



# What's Cookin'?

A School Nutrition Newsletter

Bellville Independent School District  
School Nutrition

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### Message from the Director

April F. Pinkham

Can it be? The beginning of a new decade? This year seems to keep moving along at a quick pace. TAKS quickly approaches, new year's resolutions came upon us too quickly, and there are not many days left in this school year. This doesn't seem possible. The new year has brought new things as we begin January with the district wellness challenge. This should be a great way to bring the district together to have support for each other when trying to conquer the great feat of eating healthy and exercising regularly. Experts say it takes at least five weeks of consistently exercising to make it a habit. I guess that is my excuse, since I can't seem to get past week two. Get a work out buddy so you have someone to get you going on the days you don't feel like it. Whether your goal is to maintain your weight and just start eating better or trying to lose weight, they both are challenging. Don't forget to ask your cafeteria manager when salad day is and remember when we prepare food items, we do not add fat to the meal. If you have questions about meal items we serve, please feel free to email me for nutritional information. Other than the year passing us by quickly, the school nutrition department has been busy keeping up with birthday baskets, working on installing new menu board/LCD screens in the high school, Zumba fitness day, repairing and replacing kitchen equipment, and did I mention, we are tweeting? Again this year, the school nutrition department will be providing TAKS snacks on specified days to help our students concentrate and do their best while testing. We are working on a milk campaign that will be unveiled in March during National School Breakfast week which is also National Nutrition Month. Watch for flyers for Muffins for Mom which will take place February 18 at the elementary cafeterias.

Good luck to all of you participating in the wellness challenge!

### Weekend Diet Tips—Stop CHEATING! <http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/>

Dieting is hard work. When we work that hard, sometimes we feel the need to reward ourselves. Unfortunately, that reward often takes the form of cheating on diets. Here are some tips to help you get past this pitfall and stay on your healthy eating plan. The most common weekend pitfall is when dieters think they can splurge on the weekend because they have been through a tough week. It is normal to feel the need for a reward when you have been working hard. But, instead of rewarding yourself with food, try something else. Perhaps you could buy a book you've been wanting. Or treat yourself to that DVD or CD you've been looking at for a while. Going to a movie can be a special treat, as well. But, if you just have to have some type of food reward, try choosing one portion of a favorite food. Be sure this food is a treat. It is not as much of a reward if you eat something you have all the time. Another common belief is that if you go out, you have to eat more than you normally would. A good way to get past this is to plan activities that center around food. You could do something such as shopping or visit a local exhibit of art. Eating lunch out instead of supper is a way to eat less, but still enjoy a meal outside of your home.

When you have worked hard all week, sometimes all you want to do is relax during the weekend. However, don't let your exercise program go by sitting on the couch all weekend. This can lead to a longer period of putting off exercise. Go ahead and sit on the couch and watch television, but set a time limit. And, sometime during the day get up and participate in some type of physical activity. It doesn't have to be vigorous, but it should get your body moving. It is also a major stumbling block to believe you cannot eat healthy because of your obligations. Even when you have errands, grocery shopping and chores around the house, you can make time to eat right. It doesn't take a lot of planning to produce a healthy meal. It just takes a bit more effort than pulling out the cold cuts and making a sandwich.

Even if you are busy on the weekends, you should be sure to take a bit of extra time to stay on your healthy eating plan. Your health should not be put on the back burner to a busy schedule. Take the time to plan your meals and don't use rewarding yourself for hard work as an excuse to go off your diet.

## 5 Reasons to Love Eggs

### Weight management

High quality egg protein helps you feel full longer and stay energized.

### Muscle strength and muscle loss prevention

Egg protein has been shown to help active adults build muscle strength and help prevent muscle loss in middle aged and aging adults.

### Healthy pregnancy

Egg yolks are an excellent source of choline, an essential nutrient that contributes to fetal brain development and helps prevent birth defects.

### Brain function

Choline aids brain function in adults and is a key component of the neuron-transmitter that helps relay messages from the brain to the muscles.

### Eye health

Lutein and zeaxanthin—antioxidants in egg yolks, help prevent macular degeneration—a leading cause of age related blindness.

## Food and Mood



Do you tend to reach for food when you are feeling stressed or anxious? The majority of people do have a snack attack while they may be having a panic attack. Believe it or not, food can actually calm you down while you are stressed as long as you choose the right foods. Apples,

cashews, sunflower seeds are all great snack items and ready to eat, but if you are still craving chocolate, reach for a square of dark chocolate to satisfy the urge. Chocolate actually can increase neurochemicals which help you feel happy or calm. Now doesn't that make us feel better just reading it? If you are not a cholic, try spinach which contains extra magnesium which helps to keep blood pressure from spiking. Oatmeal is loaded with B vitamins which also help the production of serotonin. Fish that contains high amounts of Omega-3 fatty acids can help with the jitters as well.



## Fresh Versus Frozen

We did this article in 2007 but it is worth repeating considering the terrible freezing weather we had. Produce will definitely be effected and it will be reflected in the price. Don't shy away from using frozen or canned vegetables. If you can't grow your own produce and eat it within hours of harvesting it, some nutrients will begin to break down. In a study from the late 90's, it is suggested that vegetables such as green beans and spinach lose about 75% of their vitamin C after being stored in the refrigerator for about a week. Some canned carrot, corn and tomato products actually provide more antioxidant than their fresh counterpart. Frozen vegetables are picked and frozen at their peak and often don't have time to lose the amount of nutrients fresh produce does if not used within a few days.

Canned and frozen vegetable are nutritious and naturally low in fat unless they are packed in butter or sauces. Canned or frozen are not dependent upon seasonal availability, and therefore, cost is not so much a factor. Cost is directly related to brand and style (whole versus cut). A vegetable that is packed whole usually costs more than the same vegetable that is packed cut,

diced or chopped. This is because the whole vegetables are specifically chosen for their appearance. To save money, choose cut or chopped vegetables instead of whole, especially when using them in casseroles or stews.

For maximum quality, store cans in a cool, dry place, ideally no warmer than 75 degrees. Use canned vegetables within one year unless noted otherwise on the can. Do not buy bulging, dented, leaking or rusted cans. The vegetables may be contaminated and can cause serious illness. Once a can is opened, store the unused portion in a plastic or glass container and use within three days.

Frozen vegetables will keep for 8-12 months when stored at 0 degrees or lower. Don't buy frozen packages that are limp or wet. The quality can suffer if the vegetables have been allowed to thaw and refrozen. This does not create a food safety issue.

When buying canned or frozen, remember to look for unsalted. You can, also, rinse canned vegetables prior to cooking.

## Food Label Terms

Nutrition labels can be confusing in themselves but what exactly is meant by “LITE”, “LOW CALORIE”, “LOW FAT” and other common terms?

**CALORIE FREE**—Fewer than 5 calories

**CHOLESTEROL FREE**—Fewer than 2 milligrams of cholesterol and 2 grams saturated fat

**FAT FREE**—less than .5 gram of fat

**HEART HEALTHY**—Contains 13 grams of oat bran of 20 grams of oatmeal, and is low in fat and sodium

**LIGHT (LITE)** - One-third fewer calories (or 50% less fat)

**LOW CALORIE**—40 calories or less

**LOW CHOLESTEROL**—20 milligrams of less cholesterol and 2 grams or less saturated fat.

**LOW FAT**—3 grams or less of fat

**LOW SODIUM**—140 milligrams or less of sodium

**SODIUM FREE**—Fewer than 5 milligrams of sodium

**TRANS FAT FREE**—.5 grams or less of trans fat

All of the above terms mean **PER SERVING**.

Remember to really read your nutrition labels to see what the serving size is for **ONE** person.

## MyPyramid.gov



MyPyramid.gov is a wealth of information regarding nutrition and has interactive tools to help plan meals. There is a link to MyFoodapedia which allows you to enter a food and search for calories and other nutritional information.

Recommendations from the 2005 Dietary Guidelines are still in effect un-

til the 2010 guidelines are published. The pyramid above symbolizes your own individual approach to healthy eating and physical activity. The steps represent activity. Try to do some sort of physical activity daily. The orange section is for grains. Eat at least 3oz of whole grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice or pasta every day. 1oz is about 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of cereal, or 1/2 cup rice or pasta. The green sections represents the vegetables. Try to eat more dark green, leafy vegetables like broccoli and spinach. Eat more orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes. Don't forget to include dry beans and peas in this category. The red section is for fruit. Choose a variety of fruit from canned, frozen or dried but steer clear of fruit juices with added sugars. The blue group is for dairy. Choose low fat or fat free. Purple represents the meat group. Go with lean meats and poultry and try to bake, grill or broil when possible. Eat more fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds. The very small yellow section reminds you to choose a trace amount of fat and oils in your diet. **STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU** means small steps and changes you can make to make a difference to improve diet and exercise.

## Where's the Beef?

Certainly, a lot of residents in the Austin County area must know more about beef than others, but while a lot of the employees are taking the Wellness Challenge, many still want to know where the beef fits in. Beef can fit into the daily diet when using lean cuts partnered with correct portion sizes. Lean meat is defined as less than 10 grams of total fat, 4.5 grams of saturated fat and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol per serving (3.5oz). Some cuts that meet the government guidelines for “lean” are; any cuts from the “round” portion, brisket, flank steak, any of the loin cuts except porterhouse, shoulder roast, and shoulder steaks. Steer clear of ground meats and choose 90/10 when possible. All natural labels mean that the meat has been minimally processed and contains no



artificial ingredients. It does, however, allow for growth-promoting hormones or antibiotics. Grain fed/Corn fed seems self-explanatory which is added to the diets of cattle to speed up growth and add to the marbling of the beef. Grass fed labels indicate the cow must eat only herbaceous diets and/or mother's milk during it's life. Grass is the natural diet of cattle which can contribute to a healthier, leaner cut of meat. If it is labeled grass fed and certified, the animal cannot be given any antibiotics or hormones as well. The term grain finished means the animal is fed grain prior to slaughter to provide a more marbled finish.

## Recipe Corner

### Brazilian Chicken and Fruit Salad Wraps Courtesy of Dole Food Service

3 lbs. chicken breasts, skinless, boneless  
1 can (#10 or 12 cups) Dole Tropical Fruit Salad, drained  
1 cup slivered almonds, toasted  
2 cups fat free mayonnaise  
2 T grated lemon peel  
2T lemon juice  
2 t garlic salt  
2 t ground ginger  
1/2 t cayenne pepper  
16 flour tortillas, warmed  
Season and grill chicken. Chill and dice. Mix together chicken, fruit salad and almonds.  
Blend mayonnaise, lemon peel and juice, garlic salt, ginger and cayenne. Mix with chicken mixture. Place 1 portion (1 cup) salad in each tortilla. Roll and fold ends over and serve.

### Eggs Florentine Casserole

Courtesy of Heather Higginbotham

1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach  
1 cup shredded cheddar  
1 lb. ground pork sausage  
2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms  
6 green onions, chopped (about 1 cup)  
2 tablespoons butter, melted  
12 large eggs, lightly beaten  
2 cups whipping cream  
1 cup shredded Swiss cheese  
¼ tsp paprika

Cook spinach according to package directions; drain well. Sprinkle cheddar cheese in bottom of a lightly greased 13x9 baking dish. Spread spinach over cheese.

Brown sausage in a large skillet, stirring until it crumbles; drain and sprinkle over spinach. Sauté mushrooms and green onions in butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat until tender. Sprinkle sautéed vegetables over sausage.

Combine eggs and whipping cream, beating with a wire whisk until blended. Pour egg mixture over vegetable mixture. Top with Swiss cheese, and sprinkle with paprika.

Bake, uncovered, at 350 for 40 minutes or until set.  
Yield 12 servings.

## Good Links

[www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)  
[www.squaremeals.org](http://www.squaremeals.org)  
[www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com)  
[www.3aday.org](http://www.3aday.org)  
[www.whymilk.com](http://www.whymilk.com)  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)  
[www.fb.org](http://www.fb.org)  
[www.powerpanther.org](http://www.powerpanther.org)  
<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>  
[www.foodandhealth.com](http://www.foodandhealth.com)  
[www.rimag.com](http://www.rimag.com)  
<http://fs.bellinstitute.com>  
[www.bam.gov](http://www.bam.gov)  
[www.nationalnutritionstandards.com](http://www.nationalnutritionstandards.com)

**Congrats to the Bellville ISD school kitchens and staff for receiving a**

**100**

**on the recent health inspections!!!!**



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