

the healthy swimmer



Marcelo Weain

Perfect Protein

The black bean, or *phaseolus vulgaris*, is one of more than 500 varieties of kidney beans. Native to the Americas, the black bean is a protein-rich staple food of many Latin cultures and now is enjoyed by most cultures around the world. Also known as the turtle bean, caviar criollo and frijole negro, the black bean is about the size of a pea with a satiny black skin and a white center.

Black beans are rich in cholesterol-lowering fiber, and their low glycemic index prevents blood sugar levels from rising too rapidly after a meal, making them an especially good choice for individuals with diabetes, insulin resistance or hypoglycemia. Research published in the *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry* suggests that black beans are rich in antioxidant compounds called anthocyanins. When researchers analyzed different types of beans, they found the highest level of antioxidant activity in beans with a darkest seed coat—approximately 10 times the amount found in an equivalent portion of oranges.

Cooked black beans have a creamy texture and a slightly sweet flavor. When combined with whole grains such as brown rice, black beans provide virtually fat-free high-quality protein. Dried and canned black beans generally are available throughout the year in most markets. <<<

reader recipe

Although the word hummus is Arabic for chickpea, hummus is commonly known as a dip made of ground chickpeas, sesame tahini, lemon juice and garlic. Hummus sometimes is served as a dip for raw vegetables, but most often it is served as a spread for small pieces of pita bread.

Hummus traditionally has a Middle Eastern or Mediterranean flair, but recipes have started to include other varieties of beans including edamame (soy beans), white beans and black beans. With ingredients such as lime juice, green onions and cilantro, this month's quick and easy recipe is a Tex-Mex spin on the classic hummus.

Black Bean Hummus

- _____ 1 (15-oz.) can black beans;
drained and rinsed
- _____ 2 T water
- _____ 2 T fresh-squeezed lime juice
- _____ 1½ T chopped green onion
- _____ ¾ t ground cumin
- _____ ½ t salt
- _____ ¼ t cayenne pepper
- _____ 1 t chopped cilantro

Pour black beans in the bowl of a food processor. Add water, lime juice, green onion and spices, and process until smooth. Scrape down the sides of the food processor bowl as needed. Add additional seasoning and water to desired taste and consistency. Garnish with fresh chopped cilantro. Serve with fresh vegetables or pita bread. <<<

Serves 4. Calories per serving = 110; calories from fat per serving = 10.

>>> 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.

Bathroom Scale vs. Tape Measure

When it comes to determining healthy body weight, a tape measure can be just as helpful as a bathroom scale. New research from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center suggests that body weight distribution influences the risk of unhealthy plaque build-up in heart arteries and throughout the whole body.

"In our 30s and 40s, we often gain three to four inches in the midsection," said James A. de Lemos, M.D., F.A.C.C., a professor of medicine and director of the Coronary Care Unit at the medical center. "It's a day-to-day, meal-to-meal battle, but it's worth fighting. Even a small pot belly puts us at higher risk."

Researchers looked at data from the Dallas Heart Study, an ongoing medical survey conducted among an ethnically diverse urban population with a median age of 45. The researchers focused on a group of 2,744 participants, who were tested for early signs of arterial disease using noninvasive image testing. Looking at calcium and plaque build-up in the arteries, the researchers studied the relationship between body shape and early signs of arterial disease—and found that calcium in the arteries was directly influenced by the waist-to-hip ratio (WHR).

To calculate the waist-to-hip ratio, use a nonstretchable tape to measure the waist at its narrowest, usually just above the belly button. Measure the hips around the widest part, and divide the waist measurement by the hip measurement.

Using this ratio, people with the highest and lowest WHR were compared, and people with the highest WHR were twice as likely to have calcium deposits in their coronary arteries. The relationship between WHR and arterial plaque remained strong even after other risk factors were taken into account. In men, a ratio of 0.9 or less is considered healthy—0.8 or less in women. <<<

Combat Headaches with Exercise, Relaxation

According to a report by the Mayo Clinic, lifestyle change may be the best way to combat tension headaches. The Mayo Clinic recommends sleep, balanced meals, regular exercise and stress management as the best ways to prevent headaches.

A headache, or cephalgia, is a condition of pain in the head, neck or upper back. Although the exact cause is unknown, headaches are commonly attributed to dehydration, low blood sugar, sinusitis, depression, anxiety, sleep deprivation, poor nutrition, poor posture, awkward body positions, lack of physical activity and fluctuating hormones.

Recent research discredits the theory that headaches result from heightened emotions, tension or stress. The International Headache Society uses the term "tension-type headache" instead of "tension headache," because muscle tension may not be the main cause.

Certain exercise may cause headaches, but routine exercise also can help relieve the pain. Regular aerobic exercise, such as swimming, can



Eliza Snow

reduce the frequency and intensity of headaches because exercise relieves stress, relaxes the muscles and increases beta-endorphins, which act as natural stress relievers for the body.

In addition to regular exercise, stress management and relaxation techniques can help reduce pain. Yoga, massage, stretching and posture exercises can prevent tension headaches. <<<

>>> For more information about the prevention and treatment of headaches, visit the Mayo Clinic web site at www.mayoclinic.com.

Back-to-School Cleaning

If you believe in spring cleaning each year, there's good reason to do a thorough housecleaning during the back-to-school season too.

Dust is a general name for tiny solid particles less than 500 micrometers in diameter. These particles can come from windblown soil, volcanic eruptions and pollution—but in buildings, the particles come mostly from the inhabitants. Among the three types of dusts (mineral, organic and chemical), organic dust is most common in dwellings. It comes from living materials, such as plants and animals, and may contain molds, pollens, fibers, human and animal dander, and dust mites. The dust mite is a microscopic, spiderlike organism that feeds on flakes of shed skin and commonly triggers asthma and allergic symptoms.

According to a report by the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases, cleaning the bedroom is a key to reducing dust mite inhalation. Dust mites can live in bedding, upholstered furniture and

carpets. Although they generally thrive in the summer and die in the winter, they continue to thrive all winter in warm, humid environments.

To rid your home of dust mites, the NIAID suggests the following maintenance guidelines: Clean floors, furniture, doorframes and windowsills with a damp cloth or mop. Carefully vacuum carpet and upholstery regularly. Use a special filter in the vacuum,

and wash curtains frequently at 130 F. If you are sensitive to dust, wear a filter mask when cleaning, and clean thoroughly and completely once a week. Air filters also can reduce the levels of allergens, and dehumidifiers may help by reducing humidity. <<<

>>> For more details about reducing dust in your home, visit the NIAID web site at www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/dustfree.htm.



Sebastian Kaulitzki

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, Health and Safety 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.