

The TOPS Reminder

A newsletter for Western Massachusetts Counties

By Terri Lavigne (413) 532-7664 losingweight@tlavigne.us

February 2015

KOPS Honor Society

I'm excited to say we are finally having a meeting to start your KOPS Honor Society. This meeting we will make decisions on what type of meeting is preferred, eating out or not. The board will be elected that day.

February 28th at 9AM at the Shriners' Hospital 516 Carew Street Springfield. Cost a donation to pay for the hall.

Bring \$15 for yearly dues in case you decide to join.

Your Opinion Matters

Tammy Shafer from Chapter MA1 Springfield, recently sent an email to me regarding reducing the cost of Fall Rally registration and selecting venue locations more fairly. She remembers when Fall Rally Registration was less expensive than SRD and offered a few suggestions for lowering the cost. She also feels that "If one third of our State's members

are in Western Massachusetts' Chapters, it would be fair for one third of the events to be held in Western Massachusetts". What do you think? "Weigh-in" on the subject by sending an email to www.matops.com

New KOPS Congratulations !

Lettice Randall from MA 0179 Shelburne Falls

Jacqueline A Jordan from MA 0411 Westfield

Tips to help you eat whole grains

• At Meals:



- To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product – such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice. It's

important to substitute the whole-grain product for the refined one, rather than adding the whole-grain product.

- For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes and whole-wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese.
- Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soup or stews and bulgur wheat in casserole or stir-fries.
- Create a whole grain pilaf with a mixture of barley, wild rice, brown rice, broth and spices. For a special touch, stir in toasted nuts or chopped dried fruit.
- Experiment by substituting whole wheat or oat flour for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, muffin or other flour-based recipes. They may need a bit more leavening.

- Use whole-grain bread or cracker crumbs in meatloaf.
- Try rolled oats or a crushed, unsweetened whole grain cereal as breading for baked chicken, fish, veal cutlets, or eggplant parmesan.
- Try an unsweetened, whole grain ready-to-eat cereal as croutons in salad or in place of crackers with soup.
- Freeze leftover cooked brown rice, bulgur, or barley. Heat and serve it later as a quick side dish.

• **As snacks:**



- Snack on ready-to-eat, whole grain cereals such as toasted oat cereal.
- Add whole-grain flour or oatmeal when making cookies or other baked treats.
- Try 100% whole-grain snack crackers.
- Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a

healthy snack if made with little or no added salt and butter.

The Buzz... Coffee Drinkers

Because there will never be too many light and delicious iced coffee options in the world, Dunkin' Donuts is launching new Coolatta Lite blended drinks! The frozen sippers -- in coffee and non-coffee flavors -- will have 33 to 80 percent fewer calories than the original lineup. Impressive! Look for them to start popping up in the Northeast later this month... ***Speaking of coffee, did you hear about the new coconut milk option at Starbucks? It's launching tomorrow, and we've got ALL the info: calorie counts, cost, and more! Click for the 411. ***Brain food is officially a thing, people. According to research analysts, it's more evident than ever that nutrition is linked to an individual's mental health. Among the particularly important nutrients are omega-3s, B vitamins, and zinc. So if you're feeling low, it might be a good idea to give your eating habits a once-over... ***Remember that poll we ran to choose the next HG Survival Guide? The votes are in! The next restaurant profiled will

be... P.F. CHANG'S! Look for the new guide this Friday, and make your dinner plans accordingly. And that's all we've got. HG out!

Reasons You Should Eat Oatmeal Every Day

By [Bonnie Taub-Dix, MA, RDN, CDN](#)



Have you ever had what I call a “Ratatouille moment?” You may have had one without realizing it, so let me explain what this is:

In the tender movie [Ratatouille](#), a food critic sits down at a restaurant table and tastes a dish of ratatouille, a combination of eggplant, zucchini, tomatoes, bell peppers, and a blend of seasonings and spices. As soon as his fork hits his lips, he’s immediately transposed to his childhood. He traveled back to sitting at his mother’s table, filling himself with this comforting dish laced with

bursting flavors and, of course, love.

For me, oatmeal brings a *Ratatouille moment*. When I was a young child, my dad worked a very early shift. He used to wake me up in the wee hours of the morning and welcome me to the table with a steamy bowl of oatmeal. I never knew or cared about what time it was, I only knew that it was dark outside and that I was going to be surrounded by a dish of warmth. To this day, when I'm stressed or I'm just in the mood for a hug from my plate, I know I can count on the comfort of this guilt-free food that somehow feels indulgent.

Breakfast With Benefits

1. **Oats contain both [soluble and insoluble fiber](#).** Soluble fibers form a viscous gel that helps to lower cholesterol and stabilize blood glucose levels. The insoluble fiber in oats helps provide a "moving" experience by curtailing constipation and improving intestinal health. What a delicious way to make your heart and colon smile.

2. **Oats make an easy, balanced breakfast.** One cup of cooked oatmeal contains about 150 calories, four grams of fiber (about half soluble and half insoluble), and six grams of protein. To [boost protein](#) further, my favorite way to eat oatmeal is with a swirl of almond butter nestled within. This powerful combo will keep you away from that mid-morning visit to the vending machine.

3. **Oats provide important minerals.** [Nutrient-rich oatmeal](#) contains thiamin, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc, manganese, selenium, and iron.

4. **Oats are naturally gluten-free**, but check with manufacturers to ensure that their products are not made using the same equipment as other potentially contaminating grains. (Always purchase [gluten-free products](#) from reputable companies and read food labels carefully.)

5. **Oats could help you control your weight** by keeping you feeling fuller longer. Sadly,

carbs are often shunned and feared by those looking to drop a few pounds, yet choosing whole grains could squash hunger and simultaneously provide that pleasant "ahhhh" feeling carb-lovers crave. But, as with any other food, be mindful of portion sizes.

Foods that bring back comforting memories are precious and should be savored slowly. But proceed with caution when it comes to what I call "Ratatouille impersonators." Those are foods that remind you of a past experience, but taste nothing like the original dish. For example, let's say you noticed an apple strudel in a box on the supermarket shelf and it made you remember the way your grandmother baked this recipe. If you purchased it, tasted it, and it didn't taste like grandma's ... then hopefully, you ditched it! These impostors usually come with a side of angst, leading to discomfort instead of comfort.

What food gives you a "Ratatouille moment?" Tell me on Twitter [@eatmartbd](#).

I enjoy oatmeal with a teaspoon of peanut butter.
T

Try a Healthier Burrito

Hungry Girls's Elite
Chicken-Bacon-Ranch
Burrito



That's Good Burr'eatn!

Serving Size: 1 burrito
(entire recipe)
Calories: 325
Fat: 10.5g
Sodium: 813mg
Carbs: 32g
Fiber: 8g
Sugars: 5g
Protein: 30.5g

PointsPlus® value 8*

There's no denying the allure of restaurant burritos, especially those with an extra-flavorful twist. But as tempting as they are, our lightened-up swap reigns supreme...

Prep: 10 minutes
Cook: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

1 slice center-cut bacon or turkey bacon

3 oz. raw boneless skinless chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces

1 tsp. lime juice

1/8 tsp. salt-free seasoning mix (like Mrs. Dash Original)

1 wedge The Laughing Cow Light Creamy Swiss cheese

1/4 tsp. ranch dressing/dip seasoning mix

1/2 oz. (about 1 tbsp.) mashed avocado

1/2 tsp. chipotle pepper sauce (like the kind by Tabasco)

1 medium-large high-fiber flour tortilla with 110 calories or less (like the kinds by La Tortilla Factory)

1/2 cup shredded lettuce

1/4 cup chopped tomato

2 tbsp. chopped onion

Directions:

Cook bacon until crispy, either in a skillet over medium heat or on a microwave-safe plate in the microwave. (See package for cook time.)

Bring a skillet sprayed with nonstick spray to medium-high heat. Add chicken, and top with lime juice and salt-free seasoning. Cook and stir for about 4 minutes, until cooked through.

To make the sauce, in a small bowl, combine ranch seasoning with cheese wedge. Stir until smooth

and well mixed. Add avocado and chipotle sauce, and stir until uniform.

Microwave tortilla on a microwave-safe plate for 15 seconds, or until warm.

Spread sauce down the middle of the tortilla, and top with lettuce, chicken, tomato, and onion. Chop or crumble bacon, and layer over the onion.

Wrap tortilla up by first folding in one side (to keep filling from escaping) and then tightly rolling it up from the bottom. (Or fold in both sides, burrito style.)

MAKES 1 SERVING

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



Terri