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Some of us grew up hearing, "If you don't clean your plate, you can't have any dessert." Now we know if portions are too large, we may be wise to save some for another meal. So where does that leave dessert?

A dessert typically is defined as a dish or course served at the end of a meal. Many definitions say it is usually, although not always, a sweet dish. With the 2005 Dietary Guideline's recommendation to "Get the most nutrition out of your calories," can we have our dessert and eat it, too?

Baseball legend Yogi Berra is noted for saying, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." Three food groups encouraged by the new 2005 Dietary Guidelines are fruits, calcium-rich foods and grains (especially whole grains). The Guidelines also recommend preparing foods and beverages with little added sugars.

When you're at the fork in the road regarding desserts, grab your fork or spoon — and try some of these recipe ideas.

Cocoa-Berry Yogurt Tarts

(Makes 6 servings • Prep time: 10 minutes)

- 1-1/2 cups low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1-1/2 cups reduced-fat ricotta cheese
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 6 graham cracker tart shells
- 3/4 cup strawberries, sliced (raspberries or blueberries also can be used)

DIRECTIONS: Mix yogurt, ricotta, sugar and cocoa powder thoroughly with whisk until creamy. Spoon 1/6 mixture into each tart shell and top with sliced strawberries.

Nutritional Facts Per Serving: Calories: 260; Total Fat: 9 g; Saturated Fat: 3 g; Cholesterol: 20 mg; Sodium: 250 mg; Calcium: 20% Daily Value; Protein: 9 g; Carbohydrates: 37 g; Dietary Fiber: 3 g
Per serving: 1/8 fruit serving; 3/4 dairy serving; 1 teaspoon added sugar; (Note: 1/2 cup ricotta cheese equals 1 dairy serving)

Recipe courtesy of 3-A-Day of Dairy (www.3aday.org) and provided by Jennifer Meyer, RD, LMNT, Program Director, Dairy Council of Nebraska.



ALICE'S TIP:

This recipe also tastes delicious spooned directly into a serving dish and topped with berries. Dress it up for an elegant meal by serving it in a fancy glass!

Fruit Slush

(Makes 4 servings)

- 3 cups frozen fruit (such as frozen strawberries, blueberries, raspberries or melon)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup fat-free milk or nonfat plain yogurt
- Sweetener as needed: about 1 to 3 tablespoons sugar or the equivalent in artificial sweetener

DIRECTIONS: Blend first three ingredients until smooth. Sweeten to taste.

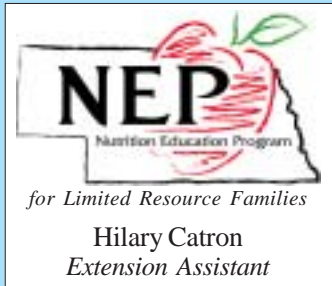
Source: Courtesy of the National Cancer Institute's Eat 5 to 9 A Day program at www.5aday.gov



ALICE'S TIPS:

1. This is a great recipe for using odds and ends of frozen fruit. The slush in the picture includes raspberries, strawberries and blueberries.
2. It may be difficult to blend very large frozen strawberries in some blenders. You may be more successful if you thaw the strawberries slightly until you can cut them into smaller pieces.
3. This slush is best if served immediately. It makes a great dessert and can be quickly assembled just before serving.

NEP Partners with LPS to Teach Nutrition in Teen Parenting Classes



This winter, Cooperative Extension's Nutrition Education Program (NEP) began a new venture with Lincoln Public High Schools to teach nutrition as part of teen parenting classes at North Star, Lincoln Northeast, Lincoln Southeast, Bryan Community and Lincoln High School. Students are pregnant teens and teen parents (male and female).

NEP staff visit each high school for one month to present lessons on:

- Food Guide Pyramid
- Five Food Groups
- Meal Planning
- Shopping
- Fast Food
- Feeding Infants and Children
- Physical Activity
- Food Safety
- Food Preparation

Most lessons are taught using a game or

activity rather than a lecture format. Students have commented the games are a lot of fun and they learn a lot about nutrition.

One activity involves students recording everything they eat during one day and then entering the information into the USDA's Interactive Healthy Eating Index online. This index gives students a visual picture of their diet. They then set a personal dietary goal to work on over the next month. One student whose diet consisted of three sodas and one taco at the start of the month, was eating two good meals a day by the end of the

nine lessons.

Another successful activity is the 10,000 Steps Walking Program. Every student receives a pedometer and walking log to keep track of their daily activity. Many teachers have commented students are still recording their activity up to two months after completing the NEP program.

The last nutrition lesson is NEP Graduation Day. The students participate in a food preparation activity and each participant receives a cookbook and graduation certificate. Graduates who participate in the Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) also receive nutrition education credit through their local WIC agencies.

The beneficial results of the NEP/LPS partnership are immediate. Some comments made by students after completing the program include, "I now try to drink more milk and eat more fruit." "I drink less pop and eat less candy." "I no longer thaw my meat on the counter." "I try to walk 10,000 steps each day."



The USDA's Interactive Healthy Eating Index is online at <http://209.48.219.53>

Enjoy Beef Nutrition during May, National Beef Month

As the weather starts warming up, we start thinking of cooler, lighter foods. Consider a cooling main dish salad topped with lean strips of protein- and nutrient-rich beef.

"A total of 19 cuts of beef qualify as 'lean' under government labeling guidelines, according to the USDA Nutrient Database," says Kaiti Roeder, Registered Dietitian and Director of Consumer Affairs for the Nebraska Beef Council.

These leanest cuts have, on average, only one more gram of saturated fat than a skinless chicken breast (per 3-ounce serving). The 19 leanest cuts are eye round, top round steak, chuck mock tender steak, bottom round, top sirloin steak, 95% lean ground beef, brisket (flat half), shank crosscuts, chuck shoulder roast, chuck arm pot roast, chuck shoulder steak, top loin (strip) steak, flank steak, ribeye steak (small end), rib steak (small end), tri-tip, tenderloin and T-bone steak.

If you're in the store and aren't sure what a lean cut is, Roeder advises you can be assured the cut is lean if it contains the word "loin" or "round."

Here's a salad idea from Roeder, courtesy of the Nebraska Beef Council to get you started. For more beef recipes from the Nebraska Beef Council, visit www.nebeef.org and search for recipes through an advanced recipe search.

Mexican Beef Salad

(Serves 4)

- 1 pound lean ground beef (95% lean)
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 5 cups thinly sliced romaine lettuce
- 1-1/2 cups (about 8 ounces) grape tomatoes or cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup drained, canned no-salt-added black beans, rinsed
- 3 tablespoons canned chopped mild green chiles, rinsed and drained
- 1/3 cup shredded fat-free or low-fat Cheddar cheese
- 2 tablespoons snipped fresh cilantro

In a large nonstick skillet, brown the ground beef and onion over medium heat for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the beef is not pink. Pour off and discard the drippings. Sprinkle with the chili powder, cumin and garlic powder. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the dressing (recipe follows).

To serve, place the romaine lettuce on a large platter. Top the romaine lettuce with the tomatoes, beans, green chiles, and beef mixture, in that order. Sprinkle with the Cheddar and cilantro. Serve with the dressing.

Spicy Ranch Dressing

- 1/2 cup fat-free or light ranch dressing
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/8 teaspoon red hot-pepper sauce

In a small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients.

Nutrients per serving: Calories 292; Total Fat 7.9 g; Saturated Fat 3.3 g; Polyunsaturated Fat 0.9 g; Monounsaturated Fat 3.1 g; Carbohydrates 24 g; Fiber 5.1 g; Cholesterol 80 mg; Protein 32 g; Sodium 456 mg; Niacin 7.1 mg; Vitamin B6 0.6 mg; Vitamin B12 2.2 mg; Selenium 19 mg; Zinc 6.9 mg; Iron 4.8 mg. (AH)