



Food & Fitness



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

See "Red" on Valentine's Day and throughout the year. The Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) calls red fruits and vegetables "Red-hot and Healthy." They contain many health-promoting phytochemicals including lycopene and anthocyanins. Some "red" fruits and vegetables include red apples, cherries, cranberries, red grapes, pink/red grapefruit, raspberries, strawberries, watermelon, beets, red cabbage, red peppers, radishes, red onions, rhubarb and tomatoes. For additional red fruits and vegetables and recipes, check the PBH Web site at www.5aday.com.

Some "red" ideas for Valentine's Day or any day include:

- ♥ Pasta with tomato sauce.
- ♥ Tossed salad with red bell peppers.
- ♥ Tossed salad with cherry or grape tomatoes.
- ♥ Tomato soup.
- ♥ Cole slaw made with red cabbage.
- ♥ Cranberry sauce — use the bag of cranberries in your freezer you bought when they were on sale.
- ♥ Oatmeal topped with a heart shape made of dried cranberries.
- ♥ Raspberry smoothie — put 3/4 to 1 cup plain or vanilla flavored yogurt in blender. Add a few tablespoons of frozen raspberries at a time and blend until desired consistency. After blending, if desired, blend in 1 or more teaspoons of sugar or artificial sweetener to taste.
- ♥ Pink/red grapefruit half topped with a sprinkle of brown sugar.
- ♥ Red grapes make a great side to your sandwich for noontime nibbling.
- ♥ Frozen lowfat yogurt or ice cream with "real" strawberry sauce — see recipe below.

Strawberry Sauce

1½ cups fresh strawberries or partially thawed frozen strawberries
1 tablespoon lemon juice
¼ cup confectioners sugar

In a blender, blend strawberries with lemon juice and sugar until smooth.

Source: National Cancer Institute (NCI)



Attend a FREE class on Healthy Cooking with Spices & Herbs on Thursday, March 20, 7-8:30 p.m. When cutting back on fat, sugar and salt, you can add zing to your foods with spices and herbs! Alice Henneman, extension educator and registered dietitian, will show you how to prepare delicious and nutritious foods using spices and herbs.

This class will be held as part of BryanLGH Medical Center's Wellness series at the Plaza Conference Center, Bryan LGH Medical Center East, 1600 S. 48 St., Lincoln. To register for this program, call BryanLGH at 481-8886.

Web Resource for February

Check our "Food Theme Month Links" at lanaster.unl.edu/food/ciqlinks.htm for information that will be helpful to you during each month of the year.

To keep up-to-date on new tips, resources and recipe ideas to help you prepare healthy foods in a hurry, sign up for our monthly **Cook It Quick** e-mail messages at lanaster.unl.edu/food/ciqupdat.htm



Cleaning the Kitchen Cupboard: Can This Food Be Saved?

Alice Henneman, MS, RD
Extension Educator

Have you looked — REALLY looked — at the foods in your kitchen cupboards lately? Is it time to bid some foods a fond farewell? Should others be moved to a better location and/or storage container? Can you "revive" some aging foods so they still can be used?

Read on for tips to help you decide whether to toss, move or try to save common foods.

The following storage times are based on food stored at a room temperature of about 70 degrees F and are those generally cited for maintaining best food quality. A range of times and the more conservative recommendations are given to allow for age of the product when purchased, how long it has been open, etc. READ LABELS CAREFULLY — they often contain important storage information and recommended "use by" dates.

Baking Powder

- 12 to 18 months or expiration date on container.
- **Storage Tip:** Store tightly covered in a dry place. Make sure measuring utensils are dry before dipping into the container.
- **Testing For Freshness:** Mix 1 teaspoon baking powder

with 1/3 cup hot water. If it foams vigorously, it still has rising power.

Baking Soda

- 12 to 18 months or expiration date on container.
- **Storage Tip:** Store tightly covered in a dry place. Make sure measuring utensils are dry before dipping them into the container.
- **Testing For Freshness:** Place 1-1/2 teaspoons in a small bowl. Add 1 tablespoon vinegar.

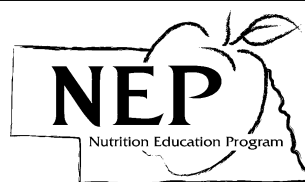
If it fizzes, then it will still help leaven a food. If it doesn't fizz, use it as an odor catcher in the refrigerator.

Canned Foods

- 1 to 2 years.
- **Storage Tip #1:** The Canned Food Alliance (www.mealtime.org) recommends eating canned food within 2 years of PROCESSING for best quality. Many

see *FOOD SAVED?* on page 11

Making the Five Food Groups "Come Alive" for Pathways Families



Mardel Meinke
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Pathways is a residential community, administered by the Lincoln Medical Education Foundation to help young families become self-sufficient. The Lancaster County Nutrition Education Program (NEP) has provided nutrition programs for Pathways families since 1997.

At a recent program, Pathways families had a lively discussion about the five food groups. Hands-on items, such as food, packaging, recipes and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) information, served as inspiration for sharing. The topic of food safety was emphasized using items from the kitchen. The men and women also shared ways they save money shopping for food.

While the parents were learning and discussing ideas, their children were involved in separate groups talking about "everyday foods" vs. "sometime foods" and preparing healthy snacks they can make at home.

At the next session, families utilized their skills preparing a



Youth make a healthy snack by spreading peanut butter on apple slices.

meal for the group of 55 parents and children. The adults worked in teams to prepare turkey and rice skillet dinners, vegetables, fruits, breads and healthy desserts. Their children prepared a very colorful fruit salad to accompany the meal. While everyone moved through the serving line, a 6-year-old girl proudly shared she had helped make the fruit salad. This was a great way to involve the children in the preparation of the meal and also encourage them to eat healthy.

Parents who attended both sessions were awarded the NEP cookbook, *The Cook's Helper*. Several commented they learned a lot about the food groups and plan to eat healthier foods, including less "fast food." One dad said he learned about whole

wheat bread. A mom said she liked learning about different food combinations. Another mother reported she will do weekly menus and shopping. Still another mom plans to make oatmeal for breakfast as a good source of whole grains. While preparing the "Colorful Corn" recipe for the meal, one mother refused to use a dented can because the potential dangers of foods from dented cans had been emphasized. Many of the parents said they liked the recipes that were prepared for the meal and plan to utilize them at home.

There were many successes for the Pathways's adults and children as a result of this opportunity to focus on incorporating the five food groups into a healthy diet.