

# the healthy swimmer



Milo Stuz

## Hot Health Item: Pomegranate Juice

The pomegranate is one of the oldest known fruits—and one of the most mysterious. Some claim the fruit, cultivated as early as 2000 B.C., grew in the Garden of Eden. For centuries, the leathery red fruit with succulent, ruby-colored seeds was associated with health and rebirth in art and mythology.

Despite its long-standing reputation, pomegranates and by-products have just recently become hot items in health food markets across the U.S.

Pomegranates are rich in vitamin C, folic acid and polyphenols—chemical substances with antioxidant characteristics that may help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and certain cancers.

A study from the Pharmaceutics Department of the University of Florida Center for Food Drug Interaction Research and Education in Gainesville reports that polyphenols and ellagic acid found in pomegranates have health-promoting and disease-preventive effects.

The study, led by Susanne Mertens-Talcott, Ph.D., indicates that polyphenols and ellagic acid can help prevent chronic conditions such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

Whole pomegranates are generally available from September through January, and a growing variety of juice products are available year-round. Consumers purchasing pomegranate juices should check labels, because not all products are created equal. Some are actually “cocktails” mixed with a variety of fruit juices and sugars. Those products usually don’t provide the same benefits as pure pomegranate juice. <<<

## reader recipe

Pomegranates vary in taste depending on the variety and state of ripeness. The flavor can range from sweet to sour, but the two extremes are balanced in most bottled pomegranate juices. There are many ways to incorporate pomegranate juice into your diet. Try this quick and easy pomegranate vinaigrette with your next tossed salad.

### Pomegranate Vinaigrette

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 c **100 percent pomegranate juice**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1/2 t **sugar**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1/2 t **salt**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1/2 t **fresh ground black pepper**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 T **cider vinegar**
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 t **extra-virgin olive oil**

In a small saucepan, boil the pomegranate juice over high heat for about 10 minutes, or until the juice is reduced to 1/3 cup. Remove from heat, stir in remaining ingredients and cool before serving. <<<

**Serves 8** (2 T per serving);  
25 calories, 1/2 gram of fat per serving

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

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

## Tips for Healthy Skin and Hair

To many die-hard Masters swimmers, the lingering aroma of chlorine on the skin is strangely comforting. But how can you protect yourself from chlorine’s potentially damaging effects?

Exposure can cause dryness and irritation of the skin and eyes. Long-term exposure can also cause negative cosmetic effects, including hair damage. Most swimmers can protect themselves with a few simple steps, says a recent *Health Magazine* article ([www.health.com](http://www.health.com)) by Diane Berson, a dermatologist at New York’s Weill Cornell Medical Center.

“Shower as soon as possible after getting out of the pool, because you need to wash the chemicals off of your skin,” Berson says. “Using a moisturizing body wash that contains petrolatum or glycerin can help moisturize the skin in the shower.” Pat the skin dry rather than rubbing. “While the skin is still moist, slather on a moisturizer. Lotions and creams containing alpha hydroxy, lactic and glycolic acids are beneficial because they can penetrate deeply into the skin.”

When possible, wear a swimming cap—and for extra protection, apply hair conditioner before putting on your cap. If you don’t have a cap, wet your hair with tap water before entering the pool. Hair that’s already saturated will not absorb as many pool chemicals. After swimming, rinse hair thoroughly. <<<



## Group Promotes Lightning Safety at Indoor Pools

Most swimmers know not to swim outdoors during an electrical storm—but many are unsure if it's safe to swim indoors during stormy conditions. A new report, *Lightning and Aquatics Safety: A Cautionary Perspective for Indoor Pools*, from the National Lightning Safety Institute (NLSI) addresses this topic. Written by NLSI President and CEO Richard Kithil and Kevin Johnston with the Professional Aquatics Consultants International, the report includes details about the physics of lightning, statistics, codes and standards, and recommendations for lightning safety at indoor pools.

According to the report, there are approximately 22 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes in the U.S. each year. A typical lightning current has 25,000 amps and hundreds of millions of volts. If lightning strikes the ground near an indoor pool, it may be conducted into the building. Local circumstances, such as buried or pole-mounted telephone and electrical wires, determine how safe it is to swim at each facility.

Writing on NLSI's web site, Kithil points out: "When a body is free-floating in water, it is not

a part of any circuit path (this does not account for 'direct lightning strikes') and cannot receive shocks. When a body in water is in contact with a circuit path, it will conduct current. 'In contact' can mean:

- feet on the pool floor
- touching sides of the pool
- in contact with ladders, underwater lights, railings, etc.

Swimmers inside a pool building who are a part of the circuit path also can become victims. "Wet floors at pool facilities are very good conductors," he says.

NLSI offers the following recommendations for lightning safety at indoor facilities. First, recognize the threat. Tune in to local weather reports and know when there's a chance of lightning in the forecast. Follow all facility guidelines when swimming activities are suspended and resumed.

"At the first signs of thunder or lightning, all pool activities should be suspended (showers, too) until 30 minutes after the last observed thunder or lightning," Kithil says. "Hear thunder after 27 minutes of activity suspension? Start your 30-minute clock all over again." <<<

>>> **To read the report or obtain general information about lightning safety, visit NLSI at [www.lightningsafety.com](http://www.lightningsafety.com).**

## Is There a Doctor in the House?

Are you a medical professional, healthcare practitioner or nutritionist? The USMS Sports Medicine, Safety and Health Committee would like to hear from you. The committee is developing a network of resource people to respond to a variety of reader questions for the Healthy Swimmer department in *SWIMMER* magazine. Healthy Swimmer Topics include general health, injury prevention, water and pool safety, optimal sports nutrition and health questions specific to the sport of swimming. The committee would especially like to hear from registered Masters swimmers who know what it's like to be a swimmer and care for other swimmers. <<<

>>> **If you would like to be a part of our growing network of health experts, please contact Jody Welborn, chair of the USMS Sports Medicine, Safety and Health Committee. T: 503-297-5889, E: [SportsMedicine@usms.org](mailto:SportsMedicine@usms.org), or write to: Jody Welborn, 6687 SW Canyon Drive, Portland, OR 97211.**

## Keep an Eye on Your BMI

Do you know your BMI? Body mass index is a measure of body fat based on height and weight that applies to both adult men and women. Physicians use the BMI measurement as a screening tool to identify possible weight problems.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) can help you determine your BMI and what it means. The CDC's web site ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) features information about BMI, including English and metric calculators. Here's a look at the standard BMI categories for adults:

<b>BMI</b>	<b>Weight Status</b>
Below 18.5 . . . . .	Underweight
18.5-24.9 . . . . .	Normal
25.0-29.9 . . . . .	Overweight
30.0 and above . . . . .	Obese

According to the CDC, BMI does not measure body fat directly, but research has shown that BMI correlates to direct measures of body fat, such as underwater weighing and dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA). BMI is a widely used alternative for direct measures of body fat, and it is inexpensive and easy-to-perform.

BMI is calculated by dividing weight in pounds by height in inches squared, and multiplying by a conversion factor of 703. If you're just not into math, the online BMI calculator is simple and easy to use. Just fill in your height and weight and click the "calculate" button. <<<

>>> **Check out the BMI calculator, and a variety of other helpful resources, at [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/index.htm).**

The information in this department is not intended as a substitute for professional or medical advice. It is not intended to provide medical advice on personal health matters. For personal medical advice, consult your healthcare provider. If you are concerned about a particular medical condition or injury, see your healthcare provider for evaluation and care.