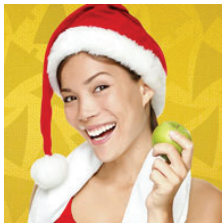




Dole Diet Center

'Tis the Season to Be Jolly

Research Links Fruit and Vegetable Consumption to Mental Well-Being



“Ho ho ho!” and “fa la la la la!” No matter what holiday you celebrate, most would say it’s the happiest time of the year. But the holiday cheer doesn’t have to end come January. Two recent studies suggest you can keep the happy spirit alive all year round by loading up your plate with more fruits and vegetables.

Published in the *British Medical Journal*, the Health Survey for England found that people with the lowest mental well-being were more likely to report lower intakes of fruit and vegetables, while those with the highest mental well-being tended to report eating more of these foods. Another recent study from the University of Queensland found eating fruits and vegetables was positively associated with life satisfaction and overall happiness. Interestingly, the researcher found fruit had a more profound effect on emotional well-being and mental health; in other words, the more fruit people ate, the less depressed and anxious they felt. Vegetables had a larger impact on self-reported general health: People who ate more vegetables were more likely to say they “feel as healthy as anyone.”

These results come as no surprise. Fruits and vegetables have long been touted for their myriad health benefits, and these are not the first studies to suggest they might improve happiness. Past evidence suggests a dose response correlation between daily portions of fruits and vegetables and mental health, and that even a 3% increase in concentration of certain antioxidants found in fruits and vegetables is associated with great optimism. In one survey, it was shown that physical health was the best single predictor of happiness.

Spread the cheer this holiday season (and all year long) by making fruits and vegetables the stars of your diet. Color half your plate with vegetables at meals (the more, the better!) and choose fresh fruits for snacks and dessert. More matters. Seasons eatings!

Bonus: Healthy eating can make you happy, and happiness can make you healthy! Scientists estimate that 10-15 minutes of laughing over the course of a day could burn up to 40 calories, which can translate to 4 pounds lost over the course of a year.

Fabulous Flavonoids

Citrus Fruit and Tea May Lower Risk of Ovarian Cancer and Promote Healthy Aging



Do you start your day with a glass of OJ and end it with a cup of tea? If you’re a woman with these habits, we have good news for you. Two new studies published in *The American Journal of Clinical Dietetics* using data from the Nurses’ Health Study have linked certain compounds in these foods to both lower risk of ovarian cancer and increased odds of healthy aging.

Hot News



HEALTHIER HOLIDAYS

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WINTER CITRUS SALAD

In one study, researchers followed over 170,000 women in the *Nurses' Health Study* and *Nurses' Health Study II* for about 20 years, periodically collecting data on what foods they ate. They specifically focused on intakes of flavonoids, bioactive compounds in plant foods that might help protect against cancer. Researchers also monitored for new diagnoses of ovarian cancer. Analysis showed women with the highest usual intakes of flavonols and flavonones, two types of flavonoids, had significantly reduced risk of epithelial ovarian cancer, suggesting these compounds may be associated with lower risk of the disease. Just two cups of black tea per day lowered risk of ovarian cancer by 31%.

The other study looked at nearly 14,000 women from the *Nurses' Health Study* in their late 50s for 15 years. Researchers measured average intakes of flavonoid-rich foods and monitored for signs of healthy aging – namely that the women stayed chronic disease-free. They found women who ate the most flavonoid-rich foods had greater odds of staying healthy and surviving to older ages.

So what were these ladies eating? We have more good news: Major sources of flavonoids include tea, whole citrus fruits, and citrus juices, foods that can easily and inexpensively be incorporated into anyone's typical diet. If you're not already doing so, start your day with an orange or grapefruit, and try swapping your afternoon coffee for a cup of tea with lemon. Citrus fruits also add bright color and sweet flavor to green salads. Try our favorite recipe for [Winter Citrus Salad](#) made with oranges and grapefruits. Delicious, colorful, and good for you too – 'orange' you happy to hear?

Bonus: Australian researchers have linked high citrus consumption with a 50% lower risk of developing cancers of the mouth, throat, and stomach.

All in the Family

Family Meals Associated with Better Health



Whether it is holiday brunch, a five course sit down dinner, or a leftovers feast, family meals are a trademark of the holiday season. While this may be the most indulgent time of the year, the act of eating with others may actually be good for your health. A recent study followed a diverse group of about 2,000 teens for 10 years, discovering frequency of family meals during adolescence significantly correlated with reduced odds of becoming overweight or obese in young adulthood compared with never eating family

meals growing up. This is not the first study of its kind.

Researchers from Cornell University have looked beyond the foods on the table to other mealtime factors that might influence BMI. In a small study, they found eating at a kitchen or dining room table and remaining at the table until everyone has finished are behaviors related to lower BMIs in both parents and children. Conversely, eating with the TV on and away from the table were rituals related to higher BMIs. For parents, BMI was lower for those who had meaningful talks with their children about their days. Other research has indicated associations between positive interpersonal and food dynamics at family meals and reduced risk of childhood overweight and obesity. Habits included positive reinforcement and communication regarding both personal life and the food on the table. A review last year concluded that communal meals, whether they are amongst family, friends, youth or adults, are associated with better dietary intake throughout life.

All findings point to the significance of frequent family meals: families that eat together, stay healthy together. And they also stay happy together! Over ten years ago we reported that family meal time is linked to lower risk of depression in children. Use the holiday season to reconnect and get back on track if family meal time has erased itself

from your agenda. Though schedules may be hectic, try designating at least two days a week to family meal time at a table with the TV off. If weeknights are packed, try a family breakfast or a weekend lunch.

Interestingly, research indicates that most children and adults do not meet recommended intakes of healthful foods, such as fruits and vegetables, regardless of how often they share meals. Once you establish mealtime rituals, kick your habits up a notch by incorporating more fruits and vegetables into your meals. Our [Vegetable Lasagna](#) makes for a warm and comforting nutritious supper the whole family will enjoy.

Nutrition News Desk

Healthier Holidays

Tips and Tricks for Healthy Eating This Holiday Season



It may be the season of giving, but for many it turns into the season of gaining. With endless parties, fancy meals, and cookies at every corner, holiday pounds can creep on faster than the decorations go up. But this doesn't mean you need to be a Scrooge. Here are our tips for keeping up healthy habits during the holidays.

1. **Know before you go.** If the invitation doesn't specify, find out what foods will be served. Appetizers and desserts only during dinner hours? Have a big vegetable salad beforehand to fill you up and prevent overloading on less healthy party foods.
2. **Exercise first.** Research shows that walking before a high fat meal can reduce triglyceride levels and improve blood vessel function. Exercise can also curb appetite.
3. **BYON** – “Bring your own nutrition,” that is. Offer to bring an appetizer or side so you know there will be a healthy party option that you can feel good about. Try these holiday foods that pack a health punch.
4. **Make it festive.** Don't let the veggie tray become the party pooper. Wow your guests with an eye-catching display like this festive [Laurel Rouge Salad](#) made with bright red tomatoes and dark leafy greens.
5. **Swap the swap.** Cookie swaps may be festive and fun, but they turn into cookie overload. Throw your friends a healthy curveball by bringing individual baggies of our [Cinnamon Chia Granola](#) tied with seasonal ribbon instead. This also makes a tasty grab bag gift.
6. **Decorate with fruit.** Why should candy canes and gum drops get all the glory? Fill jars with kumquats, bowls with pears, and dishes with unsweetened dried fruit for nutritious and colorful edible arrangements.
7. **Lighten up.** Holiday meals don't have to be high calorie. For special brunches serve egg white frittatas with exotic fruit salad and for dinners focus on fresh seasonal vegetables flavored with herbs and spices. By choosing high quality ingredients, dishes will seem indulgent while staying nutritious and light.

Slow Food Anyone?

Eating Rate is Associated with Metabolic Syndrome



Run, run, Rudolph! Between parties, shopping, decorating, and traveling, the holiday season is packed with activity and excitement. It might be hustle and bustle until the New Year (or maybe all year round), but there is definitely one place you should slow down: the kitchen table. Speed eating may actually be linked to metabolic syndrome, a cluster of risk factors associated with heart disease and several types of cancer.

A Japanese study published in the *British Medical Journal* looked at over 56,000 people during their annual health checkup. Participants were given questionnaires regarding their medical history and eating habits, and could pick from slow, normal, or fast to describe their eating rate. Scientists found people who ate quickly had significantly higher BMI, waist circumference, triglyceride levels, and blood pressure than those who ate slowly. Fast eaters were also more likely to have metabolic syndrome, which can have serious health implications.

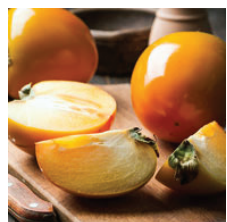
There is a reason slow food is gaining popularity. A review from this year analyzed 22 different studies on eating rate, finding those who ate slowly ate fewer calories than the fast eaters. Excessive caloric intake leads to weight gain, which can ultimately lead to chronic disease and a slew of health problems.

Step on the breaks and put down the fork. If you tend to turn meals into a sprint competition, here are a few tips to help you slow down:

- Take smaller bites or try eating with your non-dominant hand.
- Put down your fork between bites. Really taste your food before you pick up more.
- Eat with a friend. Having a conversation can help you slow down.
- Take a sip of water between each bite. This will also help you fill up faster.
- Sit down for meals. Eating on the go or standing up can make you feel rushed.

Get Exotic with Persimmons

Celebrate Exotic Fruits Month with the Japanese Persimmon



Winter is here, temperatures are low, and an exotic vacation is on everyone's mind. It's no wonder that December is Exotic Fruits Month. While we embrace all fruits (exotic or not), we decided to celebrate this month with the Japanese persimmon. Bursting with flavor and nutrients, persimmons can add an exotic and healthful twist to your favorite recipes and snacks.

History: Japanese persimmons, or *Diospyros kaki* L., are native to Japan, China, and India. (The American native persimmon, *Diospyros virginiana* L., is a different and less widely eaten fruit.) Cultivation has spread nearly worldwide, and seeds were first brought to the US in 1856. Though there are many persimmon varieties, the most common types you will find in stores are the nonastringent Fuyu (shaped like a tomato and best for snacking and cooking) and the astringent Hachiya (oblong shaped and better for jams and baking). Hachiya persimmons are chalky and tart until fully ripened – almost to jelly – while Fuyu persimmons are sweeter and can be eaten when firm.

Nutrition: At just 118 calories, a Japanese persimmon packs in 6 g fiber and is an excellent source of vitamins A and C and manganese. Studies have shown persimmons are loaded with antioxidants that may ward off signs of aging and contain bioactive compounds that can improve cardiovascular health. Fiber from persimmons may also help lower cholesterol by binding to bile acids that stimulate cholesterol release from the gallbladder. Interestingly, a study in mice showed that adding persimmons to a high fat, high calorie holiday-style diet reduced the rise of total cholesterol by 25%, and LDL (“bad”) cholesterol by 10%.

How to Eat: Persimmons can be enjoyed cooked or raw in both sweet and savory dishes. Create an exotic persimmon salsa or replace tomatoes with persimmons for a unique twist on Caprese salad. Add sautéed or raw persimmons to any green salad; mix with quinoa or bulgur; or enjoy on top of oatmeal. Ripened Hachiya persimmons can be stirred into oats and yogurt or used to flavor smoothies. Roast persimmons and mix with whole wheat pasta and arugula for a hearty winter meal, or toss with mushrooms and kale for a unique and colorful side. As for snacks? Eat the Fuyu persimmon just as you would an apple. Juicy, sweet, and flavorful, they’re simply delicious on their own.

Featured Recipe

Winter Citrus Salad

Ingredients:

- 2 ruby red grapefruits
- 2 oranges
- 3 red pears
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh mint leaves
- 3 tablespoons pomegranate seeds
- 1 package (4.5 oz.) DOLE® Power Up Greens™ Baby Kale and Greens
- ½ pound haricot verts, blanched
- ¼ cup toasted walnut halves
- Citrus dressing (see recipe below)



Serves: 6

Prep Time: 30 min.

Directions

1. **Peel** grapefruits and oranges, section fruit, and set aside.
2. **Thinly** slice pears lengthwise and brush with lemon juice.
3. **Shingle** pears on one side of a platter. Sprinkle pears with mint and pomegranate seeds. Arrange DOLE Power Up Greens™ Baby Kale and Greens salad blend in a line on the other side of the platter. Scatter grapefruit and orange segments along with haricots verts and walnuts on top. Drizzle dressing over the salad and pears. Add a garnish of kale leaves around the platter.

Citrus dressing: Whisk together ¼ cup grapefruit juice, 2 tablespoons rice vinegar, 1 tablespoon olive oil, ½ teaspoon chopped mint leaves, salt and pepper to taste.

Tip: Serve this salad as a first course and arrange the salad on six serving plates.

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