

Dole Diet Center

Black History Month

Time to Take a Clear Eyed Look at Health Disparities



Every February provides an occasion to celebrate Black History Month — yet it should also give pause to reflect on nutrition-related health problems that impact the black community disproportionately. One of those is glaucoma — which causes progressive vision loss, nerve damage and eventual blindness. Compared to Caucasians, African Americans are 15 times more likely to suffer visual impairment caused by glaucoma.

So it's high time that research started paying more attention to this disparity. Researchers from the University of Southern California Los Angeles did just that when they followed 1,155 African American women over a decade of eye exams, combined with periodic dietary intake assessments. The end result: Women who ate 3 or more servings per day of fruit and vegetables were 79% less likely to develop cataracts compared to those with the lowest produce intake. On the fruit side, oranges and peaches afforded the most protection, while high beta-carotene veggies such as collards, kale, carrots and spinach were singled out as particularly beneficial.

This echoes earlier research which found that senior women in general enjoyed 64% lower risk with the veggies listed above, and a 47% lower risk with peaches. One study found that high intakes of lutein and zeaxanthin, plant compounds concentrated in leafy greens, delivered an 18% lower risk of developing cataracts. All this wonderful fresh produce will help lower your risk by lowering your weight: After reviewing more than 20 studies, Israeli researchers found a strong correlation between obesity and several eye diseases. So make a delicious start on keen, green vision with our featured recipe Whole Wheat Penne with Salmon and Kale.

Turn the Other Cheek? Try Using the Other Hand

Using Non-Dominant Hand Might Help Lower Aggression



Yoga, meditation, exercise — all ways to manage stress to help you keep your cool. But in a pinch, here's a nifty trick to check your temper: Lefties try using your right hand, and righties your left for mundane tasks such as dialing a phone, brushing your hair, using a fork. Researchers found that each required a form of self-discipline and self-control that translated into greater equanimity and control over one's aggressive impulses.

Indeed, Australian researchers asked 70 co-eds to either complete "self-control training" or simply try using their non-dominant hand for two weeks in everyday activities ranging from stirring a pot to opening doors to using a computer mouse. To measure aggression, they had study subjects talk about their life goals with actors, who at the end of the interviews derided the students' goals as stupid and pointless. Rather than stew in silence, subjects were given the "opportunity" to retaliate by dialing up a loud static noise. Interestingly, while there were no gender differences among how various subjects responded — those who had used the non-dominant hand trick were 27% less likely to retaliate aggressively compared to the "trained" control subjects. Perhaps most encouragingly, those who swapped hands for the study period also reported feeling calmer and less anxious.

Using your non-dominant hand may have other self-control side benefits as well: Researchers at USC found that when popcorn eating righties switched to their left hand (and vice versa), the hand switch broke the mindless munching cycle, so that people ate 20% less. But if more worried about blowing your stack than blowing your diet, you might think twice about the standard approach of venting anger. Numerous studies show that those who vent — whether by throwing something, yelling at someone, or swearing to the wind — actually ended up angrier than those who bottled their rage. The key takeaway: Take control to keep your cool. Walk away, take deep breaths, and if all else fails, try switching hands when drumming your fingers to keep from closing them into an angry fist.

Power to the Peel

Dole Researchers Find Banana Peel Contains Concentrated Antioxidants



Many people don't know of all the scientific brainpower buzzing at the North Carolina Research Campus, where eight universities have joined forces to study fruit and vegetables alongside Dole researchers. Indeed, the Dole Nutrition Lab, led by Dr. Nick Gillitt, has become a font of nutrition knowledge providing leads for future means to help humans take full healthful advantage of Mother Nature's bounty.

Most recently, Dole researchers decided to take a closer look at that part of the banana that is usually cast away as compost: The peel. Dr. Gillitt, author of a recent study on bananas as an energy source, said, "One side observation from the study was that the antioxidant levels of the blood were improved in the banana vs. control groups. This made us think about the antioxidant profile of the bananas and exactly which molecules could be responsible for this effect in human subjects."

Data from the Dole lab has shown banana peels contain very high amounts of some of the polyphenolic antioxidant molecules found in the flesh. How much you might ask? Well it turns out the total phenolic value measured for the banana peel of a regular-sized banana is higher than for a cup of blueberries! "Although, this overall measure is impressive we still need to know exactly what compounds give them all this antioxidant power," Dr. Gillitt observes.

Dole scientists used liquid chromatography with tandem mass spectrometry to show that about half of this antioxidant value comes from a molecule called dopamine, which functions as a neurotransmitter in the brain and a hormone in the blood. Dole scientists have also found the peels are very nutrient dense containing 2.3 times the fiber, 2.4 times the beta-carotene and 8.4 times the calcium of regular banana flesh.

While it's okay to add a bit of banana peel to smoothies and juices, they're not exactly tasty, plus latex content raises issues. For us, the most exciting implication is that the hidden potential in peels could someday add value to other foods — rather than simply going to waste. Meanwhile, the projected power of the peels shouldn't overshadow the real benefits to be reaped by eating actual bananas every day. Such benefits may include:

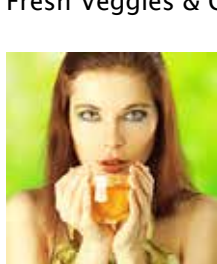
- **Colon Health:** Compounds in bananas could help minimize colorectal inflammation, believed to precede the cancer itself.
- **Balancing side effects of oral contraception:** Bananas are a top source of B6, low levels of which plague 3/4 of pill takers (B6 is used up metabolizing estrogen).
- **Iron Levels:** Prebiotic fiber, inulin, boosts iron absorption by 28% in one animal study.
- **Virus Inhibitor:** Bantec, a super protein called lectin isolated from bananas, is in development as a potential inhibitor of the HIV virus.
- **Lung Health:** Kids who ate bananas daily have a 34% less chance of developing symptoms, in one study.

One of our favorite ways to bring a little tropical brightness, flavor and health benefits to your table this February is to try our featured recipe: Sticky Rice with Bananas and Mangos.

Nutrition News Desk

Go Green to Fight Cervical Cancer

Fresh Veggies & Green Tea Provide Strongest Protection



There are roughly 12,000 new diagnoses of cervical cancer annually, and roughly 32% of these are fatal. Thanks to effective screening, many women can be cured. And thanks to new research on prevention, the right diet and lifestyle choices can significantly lower your chances of developing this deadly cancer in the first place. Two solid weapons against cervical cancer appear to be a daily dose of green tea and fresh veggies!

That was the result of a study by Chinese researchers who looked at a group of 1,040 women, average age 44, and followed their dietary intakes over two years to see how diet might affect cervical cancer risk. Out of various dietary factors, just two stood out. Those who drank green tea daily reduced their risk by 45% while veggie intake curbed risk by 10%. Even more encouraging, previous research suggested that women who eat the most veggies are 50% less likely to have the kind of persistent HPV infections that can lead to cervical cancer and infertility. On the flip side: Data shows that women with the highest intake of animal fat have a 70% increased risk.

A side benefit of veggies and green tea is that they both can help with weight management — important, as obese women have double the chance of developing cervical adenocarcinoma (a malignant cervical cancer). Regardless of weight status and gender, green tea offers other benefits besides, such as improved dental health, reduced vulnerability to allergens, and possible lower risk of other cancers. While we like a daily cup of green tea, you might like to mix it up with innovative ways to use it in recipes, such as our Orange Chicken with Green-Tea Rice.

Living to 100... and Beyond!

Longevity Isn't Just Genetics — 80%+ due to Diet & Lifestyle



Recent United Nations population statistics estimate that there are 317,000 centenarians worldwide at present, a number projected to grow to 3 million by 2050, reaching 18 million by 2100. Per capita, Japan leads the world with 35 centenarians per 100,000 — followed by France at 27, and the U.S. at 22. Research indicates that genetics account for just 20–30% of an individual's life span, with the rest accounted for by diet and lifestyle choices.

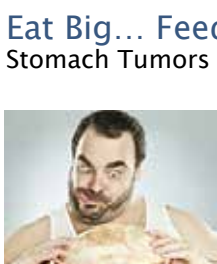
Among the many studies on those who bypass the 100 year benchmark, physical activity is a recurring theme — successful agers take the stairs, swim, golf, bike, etc. In the famous Okinawa study, centenarians do Tai chi and karate. They also exercise their brain, reading, painting, even sculpting. Exercise — for brain and body — is just one part of the longevity equation: Eating nutrient-dense fruit and vegetables helps to reduce DNA damage, while getting enough B6 from bananas, wild salmon, spinach and red bell peppers helps support DNA repair.

While genes may play a smaller role than you think, don't discount gender: Female centenarians outnumber males by a 9:1 ratio. But men have another advantage: Having reached the 100 mark, they are generally healthier and less likely to suffer dementia. Regardless of age or gender, data does point to several "to do's" if you aim to stick around for as long as possible:

- Maintain close positive ties with family and friends.
- Eat more fruit and vegetables: the Okinawans eat an average of seven servings daily!
- Favor omega-3 fatty acids and plant oils over animal fats.
- Try meditation or prayer: One study found that having a dutiful disposition could lower dementia risk by 90% while regular meditation was found to thwart age-related thinning of the prefrontal cortex.

Eat Big... Feed Tumors

Stomach Tumors 74% Larger Among Obese Subjects



With 21,000 new cases of stomach cancer diagnosed in the U.S. each year, and rising rates of this cancer globally, risk factors are under increased scrutiny. And with nearly double the incidence of stomach cancer among African Americans compared to Caucasians (with black males at highest risk), this February's Black History Month provides a reminder of one more historical inequity in need of redress.

Among many factors involved, a recent study in Experimental and Therapeutic Research singles out obesity as playing a particularly powerful role in driving not just the incidence, but the actual size of stomach tumors. Chinese researchers observed laboratory mice on a regular diet, compared to those on a high-fat diet, over the course of three months. Not only did the overeating mice end up weighing 25% more, they grew stomach cancer tumors 74% larger than the normal-weight mice, with 30% more capillaries (anatomical evidence of faster tumor growth). The obese mice also suffered a 65% lower immune capacity.

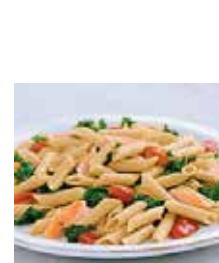
Why might this be? Science now recognizes fat as an active organ that secretes hormones which speed not just stomach cancer — but eight other types as well. Fortunately, the most reliable weapon against obesity is a diet full of fruit and vegetables. And high intake of vegetables has been linked to a 50% lower risk of developing stomach cancer — with cabbage showing particular promise. What to avoid: Processed meat, regular consumption of which is linked to a 38% higher risk of stomach cancer.

Featured Recipe

Whole Wheat Penne with Salmon and Kale

Ingredients

- 1 Pound salmon fillet
- 3 Cups whole-wheat penne or other bite-sized pasta
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 Bunch kale, chopped (about 1/4 pound)
- 2 Cups grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 Cup dry white wine
- 1 Tablespoon unsalted butter
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste



Serves: 4
Cooking Time: 15 min
Preparation Time: 8 min

Directions

- Preheat oven broiler. Rinse salmon, pat dry and season with salt and pepper. On a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil, cook salmon about 5 inches from the heat until golden brown on top (about 10 minutes per inch of thickness). While it cooks, boil water and cook pasta al dente, according to package instructions.
- Meanwhile, heat oil over medium heat in a large sauté pan. Add kale, cook about 5 minutes, stirring often, until wilted. Add tomatoes, wine, salt and pepper; cook about 6 to 8 more minutes, stirring occasionally, until tomatoes have collapsed. Chop cooked salmon and add to the tomato mixture along with butter; reduce heat to low. Drain pasta and add to salmon mixture. Serve hot with freshly ground pepper.

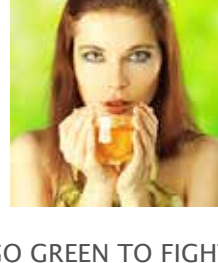
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Hot News



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