhaul while having fun in the kitchen!

The challenge culminates in a May 11 Event Don't miss this delicious opportunity!

Register for the Challenge today:
Sarah.VanEerden@amway.com

LEARN MORE

fitnessamway.com

The Optimal You Fitness Facility Website has tips on nutrition, well-being, physical activity, managing disease & more. Visit our nutrition & healthy cooking pages for cooking classes, recipes, videos, and tips to include nutrient-dense foods in meals & snacks.



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APPOINTMENT
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DID YOU KNOW?

All Michigan Amway employees, spouses and their dependents receive **FREE** Nutrition Consultations? We are available virtually, by phone and email to address your nutrition questions & concerns.

