



LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

by Laura Lubus, MPH

Looking for an excuse to laugh more often? How about this: it's good exercise for your lungs! We often overlook the importance of keeping our lungs healthy because they do their job automatically. This doesn't mean we should ignore such a vital organ. Sure, we stop and think about taking deep breaths every now and then; but for the most part, we don't think about breathing at all.

One thing you may not know is that we don't use our entire lung capacity. But we still want to ensure our lungs are functioning at peak levels. We should give our lungs a chance to work hard, like our muscles. Your lungs do best with at least 20 minutes of consistent, moderately intense movement daily. Keeping our lungs exercised and at peak

performance can help us rid our bodies of toxins, pollutants, allergens, cigarette smoke, and anything else we may inhale from the surrounding environment.

What are some other things you can do to help increase lung capacity?

- Pay attention to your posture to give lungs space to expand
- Stay hydrated
- Laugh!

Overall, keeping your lungs healthy will come from other habits of living a healthy style. Breathe in, breathe out, and thank your lungs for working so hard for you. ☐

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 3 Steps to Clear the Clutter
- 3 The Benefits of Eating Local
- 4 Harvest of the Month: Cucumbers

SMART FACTS

50%

The percent lungs function at when resting or during daily activities.

23,040

The estimated number of breaths a person takes per day.

6 LITERS

The amount of air an average adult male can hold in his lungs at full capacity.

THE BENEFITS OF EATING LOCAL

by Kaitlin Enneking

When deciding what to make for dinner, what options do you consider? Do you think about what's in season, what's in your backyard, or what sounds good from the grocery store? Whether you're buying from a farmer's market or picking the vegetables from your own garden, eating local has many health benefits.

Local food has more nutrients. Local food doesn't take as long to get from harvest to your table, which means the food retains more of its nutritional value. When you buy food that has been imported from other states or countries, it often spends more time in distribution centers. That means it's picked well before it is fully ripe, giving nutrients less time to develop.

Local foods promote a safer food supply. The more steps between you and your food, the more chances there are for contamination. Food grown in distant locations has the potential for safety issues at harvesting, washing, shipping, and distribution.

FINANCIAL CORNER WITH PETE THE PLANNER

The changing of seasons, especially this time of year, is a welcome change. And just like the weather, your financial life also has seasons. There's the 'we just had a baby' season, the 'I just lost my job' season, and the 'I'm close to retirement' season, just to name a few. Each season of your financial life comes with unique challenges and adjustments. Your ability to think ahead and prepare for an upcoming season predicts your ability to handle what comes your way. But what will always hold you back is dealing with last season's mistakes in your new season. Debt from your first child limits how you handle having your second child. Paying your own student loans when you're trying to fund your child's college fund puts you in a bind. Deal with each season as it happens, but remember another season change is just around the corner. ✎

Growing your own food burns calories. Digging soil, picking weeds, and harvesting your crops can be tough work. Gardening burns more calories than grabbing your food off the store shelf and also gets you out into the fresh air and sunshine. On average, a 150-pound person burns 270 calories in one hour of gardening. Plus, buying a packet of tomato seeds costs far less than buying tomatoes from the grocery store. ✎



NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS & SPORTS MONTH MAY

Regular physical activity is good for everyone's health, no matter our age or body type. National Physical Fitness and Sports Month is a great time to spread the word about the benefits of getting active.

HARVEST OF THE MONTH: CUCUMBERS

by Kelly Thomson, MSHP

Cucumbers are a part of the gourd family, which includes melon and squash. They are typically divided into two types: slicing cucumbers (often found on salads) or pickling cucumbers (often processed into pickles). Cucumbers are low in calories, being made up of mostly water. Although they don't get the same attention as other foods for their nutritional properties, cucumbers are a good source of vitamin K, potassium, copper, and vitamin C.

How to select

It's best to choose cucumbers that are in refrigerated cases, as opposed to those with no temperature control. They should be firm, rounded at the edges, and their color should be a bright medium to dark green. Avoid cucumbers that are yellow, puffy, have sunken water-soaked areas, or are wrinkled at their tips.

How to store

Cucumbers will keep for several days if stored in the refrigerator. If you don't use the entire cucumber at once, you may put the leftover in a tightly-sealed container in the refrigerator to keep it from drying out.



How to prepare

Before you consume cucumbers, you should thoroughly wash the whole vegetable under cool water while scrubbing with a bristle brush. This will help remove the wax coating if it has one. Another option is to remove the skin before eating. If eating a slicing cucumber, just slice or dice to your desired shape and enjoy! ✕

Source: The World's Healthiest Foods. whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foods_pice&dbid=42#healthbenefits. Accessed 10 April 2015.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH: *Cucumber & Black-Eyed Pea Salad*

Ingredients

3 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 Tablespoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons chopped fresh oregano, or 1 teaspoon dried
Freshly ground pepper to taste
4 cups peeled and diced cucumbers
1 14-ounce can black-eyed peas, rinsed
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup diced red bell pepper
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crumbled feta cheese
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup slivered red onion
2 Tablespoons chopped black olives

Nutritional Info

PER SERVING: 160 calories, 10g fat (3g saturated, 6g mono), 11mg cholesterol, 12g carbohydrates, 5g protein, 3g fiber, 270mg sodium, 273mg potassium

Directions

1. Whisk oil, lemon juice, oregano, and pepper in a large bowl until combined.
2. Add cucumber, black-eyed peas, bell pepper, feta, onion, and olives; toss to coat.
3. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Makes 6 servings, about 1 cup each.

Source: Eating Well. eatingwell.com/recipes/cucumber_black_eyed_pea_salad.html. Accessed 10 April 2015.