

the healthy swimmer



Agis Agisilaou

Favorite Fruit

The tomato (*lycopersicon esculentum*) is native to the Americas, and was cultivated as early as 700 A.D. Europeans first learned of the tomato in the 16th century, when explorers brought back seeds from Central America. Although tomatoes soon became popular in Southern European countries, many—including the British and the American colonists—thought tomatoes were poisonous.

By the middle of the 19th century, the tomato was gaining popularity across the United States. Although it grows like a berry and is classified as a fruit, it is most often used in savory dishes. Today, the tomato is a favorite around the world.

Tomatoes contain large amounts of vitamin C, vitamin A, potassium and iron. The tomato's red pigment, called lycopene, appears to act as an antioxidant. Recent studies indicate that lycopene may be twice as powerful as beta-carotene—another well-known antioxidant. Both are thought to lower the risk of breast, colorectal, endometrial, lung, prostate and stomach cancers.

Tomatoes with brilliant shades of red contain the highest amounts of beta-carotene and lycopene. Raw tomatoes are good for the body, but cooked tomatoes may have more health benefits because lycopene contained in cell walls is released by cooking. Tomatoes cooked in olive oil allow more complete absorption of lycopene. Because heat processing does not remove any of the nutritional value, canned tomato products can be just as beneficial as fresh. <<<

reader recipe

Paul Plackis of Rockledge, Fla., contributes this month's Reader Recipe, which features fresh tomatoes.

"There is nothing in this recipe that will hurt you," says Plackis, who recommends using locally grown, fresh ingredients. "The salad is easily adapted by varying or adding ingredients. You might find it most often appreciated for its simplicity, freshness and stand-alone ability. For many folks, the one regret might be that you could have made a larger batch."

Tomato Salad

- 10 fresh, vine-ripened tomatoes, cored and sliced in wedges
- 1 large sweet onion, diced
- 1 c fresh Italian flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- 3 oz. extra virgin olive oil
- 4 oz. fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 1 T dried oregano
- 1 t dried basil
- 1 t coarsely ground black pepper

Toss tomatoes, onion and parsley in a large bowl. Combine remaining ingredients in a blender set at low speed, or simply whisk together. Pour dressing on top of the tomatoes, onion and parsley. Toss lightly until ingredients are evenly distributed. Cover the bowl, refrigerate and serve chilled. <<<

Serves 10. Calories per serving = 96; grams of fat per serving = 8

>>> 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.

Sun Worshippers Take Heed

Summer is a popular season among those who enjoy the great outdoors. But as the temperatures rise and people spend more time outdoors, it's important to think about protection from the sun's potentially harmful effects.

The United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer some great resources, including materials from their five-year campaign called Choose Your Cover. The campaign emphasized that people can have fun outdoors while protecting their skin from the sun by choosing five sun protection options: seeking shade, covering up, getting a hat, wearing sunglasses and rubbing on sunscreen.

According to the CDC report, the sun's UV rays are strongest and do the most damage during midday, so it's best to avoid direct exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. You can reduce your risk of skin damage and skin cancer by seeking shade under an umbrella, tree or other shelter before you need relief from the sun. If you can't find a shady spot, make sure to cover up, wear a hat and wear sunglasses. Most important, use sunscreen.

Sunscreens come in a variety of forms such as lotions, gels and sprays. There are also sunscreens made for specific purposes, such as the scalp, sensitive skin, and for use on babies. Regardless of the type of sunscreen you choose, be sure that you use one that blocks both UVA and UVB rays, and that offers at least SPF 15. <<<

>>> For more information about staying safe in the sun, visit the CDC web site at www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/chooseyourcover.

Promoting Summer Food Safety

Summer is the season for picnics and barbecues. To protect yourself, your family and friends from food-borne illness, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition offers a few helpful hints for practicing safe food-handling techniques when eating outdoors. Keep these tips in mind when preparing, storing and cooking food for picnics and barbecues.

When transporting food, keep cold food cold. Place cold food in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. Cold food should be held at or below 40 F. Consider packing beverages in one cooler and perishable foods in another. Meat, poultry and seafood may be packed while they are still frozen so that they stay colder longer. Be sure to keep raw meat, poultry and seafood securely wrapped so their juices don't contaminate cooked foods or foods eaten raw such as fruits and vegetables.



todd laurman

Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled "ready-to-eat," "washed" or "triple washed" need not be washed. Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water. Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean cloth towel or paper

towel. Keep the cooler in the air-conditioned passenger compartment of your car, rather than in a hot trunk. Limit the times the cooler is opened.

Food safety begins with hand washing even in outdoor settings. And it can be as simple as using a water jug, some soap and paper towels. Consider using moist disposable towelettes for cleaning your hands. Keep all utensils and platters clean when preparing food.

Prior to grilling, marinate foods in the refrigerator, not on the counter or outdoors. If some of the marinade is to be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion separately before adding the raw meat, poultry or seafood. Avoid reusing marinade, or using the same platter and utensils that previously held raw meat or seafood to serve cooked meats and seafood. Grilled food can be kept hot until served by moving it to the side of the grill rack, just away from the coals where it can't overcook.

When serving, keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Do not use a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry or seafood for anything else unless the plate has first been washed in hot, soapy water. Hot food should be kept hot, at or above 140 F. Wrap well and place in an insulated container. Don't let perishable food sit out longer than two hours. Food should not sit out for more than one hour in temperatures above 90 F. <<<

Cold Snap

Many know about seeking protection from the heat and sun during the summer—but what about the cold?

Hypothermia is the condition of having an abnormally low body temperature, typically one that is dangerously low. For swimmers, hypothermia can be the unwanted surprise at the end of an open-water swim—even in summer.

Marcia Cleveland, chair of the USMS Long Distance Committee, knows a thing or two about swimming in extremely cold water. In 1994, Cleveland was the 445th person to swim the English Channel, conquering the 23-mile Strait of Dover in water averaging 60 F during the summer months.

In preparing for her successful swim, Cleveland gained 15 pounds while

acclimating to the point where 58-degree water felt "warm." After her swim, Cleveland wrote the book, "Dover Solo," and the book's accompanying web site includes an excellent article, "Hypothermia Prevention, Detection and First Aid—Hypothermia in Open Water Swimming," by Nick Olmos-Lau, M.D.

"Water immersion creates a higher risk for serious problems," says Olmos-Lau, "because in the water the body can lose approximately 20 to 30 times more heat than at the same temperature on land." Olmos-Lau's article offers detailed descriptions of the condition, ways to prevent hypothermia, and general recommendations for first aid. To read the article, visit the "Dover Solo" web site at www.doversolo.com/hypothermia.htm. <<<

Join the USMS Health Network

Are you a medical professional, physician, nurse, physical therapist, nutritionist or otherwise employed in the health field? The USMS Sports Medicine, Safety and Health Committee would like to hear from you. The committee is developing a network of resource persons 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 whose practice includes providing medical services to 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, Health and Safety Committee. E-mail SportsMedicine@usms.org, phone (503) 297-5889, or write to: Jody Welborn, 6687 SW Canyon Drive, Portland, OR 97211.

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.