

The TOPS Reminder

A newsletter for Western Massachusetts Counties

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Yearly Goal

I've had a difficult time this past year and continue to gain weight. I'm telling you this because I'm looking for someone to be my weight loss buddy, you help me and I can help you.

Fall Rally

Remember to get your forms in on time. I hope to see many of you there. Your poster should be the size of a poster board you could pick up at Walgreen for \$.69 this week.

NEW KOPS

MA 0395 Greenfield
Betty Howe
Congratulations!

Chapter Visits

0411 Westfield
0498 Chicopee employees at work
0344 Southwick
Workshop/walk Aug 10th

THE CALL OF THE CALORIE

I think that I'll never see,
A calorie that won't like me.
Beckoning, it summons thee
To come, consume, and pay the fee

Of fretful food bills I must pay
Due to sweets, inhaled today.
I snarf a roll, a Milkyway
The prices soar, I can't delay.

I'll buy it now before it's gone.
I'll eat it all at break of dawn
And then I'll cry I'll scream, I'll shout
Oh why, Dear Lord, am I so stout?

By Johannah Sakimura

Coconut Oil: The Good, the Bad, and the Unknown

By Johannah Sakimura
Not long ago, coconut oil was branded one of the most toxic fats of all. Nowadays, it's a featured ingredient on spa cuisine menus and a popular seller at health food stores. But is coconut oil really deserving of its new, super food status – and if so, why the change of heart?

Coconut Oil and Heart Health

Over time, our understanding of dietary fat has become far more advanced and nuanced, and this has led some experts to change their tune a bit on coconut oil. Coconut oil is about 90 percent saturated fat, a type of fat generally categorized as harmful because it raises cholesterol levels. But the latest science suggests not all saturated fats are created equal, and different varieties have different effects on cholesterol levels and other health indicators. The primary type of saturated fat in coconut oil is lauric acid, which raises LDL ("bad") cholesterol

levels, but also increases HDL ("good") cholesterol levels dramatically...so you get a little good along with the bad. Butter, which is rich in another type of saturated fat known as palmitic acid, doesn't give HDL the same big boost. While coconut oil does appear to be a better choice than other saturated fats, from a heart health perspective, it still can't compete with unsaturated fats like olive oil. Unsaturated fats lower LDL cholesterol and maintain or increase HDL levels; which means they are a win-win for your ticker. In a comprehensive analysis of eight studies involving more than 13,000 people, Harvard researchers found that replacing 5 percent of the saturated fat in the diet with polyunsaturated fat (one of two types of unsaturated fats found in vegetable oils, nuts, and seeds) reduced the risk of heart disease by 10 percent. Unfortunately, this study lumped all saturated fats together and didn't look at individual types, so it's impossible to know how the specific fatty acids in coconut oil fared — but the it does underscore the heart-boosting power of unsaturated fat. Other studies have specifically compared the short-term health effects of coconut oil to that of unsaturated fats, and again, the unsaturated fats come out on top. Researchers in Norway fed a group of 25 women three different diets for three weeks at a time — one

high in unsaturated fat; one high in saturated fat, with 80 percent of the fat coming from coconut oil; and one low in fat (with the small amount of fat in the diet again coming primarily from coconut oil). The high unsaturated fat diet caused the greatest reduction in LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, another risk factor for heart disease. And even though the high coconut oil diet was most effective at raising HDL, the high unsaturated fat diet produced the most favorable LDL to HDL ratio because of its powerful LDL-lowering effect.

The Perks of Medium-Chain Fatty Acids

There's also a lot of talk about coconut oil's weight loss benefits. These claims stem from the fact that, unlike most oils, the majority of the fatty acids in coconut oil (including lauric acid) are the medium-chain variety. Fatty acids vary in length, and the short- and medium-chain types are digested in a more direct pathway than long-chain fatty acids, which may increase your metabolism slightly. The key word is slightly. A few studies have found that people who consumed a small daily dose of medium-chain fatty acids (typically a tablespoon or a two) as part of a calorie-controlled diet for several months lost two to four pounds more than people consuming the same amount of other oils that are entirely long-chain fatty acids, like olive and soybean. But these studies used purified, 100 percent medium-chain fatty acids, and coconut oil is only about 50 percent medium-chain. Most important, the study participants kept their total calories in check. Like other fats, coconut oil is extremely calorie-dense at 120 calories per tablespoon, which

means if you just add it to your diet without cutting calories elsewhere; you'll be setting yourself up for weight gain, not loss.

My Bottom Line on Coconut Oil

Some health gurus would have you believe there's a conspiracy out there against coconut oil, but the reality is, many of the leading researchers in this area say there's just not enough evidence to make a ruling on coconut oil's heart health effects. Having reviewed the current science, I agree.

However, there is no shortage of research showing that unsaturated fats – like those in olive, canola, safflower, and grape seed oil – boost cardiovascular health and ward off heart disease without any downsides (except weight gain if you overdo it, of course). So while a question mark still hovers over coconut oil, I've decided to stick with these versatile, heart-smart standbys. I use olive oil as my primary oil, but for high-heat cooking like stir-frying I typically opt for grape seed, canola, or peanut oil (whichever is handy in the cupboard or matches the cuisine best). I also have a bottle of avocado oil, which I enjoy using in raw preparations like salad dressings. I fully support substituting coconut oil for butter in recipes that require solid fat, like cookies and other baked goods, but I prefer the taste of butter and use it infrequently, so I'm not inclined to make the switch.

Why You Should Eat Summer Squash!

Looking for an easy-to-prepare, healthful vegetable to add to your summer menu? Try summer squash. This entirely edible vegetable - you can enjoy the skin, flesh and seeds - is a good source of manganese, vitamins A and C, magnesium, fiber and folate. It comes in many varieties, including the popular green zucchini; a crookneck variety that is yellow-skinned with a curved neck; and the flat, round pattypan squash, a sweeter variety of summer squash.

When choosing squash, look for examples that are heavy for their size, with a blemish-free rind that is not too hard. Average-sized squash tend to be less fibrous than large squash, and often have better flavor than squash that is small.

You can even make an entree out of squash by slicing it lengthwise, scooping out the seeds, and filling the cavity with chopped onions, garlic and tomatoes. Bake at 350 degrees for about 20 minutes, then top with some freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

Claire's Carrot Raisin Salad



I'm always excited about learning new things about food. - Paul Prudhomme, Chef

Fill up on this colorfully crunchy fiber rich salad at your next lunch or dinner! Low calorie carrots and chewy sweet raisins combine to add the power of beta-carotene, potassium, polyphenols, magnesium, thiamin, and vitamins A and C to your day.

Unlike other recipes that call for several tablespoons of sugar and large dollops of fatty mayonnaise, this recipe has no fat and a subtle hint of sweetness. Make it Claire's way and you can have seconds, or even thirds, as each serving is only 49 delicious calories.

Carrot Raisin Salad makes a wonderful addition to any meal and pairs well with sandwiches or grilled meats. No time to grate carrots? Use a bag of pre-shredded carrots along with two of those little bitty 1/2 ounce boxes of raisins.

Claire's Carrot Raisin Salad

Nutrition facts for four servings

Ingredients:

- 2 cups carrots, shredded
- 1 oz raisins (or your favorite dried fruit)
- 1 T lemon juice
- 1 t sugar

- Optional: 1/4 cup pineapple, small dice

Directions:

Coarsely grate the carrots to yield 2 cups.

Combine the carrots with raisins, lemon juice and sugar.

Refrigerate at least one hour before serving – do not skip this part.

Your thoughts...

Claire most loved raisins in this salad. What other dried fruits would you add? Do you make a fantastic carrot dried fruit salad? Share the recipe with everyone here! If you would like help with nutrition facts or in a recipe search, leave your question at Recipe by Request. If you would like your wonderful recipe included at CC Palate, please send it to me via pm.

Angel Therapy Daily Inspiration



Dr. John H. SklareTOOLS:

I know that angels are popular and powerful symbols that influence and guide the lives of so many. Here is how you can use the power of angels to help support your desire for healthy living.

Remember the end of that old movie classic, "It's a Wonderful Life," with Jimmy Stewart? This is where he tells his daughter that "Every time a bell rings, an angel get its wings." To this day, every

time I hear a bell ring, I think of that image. Today, I want to use that image and ask you to consider the following.

Every time you make a healthy choice, imagine an angel gets its wings. Every time you make a decision that moves you toward your goal, imagine an angel gets its wings. Every time you have a positive thought about yourself, imagine an angel gets its wings. Every time you eat something healthy, imagine an angel gets its wings. Every time you choose to exercise, imagine an angel gets its wings. Get the idea? Now if you make a negative choice, nothing bad happens. The next angel in line simply has to wait a little longer to get his or her wings. I call this Angel Therapy and I hope it moves your spirit, rocks your world and changes your life! The line is forming and the angels await your decision.

Roasted Zucchini Rounds



Fiona Haynes

With so much zucchini around, we're always looking for new ways to use them. There are muffins, of course, quick breads, salads, pasta dishes, and then there's this great snack or appetizer recipe for crunchy zucchini rounds.

Now, zucchini have a high water content, so you can draw out some of the water by sprinkling the zucchini rounds with a little salt, leaving them for a few minutes, then blotting them dry. Plus, the crunch really comes from the bread crumb topping, which complements the zucchini rather nicely. Enjoy these zucchini rounds as they are, or dip into a little pot of low fat marinara sauce.

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 20 minutes
Total Time: 30 minutes
Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 pound zucchini, sliced into 1/4-inch rounds
- 1 large egg white
- 3/4 cup fresh breadcrumbs, preferable from a whole grain bread
- 1/4 cup shredded parmesan
- Freshly ground black pepper

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Coat a large baking sheet with cooking spray.

Combine bread crumbs, parmesan and black pepper in a small bowl. Dip zucchini rounds in egg white and press into bread crumb mixture. Place in a single layer on baking sheet.

Bake for 20 minutes, until bread crumbs are crisp and golden.

Remove with a spatula and serve immediately with some warmed low-fat marinara sauce.

Serves 4.

Per Serving: Calories 113, Calories from Fat 22, Total Fat 2.5g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 4mg, Sodium 255mg, Carbohydrate 16.6g, Fiber 1.8g, Protein 6.2g

Growing up we always had a large garden and my mother made yellow and zucchini almost the same way. She would slice, salt lightly, pat dry and either bake or pan fry using a spray such as pam.

Freezer Order

I have my own system for labeling homemade freezer meals.

Forget calling them "Veal Parmesan" or "Turkey Loaf" or "Beef Pot Pie."

If you look in my freezer you'll see "Whatever," "Anything," "I Don't Know," and, my favorite, "Food." That way when I ask my husband what he wants for dinner, I'm certain to have what he wants."

Remember

With baby steps you can climb any mountain to your goal!



***Remember I Care,
Terri***