

I hope some of you have had the opportunity to check out the new food guidance system based on the dietary guidelines released in January and found at www.mypyramid.gov . Initially it was difficult to get onto the site as more users wanted to check it than they had anticipated and there was not enough band width. Now I think you can get on fairly easily. You can enter your age, gender and activity level and get a suggested calorie level (for weight maintenance) and recommended servings for each of the food groups. There is also a worksheet to monitor your nutritional intake. The tracker system has a database for both foods and activities where you enter your food intake and activity and it will assess the quality of your diet based on selected guidelines and calculate your energy balance. (This helps you determine if you are eating more than you are expending!) Check it out and please call (4-9625) if you have questions or difficulty using the website.

It's the time of year for rhubarb! And maybe you are lucky enough to have a patch in your backyard or to know someone who does and is willing to share! You can also find it in the grocery store and at farmer's markets in the spring. Rhubarb contains both vitamin C and calcium (one serving is ½ cup and provides approximately 10% of both nutrients) It is also a source of dietary fiber. One of the drawbacks is that because it is so tart, most recipes call for more sugar than most other desserts. (A serving without sugar is 29 calories, with sugar it is 139 calories). By combining rhubarb with sweeter fruits, such as strawberries, the sugar content can be lowered quite a bit.

Here are a couple of rhubarb recipes to try:

Rhubarb-Strawberry Topping

Serves 5 (1/3 cup servings)

4 cups rhubarb, cut in one-inch chunks
½ cup sugar
1/3 cup water
2 and ½ tsp. cornstarch
1 Tbsp. water
3 cups strawberries, sliced
1 tsp. vanilla

Combine first 3 ingredients in medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered for 5 minutes or until the rhubarb is tender. Combine 1 tablespoon water and cornstarch. Stir well, and add to rhubarb mixture. Bring to a boil, stir constantly, and cook 1 minute or until thickened. Remove from heat and stir in strawberries and vanilla. This is tasty served over custard or pudding, ice cream or angel food cake or pound. It could also be used as an accompaniment for pork loin or fish in place of fruit chutney.

Per serving=64 calories, 0.6 g protein, 0.3 g fat, 1.4 g fiber, 43 mg calcium

Rhubarb Rumble

6 servings

3 cups chopped rhubarb
1 package (3 oz.) sugar-free strawberry gelatin
1 and ½ cups cold skim milk
1 package (3.5 oz.) instant sugar-free vanilla pudding mix
1 reduced fat graham cracker crust (8 inch)

Place rhubarb in a microwave safe bowl. Cover and microwave on high for 6-8 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes, until rhubarb is softened. Stir in gelatin until dissolved, and then cool completely. In a mixing bowl, combine milk and pudding mix. Beat on low speed for 2 minutes. Fold into rhubarb mixture. Spoon into crust. Cover and refrigerate until firm.

It's hard to believe that the month of May is almost here! I'll have some healthy and delicious Cinco de Mayo Mexican recipes to share with you next week!
I hope you all enjoy your weekend!!

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