



# communicating Food for Health



IT'S PEAR MONTH!

HOW WILL YOU CELEBRATE?

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## Sugar-Sweetened Drinks Appear Fattening

The average American has been increasing in weight at least since the 1950s. The reason for this increase in BMI has been debated for decades, but still there is no consensus as to what is causing it. There is no debate today that most Americans are overweight or obese. For many years it was argued the major cause was reduced activity. That may have been a contributing factor years ago, but there has been little change in the average activity of Americans since about 1980 and

yet the average American keeps getting fatter. So while activity may play a role, it is unlikely to be the major driving force expanding the waistline of most Americans today. One increasingly likely culprit promoting increased adiposity is the gradual increase in beverage calories, particularly in sugar sweetened beverages, over the past several decades. Indeed, the percentage of total calories coming from beverages has increased dramatically for many years. Back in the 1950s and

(continued on next page)

## Calories from sugar-sweetened drinks provide little satiety.

1960s perhaps 10-12% of the average American's total calorie intake came from drinks. Today the percentage of beverage calories has more than doubled for the average American. This marked increase in beverage calories and particularly sugar-sweetened drinks has been driven in part by larger average portion sizes and in part by an increased variety of beverages, particularly those rich in sugar. Back in the 1950s, most sugar-containing beverages were sodas and fruit juices. A standard bottle of Coke back in the 1950s had but 6 ounces. Today the "small" soda serving size is at least 2 to 3 times greater. In addition, there are now far more fruit drinks, "energy" drinks, "sports" drinks, and a growing variety of sugar-sweetened teas and coffees that were either not available or rarely consumed back in the 1950s and 1960s, when most American maintained a BMI of less than 25.

### **Sugar-Rich Drinks Promote Weight Gain**

A study comparing the impact of consuming sugar as either soda or jelly beans over several weeks found that subjects compensated for the extra calories coming from the jelly beans and spontaneously reduced their intake of other sources of energy. However, this compensatory reduction in other sources of calories failed when the same amount of sugar was added to the diet as a soda drink. Not surprisingly, after 4 weeks

weight was stable in those consuming the extra sugar as jelly beans whereas average weight increased significantly when the same amount of sugar was consumed as a soda drink. [Di-Meglio DP, Mates RD. Liquid versus solid carbohydrate: effects on food intake and body weight. *Int J Obesity* 2000;24:795-800]. A meta-analysis of 88 studies looking at the association between soft drink consumption and BMI "...found a clear association of soft drink intake with increased calorie intake and body weight." [Vartanian LR, et al. Effects of soft drink consumption on nutrition and health: a systematic review and met-analysis. *Am J Pub Health*. 2007;97:1-10]. A more recent analysis of data from three different prospective studies with over thirty thousand subjects followed concluded: "The genetic association with adiposity appeared to be more pronounced with greater intake of sugar sweetened beverages." [Qi Q, et al. Sugar-sweetened beverages and genetic risk of obesity. *N Engl J Med*. 2012. DOI:10.1056/NEJMoa1203039]. Simply put, those who appear to be more genetically prone to gain weight appeared to be the ones most likely to put on those extra pounds in response to consuming more sugar-sweetened drinks.

Another study in the same September 21, 2012 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* by researchers affiliated

with Harvard University randomly assigned 224 overweight or obese adolescents to either an experimental or control group. Reported consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks in the two groups at baseline were the same on average. The experimental group intervention consisted largely of the researchers delivering sugar-free beverages to the homes of the experimental group of teenagers for one year. The parents of the experimental group were encouraged to stop buying sugar-sweetened beverages (including fruit juices) but there was no discussion about reducing calorie intake or increasing activity. By contrast, the parents of the control group were simply mailed \$50 gift cards to a local supermarket twice during the year with no instructions on how the money should be spent. During the first year of the study, the control group gained an average of a bit more than 4 pounds more than the experimental group. Both groups were followed a second year without any intervention, and after the second year, the percent body fat in the two groups was not significantly reduced.

**Bottom Line:** The evidence continues to mount that calories from sugar-sweetened drinks provide little satiety and so promote weight gain, particularly in those genetically prone to put on excess body fat.

*By James J. Kenney, PhD, RD, FACN*

## PRESENTATION IDEAS

### Make an Artful Display

When you're giving a cooking demonstration, the way you present your ingredients can really make a difference in audience engagement. If you have things haphazardly tossed into bowls and plates, or even just zip lock bags, the instructions won't be as clear and you won't look as professional as you could.

Gather pretty prep bowls and other items that will make your presentation ingredients look more appealing. Be sure that all your tools and ingredients are ready to go before your class arrives to view the demonstration.

Linda L. Rankin, PhD, RD, LD, FADA, Professor and Assistant Dean at Idaho State University's Division of Health Sciences and the Department of Health and Nutrition Sciences, uses gorgeous glass containers for her cooking

classes. These ones are called [Prodyne Spice Towers](#). She told Food and Health, "I bought three and am going to use them in my Healthful Cooking class - 1 for legumes, 1 for rice, and 1 for grains. They will also be great for presentations, TV spots, and individual counseling."

We loved these towers so much that we even pinned them to our list of favorite kitchen equipment on Pinterest. Check us out at <http://pinterest.com/foodandhealth/>!

### Just for You

We love creating new presentation ideas, and many of them are made by client request. We love talking about ways to make nutrition education more fun! Are you dying for some new ideas about one of your projects? [Contact us](#) today and we'll get right on it!

### Bagged Lettuce Tips

- Pay attention to sell-by dates and make sure to use your lettuce before it expires.
- Buy bags of lettuce that have been kept cold in the store.
- Refrigerate as soon as possible.
- Wash your hands, utensils, and counters before handling your lettuce.
- Pouring greens directly from the bag into salad bowls helps you avoid cross-contamination.



## In the Bag

Bagged lettuce certainly makes eating salads and other fresh vegetables more convenient. But there is always that nagging question: "should I wash it before eating?"

I've visited a couple of the bagged lettuce companies in California and personally feel comfortable eating these products directly from the bag. I don't think I could wash the produce as well myself.

According to [The Partnership for Food Safety Education](#), re-washing bagged lettuce is not necessary. They maintain, "while it is important to wash most fruits and vegetables, if packaged greens are labeled ready-to-eat, washed, or triple washed, then the product does not need to be washed at home. Pre-washed greens have been through a cleaning process immediately before going into the bag. Re-washing and handling the greens creates opportunities for contamination."

That last part is especially important. It is possible to contaminate the produce once you leave the grocery store. Sometimes re-washing and handling the lettuce at home can cause more problems than it solves.

*Article and tips by Cheryle Syracuse, MS*

# Low-Fat Egg Rolls

## Ingredients:

- 1 tsp canola oil
- 1 tsp garlic paste
- 1 tsp grated ginger
- 4 ounces lean ground chicken
- 1 tsp water
- 1 cup broccoli slaw or shredded cabbage
- 1 cup raw spinach leaves, rinsed and dried
- 1 tsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 8 spring roll wrappers
- Cooking oil spray

## Directions:

1. Heat canola oil in a nonstick pan. Add garlic and ginger and sauté lightly for a minute or two.
2. Add the chicken and stir well. Reduce heat and cover pan. After 1 minute, add a table-

spoon of water and stir well. Cover and cook until chicken is done. Place mixture on a freezer-safe plate and place in the freezer for 6 minutes.

3. Mix cooled chicken, slaw, spinach, soy sauce, and sesame oil in a medium bowl.
4. Place a few spoonfuls of filling mixture in each spring roll wrapper. Roll gently, securing the edges to the middle of the roll and sealing with water. Press flat.
5. Spray a non-stick, ovenproof pan with canola oil and heat over medium heat. Place the rolls in the pan and allow bottoms to brown. Spray the tops of the rolls with canola oil spray, then flip them and place the pan



in a preheated 425 degree oven. Bake for 12 minutes or until golden.

To serve, cut egg rolls in half and arrange with broccoli slaw.

Serves 8. Each 1 egg roll serving: 130 calories, 3g fat, 0g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 10mg cholesterol, 213mg sodium, 19g carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 0g sugars, 6g protein.

To make this tasty dish, you'll need...

- 3 cups prepared brown rice (2 cups water, 1 cup rice)
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 onion, chopped fine,
- 2 tsp fresh garlic paste or finely chopped fresh garlic
- 2 tsp grated fresh ginger
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 can no-sodium-added diced tomatoes with juice
- 2 chicken breasts, skinless and cubed
- 1/3 cup fat-free plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons chopped cashews, toasted

## CURRY CASHEW CHICKEN

### Make It Tonight!

1. Heat oil in a large nonstick wok over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, and ginger and cover with a lid. Sweat the veggies for several minutes. Add the curry powder and cook briefly.
2. Add the tomatoes, garam masala and chicken. Cover and cook until the chicken is done.
3. Remove from heat. Add the yogurt and stir well.
4. Serve the chicken over rice, topped with toasted cashews.



Serves 4. Each 1- 1/2 cups serving: 309 calories, 8g fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 29mg cholesterol, 54mg sodium, 43g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 5g sugars, 17g protein.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

# The Secret of Longevity on the Greek Island of Ikaria

The New York Times recently described the isolated island of Ikaria as the island where people forget to die. One out of three Ikarians live past the age of 90, and researchers have identified several reasons for this: genetics, strong family networks, an unusual concept of time, naps, and diet. When arriving on the island, you notice that people here “take it easy.” In fact, their stores open after 11 am. They take naps and follow the traditional Greek diet that served as the prototype for the Mediterranean diet. They consume plenty of olive oil, vegetable dishes as main courses, wild plants, and very little meat and sweets. Their habits basically reflect the lifestyle in Greece 50 years ago.

## Soufiko: An Ikarian Vegetarian Main Course

### Ingredients

2 large eggplants  
3-4 zucchini  
2 potatoes  
4 green peppers  
4 onions  
2 tomatoes  
2 garlic cloves  
½ cup strong red wine  
½- ¾ cup olive oil  
Salt and pepper

### Directions

1. Chop the eggplants and pepper into one inch pieces.
2. Cut the potato and zucchini in round slices.
3. Roughly chop the tomato, onion and the garlic.
4. In about 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil sauté the eggplant, then the onion and garlic. Once the garlic starts to become fragrant, add the rest of the vegetables and let them cook in their own juices for about 15 minutes.
5. Add the glass of wine and let the mixture simmer until the sauce thickens. Remove from heat and add ¼ cup olive oil, salt, and pepper to taste.
6. Let the dish sit for a few minutes.
7. Enjoy warm or cold with some feta cheese.

*By Elena Paravantes, RD*



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

# Shop Smart: Label Tips

It seems like every time you turn around, companies are adding a new claim to their product packaging. So how can you decipher all these crazy assertions, much less separate the useful ones from the advertising? Why, with this handy-dandy guide, of course!

- **All-Natural** - This means that everything in the product is in its natural form. That's very different than saying everything in the product is healthful. For example, sugar, salt, and fat are all "natural."
- **Organic** - According to the USDA National Organic Program, "Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation. Before a product can be labeled 'organic,' a Government-approved certifier inspects the farm where the food is grown to make sure the farmer is following all the rules necessary to meet USDA organic standards." Just like "all-natural," "organic" food is not necessarily healthful food. Sugar, salt, and fat can all be produced organically. That said, people often choose organic foods because of their impact on animal health and the environment.
- **Light** - This is a tricky label. What is the product lighter than? By how many calories? For example, "lite" potato chips have only 27 fewer calories per serving than regular potato chips. Check the nutrition facts before you put "light" items in your cart.



- **Sugar-Free** - This is not the same as "calorie-free!" Don't let the label mislead you!
- **Reduced Sodium** - Reduced from what and by how much? If you're looking to reduce sodium content, choose items with "no added salt." Check the label. If a product has 5% or less of the daily value from salt, it's generally a pretty good bet.
- **Low-Fat** - Buying low-fat foods is not a bad idea, especially with dairy products. However, if you are buying baked goods, you'll find that a reduction in fat does not necessarily become a reduction in calories. Most low-fat bakery treats are still filled with white flour and sugar, which are both high in calorie density.
- **Reduced Fat** - Yes, the fat is reduced, but it's still present and may even still be high. According to FDA rules, an item has to have 3 g of fat or less per 100 calorie portion to be considered low in fat.
- **No Trans Fat** - The trade off for these foods is that the trans fat is often replaced with saturated fat like palm oil.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

## IDEAS YOU CAN USE: WRITE WELL

You may have the most groundbreaking, earth-shattering, amazing information and ideas, but if you don't communicate them in a way that resonates with other people, you might as well be shouting gibberish. Writing clearly and well is important. That's why we've put together some of our favorite writing tips, just for you.

### 1. Use Structure

A clear outline makes it easier for your readers to follow your ideas. Leaping from one subject to another and then back again is a recipe for confusion. Ask yourself what your key message is, then frame the rest of your article around it. Find a way to make your points flow logically from one to the other -- what connects them and why? After all, it's much easier to follow a simple outline than to guess your way through a series of apparently unrelated points.

### 2. Pay Attention to Tone

Tone is important. No one wants to read articles that are condescending, nor are they interested in plowing through confusing verbiage. It helps to imagine your reader in the room with you. How would you talk to that person? This technique often helps cut through many of the cutesy or accidentally condescending parts of a piece of writing.

### 3. Explain Why

Why should your readers be paying attention to what you say? What's in it for them? Explain and illustrate the benefits of doing what you want them to do, whether it's following your advice or buying your product.

### 4. Talk It Out

Reading your writing aloud can draw your attention to areas that need work. Sometimes your eyes simply skim over problem spots. Hearing the words you typed offers new perspective and will help make your writing smoother.

### 5. Keep It Simple

Brevity truly is the soul of wit. When most people are faced with a wall of text, they won't even bother to skim through it. Be as clear as possible and stick to the point -- don't ramble off on tangents, no matter how neat they seem. If you have a lot of information to communicate, consider breaking it up into multiple posts or handouts. Another strategy for getting rid of that wall of text is to incorporate images. Photos, charts, graphs, etc are all amazing tools that help communicate your point without letting the overall article get too wordy. Bulleted or numbered lists are another great resource for separating your ideas into manageable sections.

# November

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[Healthy Skin Month](#)  
[Lung Cancer Awareness Month](#)  
[Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month](#)  
[Peanut Butter Lovers' Month](#)  
[Pecan Month](#)  
[Pepper Month](#)  
[Pomegranate Month](#)

[Fig Week](#) (November 1-7)

[Split Pea Week](#) (November 4-10)

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# Do Sports Drinks Promote Obesity?

With the mayor of New York City and a growing chorus from public health authorities all linking the consumption of soft drinks to obesity and related ills, the sale of sugar-sweetened sodas has been tapering off over the last several years. However, the sale of other sugar-sweetened drinks, including "sports drinks," continues to grow. A study presented at the annual scientific meeting of the **Obesity Society** this past September suggests that the public perception of sports drinks being a healthier option than sodas may be incorrect. Data on nearly 11,000 children (9-11 years old initially) of participants in the ongoing **Nurses' Health Study II** were tracked over time by Dr. Alison Field and her colleagues at Harvard's Medical School. After 2 years of follow-up, the kids gained almost 2 lbs on average for each can of soda they drank daily. However, this study also found that kids put on even more weight for each bottle of sports drink that they consumed daily. On aver-

age, each bottle of sports drink consumed daily resulted in a weight gain of 3.5 lbs over two years. That's almost twice as much as the weight gained for each can of soda. Over the life of this study, which began in 2004, consumption of sugar-sweetened sodas declined slightly among the participants, which mirrors the national trend, but the consumption of sports drinks, particularly among boys, increased significantly, which also matches the national trend. A typical sports drink is sold in a 20-ounce bottle and provides about 125 kcal of sugar. By contrast, sodas are most commonly sold in 12-ounce individual cans or bottles, and contain 120 kcal of sugar. Many schools, often pressured by parents, are now removing sodas from their vending machines and replacing them with presumably healthier sports drinks.

So while most Americans are becoming increasingly aware that consuming sugar-sweetened sodas likely promotes weight gain, the shift toward sports drinks seems to be

driven by a successful marketing strategy that is promoting salty sugar-water as part of a healthy lifestyle. As a result, many parents now buy sports drinks instead of sodas, thinking they are in fact a healthier option for their kids. However, while sports drinks may be somewhat lower in sugar than sodas (per ounce) they also typically come in larger containers. In addition to sugar, sports drinks also have far more salt/sodium than sodas, and increased dietary salt promotes increased thirst.

**Bottom Line:** With both obesity and hypertension on the rise in children in the United States, it seems likely that the increasing consumption of sports drinks in kids is at least partially responsible. Both children and adults should be encouraged to consume water when thirsty rather than sports drinks.

By James J. Kenney, PhD, FACN

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