Nutrition Matters

An anthology of articles by students in Writing in Nutrition

Fall 2013

Thanks to these student authors for contributions to this anthology:

Kelsey Baumgarten
Megan Beck
Christine Charbonneau
Amanda Cortese
Erika Grover
Amy McCarthy
Amy Meunier
Jeanette Schiable
Lauren Smith
# Table of Contents:

*How to Tackle the Vending Machine Monster*,
Jeanette Schiable ........................................................................................................... 1

*Don’t Touch That Button! How to Avoid the Vending Machine*,
Amanda Cortese ............................................................................................................. 4

*Vegetarianism*,
Kelsey Baumgarten ...................................................................................................... 7

*Breakfast: Start Your Day the Right Way*,
Christine Charbonneau ................................................................................................. 8

*This I Believe*,
Amy Meunier ................................................................................................................ 11

*From Cherry Tomatoes to Sweet Potatoes: Local Farmers Keep Your Kids Eating Fresh All Year*,
Lauren Smith .................................................................................................................. 13

*Grow a Pear and Eat Your Fruits and Veggies*,
Megan Beck ..................................................................................................................... 16

*The Ups and Downs of Breastfeeding*,
Amy McCarthy .............................................................................................................. 20

*Winter is Coming! Are You Prepared?*,
Erika Grover .................................................................................................................. 22
How to Tackle the Vending Machine Monster
By Jeanette Schaible

It’s that time of day again. The Caesar salad you had for lunch has worn off and your spaghetti dinner is still so far away. You have no time or resources for an elaborate meal or something super special in the middle of this hectic afternoon at work. What is a busy, hungry person to do? You try to avoid it, but the hunger is getting to you. You dig through your pockets and wallet to scrounge enough money to hit-up the vending machine in the hall or in the lounge. But as you stand there, looking at the bright packages and labels behind the thick glass, you think, “what should I get?” With so many packaged, processed foods, what is the busy and health-conscious person going to do to fuel up without offsetting today’s good eating habits?

Vending machines and snacks can be confusing, spur-of-the-moment decisions, but you don’t have to regret your choices later by picking the first food you see. Luckily, navigating a vending machine’s menu can be made simple just by knowing some basic facts about the foods that await being purchased. Here are some tips for making break-time food enjoyable and worth your money.

*Are you hungry?* Are you actually hungry, or might you be bored with your paperwork or intrigued by the look of the food suspended in the machine? Evaluating this status could help save you from eating unnecessary calories or make you feel more confident that you want to eat. If you are just interested in the cinnamon bun or bored of your never ending projects, find some way to distract yourself, like tackling a different work task, going for a walk, chewing gum, or drinking some water. If you are physically hungry, you should eat.

*Cut the sodium.* Vending machine food can be loaded with sodium because it helps maintain shelf life and it makes food more flavorful. Eating too much sodium has been linked to high blood pressure. High blood pressure can damage the arteries and veins, which could lead to other problems. While standing at the vending machine, try to pick a food that doesn’t seem to
be full of sodium, like unsalted crackers, fruit juice, or some granola bars. If you do pick a salty snack, be sure to have plenty of water with it.

*Skip the sugar.* A lot of sugar in your diet can be bad for your teeth and weight. Unfortunately, most vending machine foods have a lot of sugar and it can be hard to determine which ones have less. Some foods scream that they are chock full, like ice cream, soda, cookies, candy, and pies. Others may have added sugar, but are probably better options. Crackers, nuts, and trail mix would have the lower amount of sugar or the sugar could be marginally avoided (like skipping the craisins and candy in trail mix).

*Start with one.* Some foods come in large sizes, so it is easy to kickback and devour the entire container. However, there could be more than one serving and that would change how much of each nutrient you just consumed. Read the serving size on the package (like 1oz., about 16 chips) and read the number of servings per container (about 2). Start by separating one serving from the rest of the container and eating it slowly. If you still feel hungry after one serving, then proceed to more. Starting with one serving will reduce the chances of you eating a lot more than you need or want. This could also allow you to save the leftovers for a second or third snack later.

*Gotta love it.* If you pick a snack just based on its nutritional information and not your enjoyment of it, you will not feel satisfied. This could lead to you being preoccupied or visiting the vending machine for round two. Extra snacking could lead to weight gain because of the extra calories. It could also lead to guilt if you pick a cinnamon bun, for example, after your dried fruit mix. It would be better to have the cinnamon bun and stop eating then to eat more snacks in order to feel satisfied. Be mindful about what you eat, but also consider your desires, satisfaction and happiness into your choices.

*Brown bag-it.* Instead of buying snacks everyday, you can bring your own. Toss some crackers, apples, or nuts in your bag and bring them to work instead of slipping coins into the
vending machine. If you prepare the night before, you will be less likely to forget your snacks and you can better regulate the healthiness of what you eat.

Based off my list of vending machine dilemmas, I would rarely buy donuts, cookies, ice cream, candy, pop tarts, or potato chips. My first choices would be Wheat Thins or similar crackers, low-salted pretzels, unflavored popcorn, unsalted peanuts, trail mix, fruit leather, granola bars, unflavored milk, and dried fruit. However, if I was really craving a chocolate bar one day, a granola bar or popcorn wouldn’t fix that.

Vending machines are very convenient ways to get food, but they can have food that is detrimental to your diet and wallet. Picking the best foods for you can help you feel satisfied without feeling gross or straying off track your normal eating habits. Knowing when you are truly hungry, how much sodium and sugar is excessive, and eating a single serving will help ensure that you are aware of what you eat and what types of effects it could have. Bringing your own snacks is also a great option and allows you to be more in control of your choices and amounts.

Reference
Don’t Touch that Button!
How to Avoid the Vending Machine
By Amanda Cortese

It is 2:30 in the afternoon; you just got out of your dreadfully boring History Gen-Ed class and your running to the library to go print out your assignment that is due in 20 minutes when you pass the antagonizing vending machine. You can hear your stomach rumbling and know that dinner is at least five hours away (if you’re lucky). As you stare reluctantly at the brightly colored packages, the angel on your right shoulder is telling you to keep walking and find some fruit, while the devil on your left shoulder is telling you that your stomach is growling so grabs some chips! You shuffle through your backpack, pull out your Ucard and quickly swipe it. The chips come falling to the bottom of the machine, you stick your hand in, grab the chips, and continue on your journey to the WEB Du Bois Library.

Vending machines are a temptation to many students on campus because of the busy schedules and the convenience of easily swiping a Ucard to pay for food. With 6,460,000 vending machines across the United States raking in a revenue of $4,350,000, it is clear that many fall to the temptation of those snacks and drinks in the vending machine.1 Unfortunately, vending machines rarely offer nutritious snacks but rather high calorie snacks that are low in nutrients. This deadly combination can be dangerous to students that depend on vending machines too often. Learning to avoid vending machines can be important in order to maintain a healthy diet. Here are some tips!
Plan Ahead

The key to avoiding vending machines is thinking ahead and planning for your day. Planning is not always the easiest task, especially if you are forced to plan before leaving for an 8AM class. However, taking just 5 minutes to think about when you will be able to eat and packing healthy snacks such as nuts, fruits, veggie sticks, or yogurt would be highly beneficial to your diet. If you have these healthy snacks right in your backpack, you will be less tempted to go to the vending machine.

Don’t Skip Meals

Another way to avoid unhealthy snacking is to avoid skipping meals. As you get closer and closer to finals, term papers, and semester long projects being due, it is likely that your schedule will become even more irregular. These irregular schedules often lead to students eating at strange times or skipping important meals. While completing school work is important, it is even more essential to make sure that you give yourself time to eat. If you are not eating, your immune system will be compromised and the last thing anyone needs during finals week is the flu.

An easy solution to meal skipping is keeping quick breakfast items in your room that are easy to prepare. For example, you could easily grab a yogurt and pour some granola in and be on your way to class. For lunch if you do not have enough time to go to the dining hall, you could go and get a sandwich and bring it with you. For dinner, it might be best to go to the dining hall and give your brain a break for 30 minutes. However, if this is impossible, dining halls around campus offer “grab-and-go” meals. If you are eating three meals a day, the need to impulsively get snacks from the vending machine will diminish.

Stop the Stress Eating

People often crave unhealthy foods when they are stressed and feel a sense of relief through food. As a student, I am sure you are stressed on a daily basis, however it is important to learn how to deal with this stress without the use of unhealthy foods. This can be difficult when you are at the library or in your dorm studying and see the many vending machines.
Avoid the vending machines as well as stress eating by determining other ways that help you feel less stressed. Take a five minutes break and listen to your favorite song, rather than eating unhealthy snacks, especially if you are not even hungry. Chewing gum while studying may help satisfy you as well. College is the time to learn how to deal with high stress situations because future work situations could potentially be even more stressful. Developing healthy eating habits and stress coping skills will be highly beneficial for maintain a healthy lifestyle.

**Make the Best Choice**

Sometimes avoiding the vending machine is just impossible. You forgot that banana you were planning to eat on your desk this morning and you do not have time to get to the dining hall, so what should you choose from the vending machine? Some vending machines around campus have fruits cups. Although fresh fruit is better, fruit cups have more nutritional value than chips. Another option could be nuts. You need to be careful of sodium, but this choice provides some protein! If you need a drink from the vending machine, avoid the soda and go for water. It will quench your thirst and water is calorie and sugar free.

**So let’s recap:**

- Plan ahead
- Pack snacks
- Do not skip meals
- Avoid stress eating
- Go for nuts or a fruit cup if you NEED the vending machine
- Avoid soda or other sugar sweetened beverages
- Choose water

Follow these simple concepts and you will be on your way to being a healthier college student!

**References**


*Picture URL:* http://www.kustomvend.com/Full_Service_Vending.html
Vegetarianism
By Kelsey Baumgarten

“You know that’s a cow you’re eating, right?”

My 6-year-old mouth went dry. I stopped chewing my MacDonald’s hamburger and stared wide-eyed at my older sister. A cow?

Meat was never quite the same after that. For a while, I avoided it without defining my purpose, but soon the intent grew to be part of who I was. At age 8, I officially adopted the vegetarian label, and I haven’t had a bite of meat since. My sister still jokes about it being her “fault,” but I assure her that someone else would have spilled the beans about meat if she didn’t.

Speaking of beans, I fell in love with them. They satisfied me in a way that 4 Eggo waffles slathered in butter and syrup never quite did. (And yes, that was my daily breakfast choice.) My parents began to buy me veggie burgers and tofu. I learned to eat healthier and to love cooking. I began experimenting with recipes, substituting alternative proteins for meat.

I was often asked how I was able to stick with my diet. Actually, that was easy. I simply didn’t miss meat. Furthermore, as I grew older, I began to learn things about meat production that made me thankful for my natural dislike of animal protein. I cringed at the thought of inhumane slaughter houses, antibiotic use, and the huge environmental impact of raising all that meat in one place. I realized that if I wasn’t already a vegetarian, I would become one.

At times, I began to think that all of society would be better off giving up, or at least eating less, meat. However, I knew that everyone was different, possessing their own values and health needs, so despite my thoughts on the subject, I never judged the food choices of my friends and family; I never preached about my meat-less diet. Yet, three of my best friends have become vegetarian, and my parents and sister now eat only the occasional serving of meat.

Acquaintances who want to “try out” vegetarianism often ask me for my favorite recipes. The people I surround myself with quickly learn that avoiding meat is not so hard; in fact, if done right, it is fun, healthy, sustainable, and delicious! So I believe in the power of leading by example. And I believe in vegetarianism.
Breakfast: Start the Day the Right Way!
By Christine Charbonneau

Stomach growling can be an embarrassing noise, especially when the whole class can hear it. You’re halfway through second period and the whole class turns to look at you. As you feel everyone’s eyes on you, you’re regretting skipping breakfast. Chances are you were not the only one who did not eat breakfast but you were the lucky one whose stomach growled and made it known to everyone. This is one reason to consider eating breakfast more often. There are also many other benefits to eating breakfast, as well as quick, easy ways to make breakfast nutritious, tasty, and fun.

Have you ever heard the expression “breakfast is the most important meal of the day?” Well, it is. Breakfast is important because it provides so many benefits that cannot be met from other meals like lunch or dinner. Here are some reasons why breakfast is good for you:

Eating a nutritious breakfast:

• Wakes you up
• Jump starts your metabolism and gives your body energy to start off the day
• Helps you avoid getting hunger pains
• Helps keep you satisfied so you are less likely to compensate for skipping by snacking more throughout the day
• Helps you make better food choices throughout the day
• Helps you focus more and concentrate more during school by improving your memory and recall
• Alleviates your hunger
• Less likelihood of your stomach growling
• Gives your body essential nutrients
• Tastes great to your taste buds

These are the advantages to eating breakfast daily. Now, you are probably wondering how to make breakfast a priority when there is hardly any time in the morning. What type of foods should you eat for breakfast? Are there tasty, on-the-go breakfast options that are healthy? There are so many ways to mix it up so you never get bored of the same foods. Adding
color and variety to your breakfast will make it healthy and spice it up so you will never get bored of eating breakfast!

A healthy, nutritious breakfast could include low fat dairy, fruits and/or veggies, whole grains, low fat protein, and fiber. It should be lower in salt, added sugar, and saturated fat.

**Quick, Easy Breakfast Options:**

- Kashi honey flaxseed bar (any type of Kashi bar) and a banana
- Planter’s mixed nuts packet and an apple or pear
- Fresh fruit and low fat yogurt smoothie
- Fresh fruit cup to take with you (cantaloupe, blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, honeydew melon), (oranges, mango, banana, papaya, grapes, apples), or fruits of your choosing
- Whole wheat pita with hummus dip and raw veggies
- Instant oatmeal made with low fat milk/water and topped with fresh fruit
- Whole wheat crackers with low fat cheese or peanut butter
- Low fat or Greek yogurt with fresh fruit
- Other Delicious Breakfast Ideas:
  - Scrambled eggs on whole wheat toast or pita
  - Hard boiled eggs and fresh fruit
  - Veggie omelet or omelet of your choice
  - Whole grain low sugar cereals like General Mills Cheerios or Post raisin bran with low fat milk, soymilk, or almond milk
  - Whole wheat English muffin with low fat cheese and tomato and turkey
  - Multigrain pancakes with fruit and yogurt
  - Whole grain waffle with peanut butter

These are all hearty breakfast options that will satisfy your taste buds and provide your body with essential nutrients to work at its best. These examples can be modified to fit your personal preferences and can also be mixed up to provide variety. For example, a whole wheat English muffin could be toasted with peanut butter or could be made into a breakfast sandwich with eggs, low fat cheese, and ham. Some breakfast recipes take longer to prepare than others so plan ahead. If you are pressed for time on school days, perhaps you could wake up a bit earlier or prepare and/or get foods ready the night before. These small steps will make it easier
to incorporate breakfast into your daily lifestyle. Also, you could save the quick, easy options for during the week and prepare other recipes that take more time on weekends.

Another way to make breakfast fun is to make your own recipes from scratch. Cooking can be a fun, educational, and engaging family activity. Here is a website that provides some ethnic breakfast ideas that are nutritious and delicious:


One of the most important reasons to eat breakfast is its role in academic performance and concentration. Eating a daily breakfast is shown to improve memory and focus so a student who eats breakfast daily is likely to have better grades than one who does not. Another vital reason is that it helps maintain a healthy weight. Individuals who eat breakfast daily are less likely to consume or overeat later on in the day since they never feel extreme hunger pains in the morning. Eating breakfast satisfies your hunger and you will be less inclined to overeat at lunch time versus if you skipped breakfast, and by the time lunch arrives, you are ravenous. Individuals who are starving are more likely to eat more, thus, consuming more calories in a given day.

This article has shown that eating breakfast daily has many pros and zero cons. There are many options you can choose for breakfast that are easy, quick, and nutritious. Eating breakfast does not have to be a chore anymore!

References
This I believe

By Amy Meunier

Everybody wants a “cure”. We want cut and dried, easy, fix-it solutions. But in this time and place in our society, we have a myriad of problems with no easy answers. I, however, have an answer (I won’t call it easy) that could ameliorate many of the biggest problems facing my generation: gardening. Everyone should have a garden, everyone. Sustainable community agriculture has the potential to save the world and bring about a paradigm shift that is so desperately needed. Let us look at the problems I purport to solve with such a simple answer. The first problem I propose solving with a garden is the Environmental Crisis. We have several direct benefits here including the basic: if we grow more plants, there is more carbon in the ground, in plant matter, and less in the air- where it’s a liability. This is called carbon sequestration and it could be considered a main component of the gardening technique called Permaculture. Permaculture gardening seeks to work within natural systems and emphasizes planting perennials; which require less maintenance and work, and have larger, more stable root systems; which lead to greater carbon sequestration and overall soil health. In addition, when we have more carbon sequestering plants, we also have more oxygen cycling (plants cleaning the air) as well as more shade and cooling from the plants. Another direct benefit to the environment would be the reduction of the application of chemical pesticides and fertilizers and the stripping of nutrients from the soil in big monoculture (single crop) fields. Indirectly, we could save oil by not having to transport our food so far away from its origins and we would, ideally, need to manufacture less fertilizers and pesticides, which reduces the pollution from their manufacture and transport.

Another major problem that could be fixed by a garden is the current health crisis. Secondary to the environmental benefits listed above, we could improve the wellness of the people living in that environment. Imagine if we all could breathe cleaner air, drink cleaner water! We would also see a decrease in food desserts. These are areas where inhabitants have no access to fresh food, like fruits and vegetables or non-processed meats. A community vegetable garden could increase the availability of nutritious foods for those that would not
otherwise have access to it. Increasing intake of fruits and vegetables, and decreasing sodium, sugar, and fat-loaded processed foods, has the potential to decrease food related disease. What is a food related disease? Well, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity and high blood pressure are some. There is even a growing body of evidence that suggests a healthy, nutrient-rich diet could help prevent certain cancers. While eating the produce from the garden would be the main direct benefit, one indirect benefit would be that growers would be getting their exercise through the act of gardening.

The third problem for which I propose such a simple solution is, I think, a single problem, with two prongs. The problem, as I see it, is an increasing sense of distance and isolation from our fellow human beings. This results in a lack of a local economy with greater centralization of power and wealth. Less money spent locally, between friends and neighbors, results in the possibility for greater income inequality. The second prong of this problem is the emotional and psychological toll such isolation has on us as human beings. By having a community garden, we create a meeting place and a joint venture, by which neighbors can become friends. By localizing agriculture, we create a vibrant local economy where money spent on a neighbors eggs or produce becomes money that is then spent on another neighbor’s goods or services- keeping money in roughly the same economic bracket, rather than trickling up. So, through a garden, we can create a sense of shared purpose and community, as well as helping to reduce dependence on big factory farms and far-away faceless corporations. I’ve made this sound simple, the reality is that it isn’t. A community garden needs land (the most important and likely the most expensive), water, tools and a willing, dedicated and organized community. The good news is this movement is already happening. The American Community Garden Association is an organization devoted to networking gardeners and aspiring gardeners across North America. There are five hundred member gardens including some in New York City, Portland OR, San Francisco, Washington DC, and Boston and Holyoke MA. Spread the word. I believe gardeners could save the world.
From Cherry Tomatoes to Sweet Potatoes: Local Farmers Keep Your Kids Eating Fresh All Year
By Lauren Smith

Winter is on its way. Time to say goodbye to the shorts and flip-flops, but that doesn’t mean saying goodbye to fresh fruits and vegetables. Here in western Massachusetts we’re lucky to have plenty of awesome farmers’ markets, no matter what season it is. Farmers’ markets offer a unique variety of fruits, veggies, herbs, breads, cheeses, and much more. Almost all products found at farmers’ markets are fresh, local, and some are even organic. Different seasons offer different types of produce, making it fun and exciting to shop locally any time of the year. Farm stands are another convenient way to get fruits and veggies any day of the week, and in western Massachusetts they can be found in nearly every town. Bringing your children to local farmers’ markets and farm stands will get them more interested in what they’re eating and will create excitement about fruits and veggies.

Taking your children to farmers’ markets is a great way to teach them about the importance of eating local and knowing where your food comes from. Turn grocery shopping into a “field trip” where the farmers’ market is an exciting and fun place to be. Farmers’ markets offer a great opportunity to meet other members of your community and learn about some of the farms and businesses in your town. Going to farmers’ markets on a regular basis will help you meet people with similar interests and build relationships with your community members. Who knows—you could even meet a future babysitter or another parent with children of the same age! Local markets also provide a unique way to get to know your farmers, and see exactly who is growing your food. Having your kids talk with local farmers, and possibly bringing them to a few farms, will create interest in how food is grown and where it comes from. This is definitely not something that would happen at a regular grocery store.

Farmers’ markets offer a huge variety of fresh foods. There is no limit to the variety of produce, which usually consists of anything from milk made from the cows down the road to apples picked at the orchard a few blocks away. Buying your food from farmers’ markets will allow you to see what food is supposed to look like—usually without preservatives, hormones, or
other scary chemicals. Showing your children the differences between store-bought produce and local produces is a fun and educational activity. After visiting farmers’ markets and learning about local produce, your children may even decide that they want to grow some of their own vegetables. Even if it’s just a small herb garden, growing something with your children and having them watch the effort that goes into gardening might actually make them want to eat more fresh foods.

Farmers’ markets are a great way to get your children more interested in fruits and veggies, but how many do they actually need each day? Well, depending on their age, children need between 1 and 2 cups of fruit and between 1 and 3 cups of vegetables per day. A good rule of thumb is to fill half of their plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal. Unfortunately, getting children to eat this many fruits and vegetables can be challenging. Incorporating veggies is easy with a little guidance. For example, try swapping French fries with sweet potato fries or chips and dip with carrots and hummus! Add chopped veggies to tomato sauce or mix dark leafy greens into smoothies. There are plenty of sneaky ways to increase your children’s fruit and vegetable intake. Going to the farmer’s markets with your children will allow you to buy all of the ingredients you need, while secretly sparking their interest about fresh foods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different types of produce are in season at different times:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples of seasonal produce</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash, root vegetables, leeks, and leafy greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways to incorporate them into your children’s diet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eating fruits and veggies can be turned into a fun game, no matter what the season is. Challenge your kids to eat as many colors as they can, or see who can eat the biggest variety of things from the farmers’ market. Allow them to pick out the fruits and veggies, and tell them that the more colors they choose the better. Depending on how old your children are, this could also be a strategy to help them learn their colors.

As the winter months approach, it is important to find some good indoor markets. Did you know that we have our very own winter market right in Amherst? Located in Amherst Middle School, the market will run every Saturday from December 7th to March 29th. In this market you will find things like fresh root veggies, fruits, cheeses, honey, and even homemade meals! This indoor market provides live music and lots of socializing with the Amherst community. The Amherst winter market accepts cash, credit cards, SNAP/EBT and WIC - making it very accessible for everyone in the community. Other great winter market locations in western Massachusetts include Northampton, Greenfield, Easthampton, Springfield, and Hadley. There are plenty of opportunities to incorporate farm fresh produce into your children’s diet, even during the cold winter months.

For other times of the year, remember that there are tons of farmers’ markets all around western Massachusetts. During the summer months, fresh produce is very easy to find and it seems as though farm stands are selling berries and squash on every corner. Some farmers’ markets in Amherst include the Saturday morning market in Amherst center and the Wednesday afternoon market at Kendrick Park. The Amherst summer farmers’ markets accept SNAP and EBT, and other farmers’ markets may accept WIC. If you are currently using any of these programs, check into which local markets accept them and take advantage of them! While incorporating fresh produce into your diet, remember to enjoy all of the local resources western Massachusetts has to offer year round.
Grow A Pear and Eat Your Fruits and Veggies!
By Megan Beck

This is for all my fellow college students living off campus who indulge in comfort food when the going gets tough and the work load seems to never end. This is for all of you that have forgotten what cooked spinach tastes like because french fries and chicken nuggets have invaded your plate.

It’s halfway through the semester and those YCMP swipes are running low, the motivation to cook has been wiped out by midterms and 10 page papers. The convenience of the dining hall seems like a long lost dream as you realize you’ve been living off the Costco sized box of ramen noodles in your pantry along with lucky charms for the past few days. You have become a toast addict, pasta connoisseur and lover of all things frozen that can be ready to eat in less than 5 minutes. It is time to throw the pop-tarts in the trash and give your body what it really needs: fruits and vegetables.

For those of you that grew up on mushy green beans, over-cooked broccoli and rubbery carrots, I feel your pain. I realize that it is very hard to overcome the fear of bad cooking that has been conditioned into many people’s minds. The good news is that fruits and vegetables can be exciting and delicious if you know what to do with them and how to use their flavors to your advantage.

**Eating more fruits and veggies have many benefits that include:**

- Energy boosts
- Weight loss
- Immune system boosts

**ENERGY BOOST!**

Have you been dragging your feet to those 8 a.m. classes? Does 1 coffee turn into 6 by the end of the day? Eating more fruits and vegetables can increase your energy naturally without needing to drink excess caffeine. Examples of easy foods to add to your diet that will give you an energy boost include:
**Sweet potatoes:** These guys are loaded with vitamin A, C and carbohydrates! The microwave is a college kid’s best friend. Lucky for you bacon is not the only thing that cooks well in there-sweet potatoes are a great snack and you can throw them in the microwave for 5 minutes and done! If you are feeling more adventurous you can throw in some butter and mash them like mashed potatoes or cut them into strips, toss them in olive oil and bake them for sweet potato fries!

**Bananas:** Not only are bananas full of potassium and fiber, they are mostly made up of sugars like glucose, fructose and sucrose which are great natural energy boosters! Cut them up and put them in your cereal or oatmeal in the morning for another quick way to increase your fruit consumption.

**Apples:** Apples are also high in fiber and sugar. Smother in peanut butter or eat it plain; it’s perfect for an on-the-go snack.

**Oranges:** Oranges take more time for your body to break down so they provide a longer lasting energy boost. They also add vitamins C, and A to your diet along with calcium and fiber!

**Beans:** Beans are a complex carbohydrate that help maintain a constant and steady level of energy to fight of those mid-day sleepies!

**IMMUNE SYSTEM BOOST!**

Trying to battle a cold that won’t go away? Feeling too lousy to study for finals? Lack of sleep, stress and a poor diet are 3 main contributors to a compromised immune system. We always hear about fruits and vegetables being full of antioxidants but what does this actually mean? Imagine your body as a city where criminals are terrorizing the innocent people and it is up to the police officers to stop these criminals and protect the city from destruction. In this situation, free radicals act as criminals by damaging and destroying cells in your body. Antioxidants act as the police officers that save your cells and help your body fight disease-especially those icky colds! The 3 main antioxidants are beta-carotene (vitamin A), vitamin C and vitamin E. Here are some good examples of foods you can eat to boost immune health:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bell peppers</td>
<td>Red peppers, orange peppers, yellow peppers, whatever color peppers— they are ALL healthy and delicious. Eat them raw, throw them in your spaghetti sauce, put them in your sandwich, just eat them! These are loaded with vitamin C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Carrots are full of vitamin A. Baby carrots are a delicious snack you can dip in hummus, dressing or eat plain!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>A great source of vitamin C! Takes ten minutes to steam or boil. All you need is a pot of boiling water and even better a steamer. Throw some butter, lemon juice and capers into a pan until it is all melted down and drizzle it over your broccoli like a salad dressing!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leafy greens</td>
<td>Leafy greens are all high in antioxidants! Branch out and try something new like kale or swiss chard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>The best immune boosting fruits are cantaloupe, kiwi and all berries, mangoes, papayas, peaches and grapefruit. Almost all fruits have vitamin C in them so eat up!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WEIGHT LOSS!**

Hopefully it’s no secret that adding more fruits and veggies to your diet can help you lose weight. Skip the fad diets, weight loss shakes and short cuts and pack in those leafy greens, beans and berries. To lose weight you need to burn more calories than you are eating. Almost all fruits and vegetables are very low in calories, fat and salt but high in vitamins and minerals! Here are some quick tips on how to replace daily foods with fruits and vegetables that will ultimately help you cut your calorie, fat and salt intake and help you lose weight:

**Breakfast:**

Replace some of the meat and cheese in your omelette or egg scramble with spinach, peppers, mushrooms, onions or broccoli! This will not only make your omelette healthier, it will add lots of yummy flavors.

Add some berries or a banana to your cereal or oatmeal in the morning.
Replace your normal breakfast with this fruit and veggie smoothie:
Here’s my own personal recipe for an easy smoothie you can throw together in the morning. It even has 3 servings of fruits and vegetables!

• 1 1/2 cups mixed frozen berries
• 1 cup fresh spinach (no whining, fresh spinach has almost no taste and melts into the berry goodness that is this smoothie.)
• 1/2 cup of plain greek yogurt
• 1 cup of orange juice or milk- you choose!
• 1 banana

Lunch:
Create a special salad! Salads can be boring and tasteless but they can also be full of fun and surprising treats! Add some apples, candied walnuts, cranberries and gorgonzola cheese to a bed of spinach with balsamic dressing and you are in salad heaven. Get creative- the more ingredients you use, the more flavor your salad will have.

Replace mayonnaise and other sauces with hummus and guacamole. Hummus is a great replacement for mayo in tuna sandwiches- it adds a creamy texture without all those saturated fats! You can make your own guacamole or buy it from the store and it adds a delicious boost of smooth avocado to your dish.

Dinner:
If you are a big meat eater and love burgers, try replacing a beef burger with a veggie burger or even a portobello mushroom! Mushrooms have the meatiest texture of all the vegetables.

Puree a veggie medley and sneak it into your sauces. Pureed cauliflower and broccoli go great in macaroni and cheese sauce. Pureed peppers, tomatoes, onions, garlic and carrots add some zing to pasta sauce!
The Ups and Downs of Breastfeeding
By Amy McCarthy

Breast is best? But is it worth the trouble? The buzz around breastfeeding is constantly talking about how good it is for a new baby. Yet, on the other hand there are so many stories that are told about breastfeeding that could scare any new mom. Pregnant moms hear stories about how painful breastfeeding is, the baby never sleeps and that it ruins her breasts. There are so many myths and truths about breastfeeding floating around that it is hard for anyone to know the difference. The truth is there are many positives to breastfeeding and there can be challenges that come up as well.

There are many benefits to breastfeeding and the benefits last a life time for your baby. Breastfeeding lowers the risk of obesity, diabetes and even SIDS. All of these are current issues that new parents must worry about. Considering obesity, and diabetes in children is becoming more and more common it is important for new moms to know what they can do early on to prevent it. And SIDS is always a scary one for new moms since so little is know about it. It is great that research does show that breastfeed lowers the risk.

Besides just the long term benefits there are some perks to breastfeeding even during the first year. One is that babies get sick less often when they are breastfed. This is a great benefit to moms that go to school or work because they do not need to take as much time off to stay home with the baby. It is very common for babies that are bottle fed to have chronic ear infections for example. Breastfeeding also helps moms return back to their pre-pregnancy weight faster. It allows for the natural process of losing weight to occur after a baby. However be patient moms, it took some time to gain baby weight so it takes some time to lose it too!

Another benefit worth mentioning is how cheap it is to breastfeed. Formula is very expensive and babies eat a lot! Even programs like WIC that help with the cost of formula are only supplemental which means you will still be buying formula on your own.

Breastfeeding is convenient! It is always ready when babies are hungry. Waking up every two hours to heat water and make a bottle with formula gets exhausting. It is much
easier to hear a baby, nurse the baby and go right back to sleep without having to fumble around in the kitchen at midnight and at 2:00 AM and at 4:00 AM and you get the idea.

Yet there are many horror stories that moms hear about breastfeeding from friends, family and even movies. I will explain some common breastfeeding myths that you might hear. Breastfeeding is painful is a very common thing for pregnant moms to hear. So to clarify this myth. It is possible for breastfeeding to be painful, but it is not suppose to be. For example it can be painful if a baby is not latching on the right way. If for anytime you feel pain while breastfeeding ask for help, call a local WIC program, your baby’s pediatrician or your OBGYN. If you call as soon as you feel pain it is much easier to fix whatever is causing it. You by no means need to suffer through the pain until you are ready to wean. Breastfeeding pain is a fixable problem.

Another common myth is that breastfeeding ruins a new moms breasts. I am sorry to say that it is the hormones from pregnancy that change your breast not breastfeeding. Your body gets ready to make breast milk whether you use it or not. Therefore the changes have already happened.

Breastfed babies are very needy and wake more frequently is another breastfeeding myth. I can understand new moms wanting to get as much sleep as possible, but I am sad to say that formula feeding does not solve this problem. Baby’s stomachs are very small therefore they can digest breast milk or formula very quickly. Even though it is hard it is actually a good sign that a baby wakes up every 2 hours because they need to be checked on frequently.

It can be very overwhelming to have a new baby. Especially when everyone you know wants to give advice, the good and the bad. Be patient with yourself and your baby. You are getting to know each other. Breastfeeding is a great way to get to do just that. You are learning to breastfeed and your new baby is learning as well. There will bumps in the road but overcoming those bumps together will help you grow as a mother. It will be reassuring to know that you are giving your new baby the best start possible and if they could they would thank you!
Winter is coming! Are you prepared?
By Erika Grover

You wake up to 5 feet of snow outside your window. Plow trucks can’t keep up with the constant snow. The government places a state of emergency in effect for the town. Your family is stuck in the house until the snow stops and roads are cleared. You wonder if you have enough food to outlast the snow and begin to rummage through the pantry.

You never know when a disaster may happen but being prepared is always a good idea. One way to be prepared is to have an emergency food kit. These kits should have enough food and water to last each member of the family for at least two weeks. There are many foods that are perfect to keep in your emergency food kit; most important is anything that is non-perishable.

**Non-perishable foods include:**

- Canned meats – Tuna or Spam.
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Canned pasta – Spaghetti O’s
- Cereal and granola
- Crackers and cookies
- Peanut butter
- Dried fruits
- Soups

These are foods that will last for a couple years unopened, some will even last forever. The cereal, granola and crackers provide the carbohydrates you need to keep energy levels up. This will allow you to keep up with other chores around the house. I believe there are 5 feet of snow still to clear! Since you will likely have to do chores, like shoveling or getting wood for a fire, you need to maintain your muscles. This is where the canned meats and peanut butter come in handy since they have the protein your muscles need. It is always important to have a balanced diet so you should have fruits and vegetables in your kit to provide vitamins and minerals for optimal health.

While dealing with the stress of a natural disaster it is also a good idea to have comfort foods and sweet snacks. Cookies, pudding cups and candy bars have a place in every emergency kit as a way to make the kids feel better and keep their spirits up. These foods are also calorie dense which will help everyone maintain their weight while eating less. But really, who needs an excuse to buy junk food?
One thing to look out for when stocking your emergency food kit is sodium. When buying canned products, like soup or vegetables, it is best to get low sodium options when available. Foods that are high in sodium will cause you to drink more fluids and you will fly through your water supply faster than planned. Plus if you don’t have power you probably don’t want to have to go to the bathroom in the dark every 20 minutes.

Speaking of water, this is just as important to have in your kit as food. For an emergency food kit you should have at least one gallon of water per person to last at least two weeks. Other options for drinks are available too, like juice boxes, tea and sports drinks. These choices also offer added calories and electrolytes which are necessary if you are doing strenuous work to keep the family safe.

When packing your emergency food kit there are a few non-food items that you will need as well.

**For example:**

- Can opener
- Sterno gel fuel
- Matches or lighter
- Pans and utensils
- Medications
- Multi vitamin
The most important tool to have with you is a hand held can opener. If you don’t have this how will you eat those delicious Spaghetti O’s? In order to heat up your canned goods you will need a heat source. One option is Sterno gel fuel; this is a gel that comes in a can that is used for many food service events as well as a place to cook in an emergency. You will also need matches or a lighter in order to light the Sterno gel for cooking. Now that you have a place to cook you may also want small sauce pans to boil water or heat up your food. In order to eat these foods you will need utensils; it is a good idea to have a box of plastic spoons and forks in your kit. By using plastic you won’t have to worry about washing too many dishes.

Multi vitamins are a good item to have in your kit since you may not be getting all the nutrients you need while eating your emergency food. This will help you stay healthy and allow you to maintain the vitamin and mineral stores in your body. Your emergency food kit should also include any medications your family takes, especially prescription medications. If it is a medication you absolutely need you should ask your doctor for back up bottles to put in your kit. Medicine like Tylenol, cough drops or cold relief pills should be kept in your kit, just in case.

The final two things you need to do with your emergency food kit are to store it in a safe place and check the dates occasionally. Your kit should be stored in a place that is not likely to be affected by any natural disaster but it needs to be in a place that you can easily get to in an emergency. Good places may be the basement or the pantry. These places should not be exposed to extreme temperatures or too much light since this can affect the food products. Even though these products are chosen for their long shelf life it is important to check the dates when you buy them and every few years they are in the kit. This will allow you to be sure the food will be good to eat if it is ever needed.

Even though you have the food in your emergency kit it is also important to know what to do with the food in your fridge. If you’ll be without power for longer than 4 hours you should take the essentials out and keep them in a cooler with ice. You could also use the snow to your advantage and put that in the cooler. Essential items are ones that you know you will use and they should also be items that you can cook easily with your limited heating source. You must keep the food below 40⁰ F in order for it to be safe; you should keep a meat thermometer in your emergency kit to check the temperature. Not all food can be saved and even in the cooler
these items will not last longer than a few days. But, this is why you have the emergency kit. Everyone in your family should know the emergency plan and be aware of the placement of your emergency food kit. Let’s hope, though, that the blizzard never comes.

Reference