



Fields to Families is committed to providing nutritious food to those in need in our community. As an integral part of this effort, our nutrition newsletter is intended to help everyone involved in Fields to Families — volunteers, donors, and recipients — become informed about how to live a healthy lifestyle.

ABCs of Simple and Healthful Eating

A: Antioxidants — During normal metabolism our cells burn oxygen, and our bodies produce free radicals, which are unstable and highly reactive molecular fragments with unpaired electrons. Smoking, pollution, ultraviolet radiation and the ozone can also create free radicals in our bodies. Unfortunately, as free radicals move through the body trying to stabilize, they damage other cells and DNA. The damaged cells are thought to cause premature aging and health issues such as cancer, heart disease, and cataracts. But we can help our bodies fight against free radicals by consuming antioxidants. Antioxidants pass along electrons to the free radicals, making them stable and limiting their destruction of healthy cells. Antioxidants can be found in vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta-carotene (which eventually becomes vitamin A).

However, it is important that we have a balance of these nutrients in our bodies because any excess or lack of each can lead to an impairment in the actions of the antioxidants. Since each antioxidant plays a different role in the body, balance in our diets and a variety of healthy foods is important.

Blueberries are often called the miracle berry because they are so rich with antioxidants. Fresh or frozen, they are a great additive to any meal or just on their own. Strawberries, raspberries, cantaloupe, pineapple, broccoli, cauliflower, red peppers and squash are also rich in vitamin C and antioxidants. Vitamin C works to fight infections and heal cuts. Carrots are also a great snack because they are full of beta carotene which is great for healthy eyes and skin.

B: Beans — Canned or bagged, beans are one of the best ways to maximize nutrients and minimize cost. Incorporating beans into your family's diet and substituting them in foods your family already enjoys will reap both health and economic benefits. Substitute black beans and/or refried beans in quesadillas and tacos. Add extra beans to chili, eliminating some of the meat. If a recipe calls for ground meat, try a variety of beans instead. Black beans, kidney beans, and pinto beans taste very meaty. Instead of hot dogs, make a bean and lean meat mixture with diced tomatoes and seasoning and serve in a hot dog bun (preferably whole wheat). Sprinkle with cheese, serve carrot sticks or fruit on the side, and you have a simple, healthy, inexpensive meal in a short time!

C: Cost effective — Eating healthy does not have to break the bank. There are many alternatives to shopping at a health food store that still provide you and your family with snacks and meals that you can feel good about providing. Regarding produce, fresh and frozen can be interchangeable. When buying frozen, the vegetables are usually flash frozen right at their peak, maximizing flavor. You know they won't go bad, so you don't have to worry about using them up right away. It is important to only buy frozen produce without additives. You are looking for just the produce as is! Buying frozen is also a great way to mix it up and try new things — create your own blend of produce.

Another way to increase your fruit intake is to buy canned. However, beware of sugary syrups. Again, you want the fruit and all of

its wonderful nutrients, not a sugary syrup that will make your efforts pointless. Canned pineapple can be served in lunches, on the side of your main meal or as a dessert. Frozen berries make great smoothies, or cooked down into a syrup on top of a SMALL scoop of low fat ice cream as a special treat.

Don't include meat at every meal. As Americans, we consume meat in excess. High protein diets can place a burden on your kidneys, leading to an excess of nitrogen, and also lead to kidney failure. If you are consuming too much protein, your body will convert it to energy or store it as fat. Excess fat increases our health risks and places difficulty on all of the organs in our body. It is healthy and smart to look for protein in other sources and not feel guilty if protein is absent from certain meals. Beans and rice can be filling and maximize your dollar. Serve with diced tomato, fresh or canned, and (if you desire) add sliced avocado and low fat cheese for a nutrient packed meal. Canned tuna fish in water mixed with a little mayo is great on salads or in a sandwich. It is full of protein and low in calories. Finally, have breakfast for dinner. Eggs can be used in a variety of ways. Make omelets with frozen veggies; each family member can choose their own toppings to create an interactive and healthy family dinner! Look at your supermarket receipt and cut out the items that aren't necessary or can be turned into occasional treats. Make time to save money and invest in the health of you and your family.



Re-Energize Your Morning Routine

With summer coming to a close and the school year right around the corner, many of us may begin to have earlier mornings again. However, for others, the alarm may feel like it's being set earlier and earlier each day. With these simple steps, you may be able to re-energize your day and feel better from the first beep of the alarm clock.

Healthful Recipes ~ just what you need ~

Blueberry & Green Tea Smoothie — antioxidant packed! Save time by brewing a large batch of green tea the night before and make extra to have in the fridge for a refreshing alternative to regular iced tea. Leftovers can be stored in a covered glass in the fridge for a great after-work snack.

- Boil $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water hot water and pour over 2 green tea bags. Steep for 5 minutes. Chill tea overnight. If using fresh berries, place in freezer.
- Place tea, 2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries, 3 ice cubes, and 12 oz. fat-free vanilla yogurt in blender. Process until smooth. Enjoy!

Garden Frittata — a great dish to make ahead! Include any vegetables you enjoy to personalize your frittata. Frozen vegetables can be substituted for fresh.

Ingredients: 1 tsp olive oil, 2 cups chopped onions, 3 cloves garlic minced (if using from a jar, use 1 tbsp), 2 cups broccoli florets, 1 cup diced carrot, 1 cup zucchini or yellow squash (or mix both), 1 cup shredded low-fat sharp cheddar cheese, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup skim milk, 4 egg whites, lightly beaten, 2 eggs, lightly beaten, $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp crushed red-pepper flakes, Pinch of salt and pepper, 2 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

- Preheat oven to 325F
- Coat a 10" non-stick oven-safe skillet with non-stick spray and place over med-high heat until hot. Add oil, onions, and garlic. Cook until onions are golden brown, about 5 minutes. Add vegetables. Cook & stir for about 3 minutes, until broccoli is bright green.
- In a medium bowl, combine the Cheddar, milk, egg whites, eggs, red-pepper flakes, and salt and pepper. Mix well. Add to the skillet and stir once. Cook for 3 minutes. Cover with foil and bake for 15 to 20 minutes. Sprinkle with the Parmesan when ready to serve.

1. Leave a note on your night-stand to remind you of what the day has to bring. You can also leave a motivational note to remind you to get up and get your body moving. It can be harder to hit snooze when you have a reason to rise and shine!

2. Drink water! Refill a bottle of water or keep a pitcher of water in the fridge that is going to be cool and refreshing right when you wake up. This will give your body instant energy by replenishing the fluids lost throughout the night. By not providing your body with enough water, you are causing it to work harder and this can result in fatigue. Beginning the day with a big glass of water will also start you in a routine of drinking more water, which is a great way to fight hunger. Continue to refill your bottle of water and keep it with you throughout the day. What a wonderful way to reuse, reduce, and recycle, something you can feel good about all day long!

3. If you have time in the morning, get outside with your coffee, breakfast, or take a quick stroll around the block. The daylight will increase your brain's serotonin level, which is the body's natural mood booster. If the sun has not risen by the time you do, just gradually turn on lights throughout the house, this will trigger your brain that it is time to wake up and decrease the release of melatonin, a hormone that causes sleepiness.

4. Give yourself or have someone give you a quick massage. While in the shower, rub your face with your fingertips and then give your arms and neck a good squeeze. This will promote blood circulation and result in a rosy glow!

5. Following your massage, stretch your muscles and increase blood flow from head to toe. Reach your arms up high and take a few deep breaths to open up your lungs and clear your mind. Then reach overhead from side to side continuing to take slow, deep breaths. Stand next to a wall and place your hand on it for stability. Then grab hold of one foot and pull your heel to your buttock. Stand upright and face forward, hold for 30 seconds and repeat with opposite side. End the stretch by reaching toward your toes; don't worry — many of us can't touch them! A good goal is to try and reach further each day. Deep breathing and continued stretching will help you reach this goal.

6. Finally, EAT BREAKFAST! The best way to start the day is with a filling breakfast to switch your body from a sleepy, energy-conserving state into one that is ready for calorie burning and productivity. A simple meal of non-sugary cereal with milk, fruit and yogurt can start the day off well. Give your morning meal a little variety with the recipes listed on the left.

This nutrition newsletter is brought to you by Fields to Families, a nonprofit organization with a mission of increasing nutrition to the area hungry by coordinating distribution of fresh produce obtained by local gardens and farms. For more information, visit www.fieldstofamilies.org.

