

“June-Welcoming Summer’s Bounty”

Women’s Nutrition Matters, LLC

Transitioning into Summer

Can you believe that summer is almost here?! I hope that you are enjoying the warmer temperatures and longer days. Just as the seasons are changing, so are the season’s fruit and vegetable picks. Earlier this season, we emphasized the leaf lettuces, arugula, young spring onions and wild greens that helped us to detoxify after a long winter of heavier, fattier foods. As summer nears, the Romaine, Bok Choy and other sturdier greens are replacing them as we bump up the nutrition and fiber. These greens are high in chlorophyll, folate, calcium and magnesium—and low in calories. Asparagus is also abundant now, a wonderful cleansing vegetable loaded with potassium, vitamins C, K, and rutin which helps protect against varicose veins. Asparagus also has a particular affinity for the urinary system, having a diuretic effect, which also proves useful for relief of premenstrual bloating. Have you ever noticed how your urine smells funny after eating asparagus? It’s caused by an enzyme that not everyone has, but if you have it, you surely know it!

Another of my favorite harbingers of June is the berries. At the Asbury Village Farm CSA, I have been harvesting organic strawberries for 2 weeks now, and let me tell you, they are delicious. According to Ayurvedic medicine, berries are the perfect cleansing, immune-boosting, tonifying foods. Berries are full of bone-building and immune-boosting nutrients like boron, chromium, zinc, selenium and folate. They contain pectin, the soluble fiber that keeps our bowels running smoothly. Did I mention that they taste great?? Who doesn’t like strawberries and blueberries? They are like nature’s candy. Berries are perfect snacks for kids and adults alike—low in calories and high in flavor. They are the best fruit choice for diabetics as well. Enjoy your berries over organic yogurt for a quick breakfast or dessert. (My husband eats his berries every evening over low-fat yogurt—in place of his cookies and milk!) Whirr

them into smoothies and slice them into salads. There is no wrong way to eat berries, just eat them! I have to tell you though, that strawberries are a very highly-sprayed fruit, listed as one of the “dirty dozen” by the [Environmental Working Group](#). Please buy organic strawberries or visit your local U-pick farms and ask them if they spray their fruits. Because of their porous nature, it is virtually impossible to wash off the residues without smashing the fruits, so buy organic.



Rhubarb is plentiful this month, and I have been cutting it weekly now to make strawberry-rhubarb crisps. Crisps are much easier to make than pies—I cannot master a good crust! Rhubarb has significant amounts of calcium, manganese and vitamin K. Team it up with berries and you have a low-calorie, delicious addition to your spring-into-summer diet. See my recipe for a simple crisp below.

Please explore the farmers’ markets in your area this month—they are in full swing, bringing fresh, local,

nutritious fruits and vegetables to you and your family. Make a trip to the local library and check out some of the seasonal cookbooks available and try some new recipes to incorporate some of these exceptional foods.



Of Bug Repellants & Bug Bites

One of the things I love about winter is the absence of bugs. I really don't like bugs, unless you are talking about butterflies or dragonflies—those I like! Having worked the better part of my life outdoors, I have come to understand the need for adequate non-toxic bug repellants –“bug dope” to outdoor people—and also bug bite relief. Getting eaten by flies and mosquitoes can turn a lovely evening picnic into an itchy blood bath. I prefer the former! Repelling insects can be a daunting task here in New Jersey where humid summer weather is perfect for mosquitoes, gnats and green heads. There are many repellants on the market today that rely on toxic chemicals such as DEET. These products may be effective at repelling insects but at what cost to the user? These ingredients are anything but safe, therefore I want to tell you about some things that I use myself which prove helpful during my outdoor adventures.

Many of our medicinal plants have very fragrant essential oil compounds, many of which we are very familiar with. The mint family, for example, has a strong pleasant scent which is very repellant to mice, rabbits and deer. Many of our culinary herbs—rosemary, thyme, lemon verbena—are also aromatics, which means they also have repellant oils as well as medicinal properties. Many organic body lotions and creams contain one or more of these oils and can be used as a double-duty moisturizer. Just as some shampoos or colognes can attract bugs to you, making use of aromatic herbs can do the opposite! My favorite cream right now, is EO brand rose geranium-citrus scent. Rose geranium has been used for years to repel ticks. I cannot vouch for its efficacy here, but I can tell you that it repels mosquitoes and gnats while I am out in the garden. A very specific scent for those days when you have your own personal swarm of “no see

ums” is clove oil. This essential oil—as with all essential oils—should not be applied directly to your skin unless it is very diluted in a carrier oil. It can, however, be applied “neat” to the rim of your cap or to a bandana and it is perfect for the job. Other oils that can be combined or used straight with variable success are rosemary, mints, lemon, and thyme. Steven Foster, a well-known herbalist, recommends a combination of eucalyptus, cedar lavender, teatree, citronella, lemon thyme and peppermint essential oils mixed in a base of almond or vegetable oil. Use 2-6 drops of each oil in about ¼ cup of carrier oil. This may be applied to the skin as needed. You can also try some of the prepared blends of oils. [Aura Cacia](#), and [Young Living](#) are 2 brands of essential oils that you might try. Young Living has a “Thieve’s Blend” which among other things is a good insect repellant. Find a combination that works for you!

Once you have been bitten, you need to stop the reaction that causes the itch. Pronto. The very best plant for the job is Plantain, a common weed that is literally everywhere. Here’s a picture of it—I’m sure you can find it growing in your yard or driveway! Just pick a few leaves—stay with me now—and chew them up and apply them to the bite. It will calm the reaction and leave you green, but itchless. Kids love this remedy!

If you are not so brave to chew weeds, try applying fresh aloe gel or witch hazel. Lavender oil is also very anti-inflammatory, and is one of the few essential oils that can be used undiluted on the skin. If none of these are available, moisten a plain tea bag and apply. Any of these should reduce the itch and provide relief.



A Note About Vitamin D

After a long, dark winter, our vitamin D levels are at their nadir, or lowest levels. If you are planning on having your annual blood work drawn soon, please ask your practitioner to draw a 25(OH) vitamin D level. I almost guarantee that your level is below the recommended 50 for optimum disease prevention. Please supplement with 2000-3000 IU of vitamin D3 daily to help your body recover its reserves. Remember vitamin

D is not just about preventing rickets! Research is showing that the hormone vitamin D plays a positive role in the prevention and healing from many diseases such as cancer, autoimmune diseases such as MS, and osteoporosis, to name a few. Want to learn more about this fabulous hormone? Check out the [Vitamin D Council](#) and sign up for their monthly newsletter.

Recipes of the Month

Strawberry-rhubarb Crisp

For the Filling:

4 cups of a combination of chopped rhubarb stems and sliced strawberries

1/8 cup organic cane sugar

1/2 T organic butter

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 tsp cornstarch or arrowroot, dissolved in a small amount of water

For the Topping:

1/2 cup whole wheat pastry flour

1/2 tsp baking powder

4 T organic butter, cold & diced

1/4 C each, organic cane sugar & brown sugar

1/4 C chopped walnuts or pecans

1/4 C rolled oats

1-2 T ground flax seed or Salba seed (optional)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Combine all filling ingredients in a saucepan over medium heat and cook, stirring occasionally, until butter and sugar melts into a nice sauce, about 5 minutes. Pour this into a baking dish- I like my fancy red pie plate.

Combine flour and baking powder in a bowl. Add butter pieces and mix them into the flour mix, crumbling it up

to form a coarse, powdery texture. Stir in sugars, nuts, seeds and oats.

Pour topping evenly over filling and bake for 35-45 minutes, until it is bubbly and browned. Let cool at least 5 minutes before serving.

This recipe is so yummy, my husband and I eat the whole thing on the same day. When peaches are in season, substitute peaches for the strawberries. Oh so Good!!!!

Watermelon Lemonade

This is a fabulously quick, easy and delicious drink, full of electrolytes, natural sugars and anti-cancer bioflavonoids. Unfortunately, I never measure the amounts so play with them until you reach a mixture that suits you!

Chunks of fresh watermelon, seedless

Organic whole lemons- 2-3 small ones

Handful of fresh mint leaves or lemon balm (optional)

In your Vitamix, fill the container about 2/3 full of watermelon chunks. Quarter 2-3 whole organic lemons and add to watermelon, along with a cup or 2 of water to get it all to mix up nicely. Blend. This is such a great combination and so healthy. The watermelons are so good this year, so sweet, so you don't even have to add any sugar. Enjoy!!

As always, it is a pleasure to be able to provide you with this health information. It is my hope that you will not only enjoy it and use it to your benefit, but that you will also pass it along to your friends and family.

Do you need a bit of guidance in creating a diet that works for you? Do you need a way to create more energy and reduce your level of stress? Please contact me either through my website, www.womensnutritionmatters.com or by email at herbalgem@gmail.com

*Have a group of 5 or more women interested in working together?
You qualify for a group rate!! Give me a call at 908-377-0773. I'd
love to work with you!!*

*Enjoy this transition into summer. Encourage your body to lighten and
detoxify. Cleanse your mind of toxic thoughts and negative emotions.
We are what we eat, think and believe!!*

Namaste, Diane