



The leaves are gradually losing their color and dropping suggesting autumn is definitely upon us! Are you feeling the urge for some **warm/hot drinks**? There are nutritional benefits to many hot beverages but just remember the calories can add up quickly! Coffee is the #1 source of antioxidants in the US diet. (This is a bean many people won't pass up!) One to 2 cups a day can be beneficial for your health. Tea is the most popular drink worldwide. All types of teas contain polyphenols which offer antioxidant properties. These help in fighting age and disease, including cancer. Tea should be brewed for 3 to 5 minutes to bring out the beneficial polyphenols. It has about half the caffeine of freshly brewed coffee. Green tea is the least processed of all teas. Herbal teas are not really teas but just an infusion of herbs, flowers, berries, etc. They do not contain the health benefits from the tea plant, *Camellia sinensis* but may offer some benefits from other ingredients. Hot chocolate intake usually picks up this time of year! According to a study done by Cornell University, this beverage has more antioxidants per serving than black tea, green tea or red wine. The health benefits come from polyphenol flavonoids and dark chocolate contains the most. They are believed to have anti-inflammatory effects and as such may help to reduce the risk of cancers and heart disease. If you want to make a really quick cup just start with nonfat or 1% milk and add 1-2 Tbsp. of chocolate syrup. Then heat on HIGH in microwave for 1-2 minutes. This is a great way to increase your calcium and vitamin D intake as well!

Another thing reappearing this time of the year is **slow cookers**, more commonly known as crock pots! If you have one, you know what a time saver this can be! It does require a bit of extra time in the morning (or the night before) to get the ingredients into the cooker or pot but it definitely pays off when you walk in the door from work and smell your dinner! It's best if you can find healthy recipes that are also easy to put together. Check out the ones in the attachment above and also at these websites:

<http://busycooks.about.com/od/healthycrockpotrecipes/a/healthycrockpot.htm>

<http://walking.about.com/od/crockpotrecipes/>

I also have a couple of cookbooks with slow-cooker recipes that I will lend out to anyone hunting for more ways to make use of their slow-cooker!!

Here are some guidelines for making slow cooker recipes healthier:

- When purchasing meat, look for lean cuts
- Trim off visible fat around the edges of meat and remove skin and fat from poultry before putting into the slow cooker
- You can reduce the fat content by first browning both sides of the roast in a regular skillet. Then add the browned pot roast to the slow cooker with the seasoning and vegetables
- Slightly reduce the size of meat servings (recommended amount per serving is 3 ounces of cooked meat. Meat is a major source of saturated fat in our diets.
- Increase the proportion of vegetables in slow cooker recipe

- To extend meat or poultry flavor in soups or stews without adding excess fat and calories, add fat-free canned beef or chicken broth (choose a low sodium one if available)
- If the cut of meat has more fat than you would like, make your slow cooker dish the day before you plan to eat it. Transfer the dish to a bowl, refrigerate it overnight. Skim off the hardened fat on the surface before reheating the dish. This technique works especially well with soups and stews
- Cook a large cut of meat of a rack made for the slow cooker. Discard cooking juices, skim off surface fat, or use only a small amount of the fat-laden juices to cut the calories and fat content.

Favorite family recipes can be adapted to a slow-cooker as long as they don't involve *al dente* (firm to the bite) vegetables.

Timing: If the recipe calls for baking or simmering 15-30 minutes, set slow cooker on low (4-8 hours) or on high (1.5-2.5 hours). As a general rule, 35-45 minutes translates to 6-10 hours on low or 3-4 hours on high. For recipes that require 50 minutes to 3 hours of cooking, slow cook for 8-14 hours on low or 4-6 hours on high. Most vegetable and meat combinations will take at least 8 hours on low (and a few hours extra hours on low is okay).

Liquid: Cut down on the amount of liquid in the recipe as it won't cook down in the slow cooker. To reduce liquid at the end of cooking, turn to high and leave the lid off. Use quick-cooking tapioca for thickening or make a paste with 1/3 cup cornstarch and 1/3 cup water and add to liquid in slow cooker and bring it to a boil on high to thicken.

Milk Products: Milk, cream, yogurt or sour cream should be added during the last hour of cooking.

Vegetables: May be sauté/browned before adding if you choose but not necessary. May be best to add mushrooms, frozen or fresh peas or corn during last hour of cooking. Sliced potatoes will darken—to prevent this mix ½ tsp. cream of tartar with 1 cup of water and immerse potatoes and then drain before adding

Pasta and rice: Pasta doesn't cook well in a slow-cooker. Long-grain converted rice can be used in all-day recipes when other items are cooking with the rice.

Beans: Soak overnight or boil for 30 minutes and let sit for 1.5 hours before slow-cooking.

Frozen foods: Small foods such as vegetables or shrimp may be added to a recipe. Add at least one cup of liquid before cooking large frozen foods such as meats.



Since today is **World Osteoporosis Day** I want to share just a few statistics and recommendations in that area.

Osteoporosis is a **major** health threat for 44 million people over the age of 50 years (that's 55% of that population!)

10 million have osteoporosis

34 million are at risk with low bone mass

1 in 2 women and 1 in 4 men over 50 years will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime!

The cost in the US for caring for these fractures is **\$18 billion**

(All from 2004 Surgeon General's Report on Bone Health and Osteoporosis)

The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) has **5 simple steps** to bone health and prevention:

1. **Get your recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D** (for 19-50 year olds, you need 1000mg calcium or 100% of Daily Value on food labels and 200 IU of vitamin D or 50% of Daily Value; for those over 50 years you need 1200 mg calcium or 120% of Daily Value on food labels and 400 IU of vitamin D or 100% of Daily value for vitamin D)
2. **Engage in regular weight-bearing exercise** (walking, dancing, stair climbin-swimming and biking do not count for this!)
3. **Avoid smoking and excessive drinking** (considered more than 1 drink per day for women and more than 2 drinks per day for men)
4. **Talk to your doctor about bone health**
5. **Have a bone density test and take medication when appropriate** (women at age 65 year and men at age 70 years or earlier if you have a medical condition or take a medication associated with bone loss)

Read more details here: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/nutrition/348-071/348-071.html>

We all know exercise is a key part of good health. Read the above attached "Exercyz and Wellness" newsletter put together by ISU Health and Human Performance students. There is some great information on core strength, trans fats, and a recipe for Pumpkin Oatmeal Muffins-yum!

I hope you enjoy your weekend!

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