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Here is a recipe which may be made with a variety of antioxidant-rich berries. I've added some cooking tips. See the accompanying article, "It's the Berries" (at right) about the health benefits of berries.

### Cranberry Apple Crisp

(Makes 9 servings)

**5 cups pared, sliced tart apples, about 6 medium apples (see Alice's Tip 1)**  
**1-1/2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries (see Alice's Tip 2)**  
**1/3 cup sugar**

#### TOPPING

**1/2 cup all-purpose flour (see Alice's Tip 3)**  
**1/2 cup brown sugar**  
**1 teaspoon cinnamon**  
**1/4 cup chilled butter, cut into small pieces**

1. Position oven rack so crisp will bake in the middle of the oven. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Lightly grease a 9-inch square baking pan. (See Alice's Tip 4)
2. In a large bowl, mix the apples and cranberries with the sugar until coated. Transfer to baking pan.
3. Topping: Mix flour, brown sugar and cinnamon. Work in butter until light and crumbly. (see Alice's Tip 5)
4. Sprinkle topping evenly over apples and cranberries.
5. Bake 45 minutes or until apples are tender. Cool on a wire rack about 15 minutes before serving. If desired, serve with a small scoop of a light ice cream or frozen yogurt. (see Alice's Tips 6 & 7)

#### Alice's Tips:

1. Granny Smith apples work well as a tart apple in this recipe. Leave the skins on, if desired.
2. 1-1/2 cups of fresh or frozen blueberries, blackberries or raspberries may be substituted for the cranberries; 1-1/2 cups of sliced fresh strawberries is another substitution possibility.
3. One-half cup of whole wheat flour may be substituted for the white flour, if you like. If desired, instead of using all flour, use 1/3 cup flour and 1/4 cup quick or old-fashioned oats.
4. Instead of greasing the pan, spray it with a no-stick cooking spray.
5. Chilled butter can be shredded with a cheese grater for easier mixing. Combine butter with the dry ingredients by working it into the flour mixture with a pastry blender or two knives until the mixture looks like coarse crumbs and there are no large chunks of butter visible. As a quicker method of mixing the topping: Place the flour, brown sugar and cinnamon in a food processor and pulse until combined. Add butter and pulse 10 times or until mixture is crumbly.
6. Test for apple tenderness by inserting the tip of a paring knife into the apples. This leaves smaller cuts in the apples and topping than using a fork.
7. Serve warm. Limit the TOTAL time the crisp is left at room temperature to two hours. Refrigerate and eat remaining crisp within three days. To reheat leftover crisp, warm in a preheated 350°F for 20 to 30 minutes. Heat single servings in the microwave on higher power for 60 to 90 seconds.

Source: Adapted from Cranberry Apple Crisp, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 5 to 9 a Day for Better Health Program.

## StairWELL to Better Health

Start the new year by stepping out, stair-stepping, that is!

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site gives details for encouraging employees to increase their physical activity by using the stairs more often than the elevator at work.

Some of the same tips may motivate you to "sneak" in some exercise by going up and down the steps at home more often, also.

A complete description of the program, including some ready-to-go signs to post on stairwells at work, is found at [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/stairwell](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/stairwell).

Here are phrases from 10 sample signs to inspire you to start:

When you  
go up,  
your  
blood  
pressure  
goes down.



- When you go up, your blood pressure goes down.
- A flight a day may keep chronic disease away.
- Physical activity will add years to your life and life to your years.
- The first wealth is health. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
- Walking up stairs burns almost 5 times more calories than riding an elevator.
- In one minute, a 150 pound person burns approximately 10 calories walking up stairs, and only 1.5 calories riding an elevator.
- There are 1,440 minutes in every day ... schedule 30 of them for physical activity.
- Small steps make big differences.
- Raise your fitness level, one step at a time.
- Step up to a healthier lifestyle. (AH)

## It's the Berries!

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The results looked "berry" good for berries in 2004 when United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) researchers released a list of the top 20 antioxidant-rich foods in a study of over 100 commonly consumed foods tested (*Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, June 9, 2004).

Wild blueberries, cultivated blueberries, cranberries, blackberries, raspberries and strawberries took six of the top 11 spots. Here's the complete top 20 list — from highest to lowest in antioxidant activity — based on serving size:

1. Small red beans (dry, cooked), ½ cup
2. **WILD BLUEBERRIES**, 1 cup
3. Red kidney beans, (dry, cooked), ½ cup
4. Pinto beans, (dry, cooked), ½ cup
5. **BLUEBERRIES (CULTIVATED)**, 1 cup
6. **CRANBERRIES**, 1 cup whole
7. Artichokes (cooked), 1 cup hearts
8. **BLACKBERRIES**, 1 cup
9. Prunes, ½ cup
10. **RASPBERRIES**, 1 cup
11. **STRAWBERRIES**, 1 cup
12. Red delicious apples, 1
13. Granny Smith apples, 1
14. Pecans, 1 ounce
15. Sweet cherries, 1 cup
16. Black plums, 1
17. Russet potato, (cooked), 1
18. Black beans (dry, cooked), ½ cup
19. Plums, 1
20. Gala apples, 1

"Just like rust on a car, oxidation can cause damage to cells and may contribute to aging," states the American Dietetic Association. Antioxidants may help increase our immune function and protect against cancer and heart disease. They function by neutralizing the damaging effects of "free radicals" that form during cell metabolism as oxygen is burned.



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In identifying these foods, researchers cautioned their antioxidant activity in the laboratory may differ from their antioxidant activity in the body. Absorption capacity may vary and cooking processes may affect antioxidant levels. For example, cooking increased the antioxidant content of tomatoes but decreased levels in carrots. While a food didn't make the top 20 for antioxidant activity, it may still be a source of other health benefits.

Foods offer advantages over supplements in supplying antioxidants. They may provide compounds that offer benefits of which we're presently unaware. Foods also may contain additional substances that work with antioxidants to make them effective.

The American Heart Association (AHA) states, "At this time, the scientific evidence supports a diet high in food sources of antioxidants and other heart-protecting nutrients, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts instead of antioxidant supplements to reduce risk of coronary vascular disease." AHA further advises, "Some studies even suggest antioxidant supplement use could have harmful effects."

While we wait for more to be known about antioxidants, we already have a good reason to eat berries. They taste good! See the "Healthy Eating" column (at left) for a recipe to get you started.

## Choose Your Drinks Wisely — It Makes Sense, and Saves Cents!



Karen Wobig  
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Less soda/pop consumption by youth is one of the goals of the Lancaster County Nutrition Education Program (NEP) School Enrichment project, in which NEP staff developed supplemental kits of hands-on educational experiences.

5th grade classrooms which

participate begin one of their lessons by discussing and researching "Nutrition Facts" on food packages and learning how to read the labels. This leads to discussion on how to understand ingredients listed on a product and their relationship to nutrients.

To visualize this, the classrooms create orange soda using actual ingredients. A student adds the sugar (12 teaspoons or 48 grams in the brand used), one teaspoon at a time. During the process, students "stop" when they think the correct amount has been added. Most students stop at 5 or 6 teaspoons. The impact of seeing 12 teaspoons

added is very great.

During the 2003–04 school year, each 5th grade student was asked, "How many cans of soda pop do you drink in one week?" Evaluation data comparing average soda/pop consumed before and after the nutrition program indicated an average **decrease** of one can of soda/pop less per student per week. If one can costs 50 cents, **each student would save \$26 per year** just by drinking one less can per week.

Encouraging children to drink water when they are thirsty and 100 percent fruit/vegetable juices or milk with

meals and snacks will not only produce healthier children, but form healthy habits that will follow into adulthood. When children are consuming soda, they drink less of the healthier drinks, especially milk.

Here are some ways to add milk/milk products to your child's diet:

- Ask for milk with the children's meals at restaurants.
- Use milk and cheese in casseroles.
- Add cheese to sandwiches.
- Eat yogurt for snacks.
- During the cold winter months, drink cocoa made with milk.



The vials of sugar above represent the average amount of sugar in one 12-ounce can of non-diet soft drink (12 teaspoons).