

Events this Week

WORKSHOPS

Move Indoors!

Tips for staying active when it is too cold, too wet, too hot or not convenient to exercise outside

Tuesday, Dec. 18

7:00 - 9:00AM

Lakeside Entrance

Step Ahead can come to you! Contact us to schedule a workshop for your group. Call us at 508/856-2319 or 800/522-4617, or email at info@stepaheadprogram.com.

Chocolate and Your Health

You may have heard that some types of chocolate can be good for you. Read on for an update on chocolate's health effects as well as tips for choosing and enjoying it.

Health benefits of chocolate

Research suggests **dark chocolate** (not white or milk chocolate) has nutrients that are good for your health. Studies show that flavonoids (powerful antioxidants) in dark chocolate may help prevent heart disease and cancer, and reduce blood pressure. Other substances found in dark chocolate are stearic acid, which may help lower cholesterol, and serotonin, which may improve your mood! Chocolate also contains sodium, potassium, iron, and vitamins A, B1, C, D, & E.

A small amount of dark chocolate

Chocolate does not replace a healthy diet with fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Chocolate has saturated fat, added sugar and calories. For example, a 100 gram (3.5 ounce) chocolate bar has about 531 calories.

A **small amount** of dark chocolate (about the size of a Hershey kiss) is all you need to reap the tasty health benefits. Read the label on dark chocolate to make sure it has at least 70% cocoa. This chocolate may cost more

than a milk chocolate bar, but it may taste richer and is better for you.

Avoid other types of chocolate

Avoid milk chocolate and white chocolate.

To make less expensive chocolate, the makers use less cocoa and often remove the healthy nutrients and cocoa butter (natural fat) while preparing the chocolate. Then, they may add in partially hydrogenated oils (trans fats) instead. Healthier chocolate has the cocoa butter added back in, instead of partially hydrogenated oils.

Choosing and enjoying chocolate

- ✓ If you usually eat milk or white chocolate try chocolate with 70% cocoa instead.
- ✓ Avoid chocolate with partially hydrogenated oils or corn syrup.
- ✓ Enjoy small amounts.
- ✓ For an extra nutrition boost, try chocolate drizzled over fruits, in a trail mix, or with nuts!

References: www.sparkpeople.com; www.mylifetime.com; Grassi et al. Short-term administration of dark chocolate is followed by a significant increase in insulin sensitivity and a decrease in blood pressure in health persons. *Am J or Clin Nut*, 2005;81(3):611-614.

Tuabert et al. Effects of low habitual cocoa intake on blood pressure and bioactive nitric oxide. *JAMA*. 2007;298(1):49-60.

Recipe of the Week

"Mock" Garlic mashed potatoes Makes 4 servings

- 1 medium head cauliflower
- 1/4 cup grated reduced fat Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/8 teaspoon straight chicken base or low sodium bouillon (or salt)
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh or dry chives, for garnish
- 2 Tablespoons Trans-fat free spread

- Set a stockpot of water to boil over high heat.
- Clean and cut cauliflower into small pieces. Cook

in boiling water for about 6 minutes, or until well done. Drain well; do not let cool and pat cooked cauliflower very dry between several layers of paper towels.

- In a bowl with an immersion blender, or in a food processor, puree the hot cauliflower with the Parmesan cheese, garlic, chicken base (bullion), and pepper until almost smooth. Add trans-fat free spread. Garnish with chives, and serve.

Nutrition Information

Calories: 104

Fat: 6g

Saturated fat: 1.6g

Carbohydrates: 11g

Fiber: 4g

Protein: 4g

Tip of the Week

Check out the American Heart Association's **Choose To Move** program, which is a free 12-week program that helps women increase physical activity and build healthy habits. Call **1-800-AHA-USA1** or visit choosetomove.org to register.

To learn more about Step Ahead visit www.stepaheadprogram.com