

the healthy swimmer



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The Redder the Better

Beta vulgaris, commonly known as the red beet, is a flowering plant native to the coasts of Europe and western Asia. The beetroot is thought to have evolved from the wild sea beet, which has smaller, less appetizing roots. For centuries, beets were grown primarily for their greens, although references from around 300 B.C. claim the Greek civilization cultivated plants with edible roots.

Beets gained popularity in the days before electrical refrigeration, when they were stored in root cellars along with other food items, such as cured meats and cheeses. The long storage life of the beet made it an easy item to keep on hand. Beets can last for four to six months in ventilated storage, and eight to 10 months in refrigerated storage.

Common red beets contain purple and yellow pigments known collectively as betalains. The pigments are generally unstable in raw beets but can be stabilized in acids, which is why beets are often pickled. However, there are many other ways to serve this root vegetable, including raw.

Beets are delicious, nutritious, low in calories and fat and rich in vitamins and antioxidants. They are known for their detoxifying properties and are a great source of folate, which aids in healthy fetal development and a healthy cardiovascular system. One medium beet (100 grams) portion contains about 50 calories, nearly 4 grams of fiber and less than half a gram of total fat. <<<

>>> For more detailed nutritional information about beets, visit <http://nutrition.about.com/od/fruitsandvegetables/p/beets.htm>.

reader recipe

With Thanksgiving around the corner, you may wish to try out a new side dish to accompany your holiday meal. Beets make a colorful, tasty addition to the table, and this recipe is quick and easy.

Roasted Red Beets With Fresh Tarragon

- 2 c uncooked red beets, diced (about 350 grams)
- 1 T extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper (to taste)
- 1-2 T fresh tarragon

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Place diced beets on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and toss to evenly coat. Roast until fork-tender, checking after 30 minutes and adjusting time as needed. Serve hot or at room temperature, tossed with fresh tarragon just before serving. <<<

Serving: 1/2 cup cooked, sliced beets (85 grams); calories, 67; fat, 4 grams

>>> DO YOU HAVE A RECIPE OUR READERS WOULD ENJOY?

Send it to editor@usms.org, or mail to: Reader Recipe, c/o Bill Volckening, 1220 NW 119th Place, Portland, OR 97229.

Workaholics Risk High Blood Pressure

A recent article in *Hypertension*, the official journal of the American Heart Association, suggests that workaholics are significantly more likely to develop high blood pressure than those who work less.

The study, led by Haiou Yang, Ph.D., of the University of California Irvine, found that people who work more than 51 hours at the office each week were 29 percent more likely to have high blood pressure than those who worked 39 or fewer hours.

The article presented an analysis of work hours and self-reported hypertension among workers in California, and was based on data from the Public Use File of the 2001 California Health Interview Survey.

Compared with those working between 11 and 39 hours per week, individuals working 40 hours per week were 14

percent more likely to report hypertension. Those who worked between 41 and 50 hours were 17 percent more likely, and those who worked more than 51 hours were 29 percent more likely to have high blood pressure.

The study controlled for several variables including demographic, biological risk factors and socioeconomic status.

Yang and colleagues noted clinical and political implications of the study results. Currently, the United States does not regulate work time or excessive overtime, although laws limiting work are in effect in Japan and Europe. The researchers concluded that preventing excessive overtime hours, and thus protecting the health of workers, continues to be a concern for many in the United States. <<<

>>> For more information about preventing hypertension, visit the American Heart Association web site at www.americanheart.org.

Home Remedies Relieve Cold Symptoms

It's the start of cold season, and time to think about how you can prevent and treat the common cold. As recently reported on NBC's "Today Show," an article by *Prevention* magazine lists 42 ways to use doctor-tested, at-home treatments for ailments from mosquito bites and acne to headaches and the common cold.

The common cold is a viral infectious disease of the upper respiratory system. Symptoms include headache, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing, coughing, congestion and fatigue. Colds typically last less than a week, although some symptoms can last up to three weeks.

Prevention compiled its treatment list from a survey of 14 health professionals who were asked what home remedies

they use—and grapefruit was among the key ingredients noted for relieving the common cold.

The tart grapefruit may be less popular than its sweeter relative, the orange, but it contains a number of health-promoting compounds such as vitamin C and lycopene. The pink and red varieties of grapefruit contain the highest levels of lycopene, a carotenoid phytochemical that has a high capacity to fight cell-damaging free radicals.

Prevention suggests simmering a quartered grapefruit in water and adding a small amount of honey to make a soothing tea. <<<

>>> **To read about all 42 doctor-tested home remedies, visit the *Prevention* web site at: www.prevention.com/article/0,5778,s1-1-74-112-7113-1,00.html.**



Making the Most of a Fast-Food Meal

During the past two years, the fast-food industry has responded to reports from the U.S. Department of Agriculture confirming that people who consume fast food have a greater risk of obesity. Although a growing list of menu options and nutrition resources help consumers make healthier choices, people don't always know how to make the most of a fast food meal.

Fast-food products are often made with ingredients formulated to preserve freshness and achieve a specific flavor or consistency. Because the industry relies on speed, uniformity and low cost, fast-food companies often employ food engineering, the use of additives and manufacturing techniques that significantly alter the food from its original form, often reducing its nutritional value.

One way to make good choices is to pick up a copy of the company's printed information about nutrition, such as Starbucks' *Nutrition by the Cup* brochure. Like many nutrition guides, the Starbucks brochure features chart comparisons for 15 nutritional categories as well as information on ingredients, portion sizes and reduced calorie choices.

Online resources such as the Fast Food Nutrition Fact Explorer (www.fatcalories.com) allow people to view and compare data presented on the official web sites of popular fast-food restaurants. The site's Fast Food Nutrition Fact Explorer can sort search results by total calories, percentage of calories from fat, total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, fiber and protein.

According to fatcalories.com, the 12-inch Subway Double Meat Meatball Marinara Sub tops the sandwich list with a whopping 1,920 calories. On the low end, Subway's Deli Style Ham sandwich contains 210 calories, while the Blimpie Santa Fe Gardenburger has only 100 calories.

With such a wide range of menu items and choices, the best way to make the most out of a fast food meal is to read up on it. <<<

>>> **To compare items from 12 of the most popular chains, visit www.fatcalories.com.**

Dress for Success

When ordering salads at a fast-food restaurant, salad dressing can be a substantial source of hidden fat and calories. Here are the five lowest-calorie choices from www.fatcalories.com.

	Total Calories	% of Calories From Fat
Blimpie Light Italian	20	50
Blimpie Fat Free Italian	25	0
Blimpie Oil & Vinegar	35	100
Subway Kraft Fat Free Italian	35	0
McDonald's Newman's Own	40	63
Low Fat Balsamic Vinaigrette		

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