

Subject: May Newsletter- Spinach

Hello and thank you for participating in the Griffin Hospital Produce Prescription Program!

Each month, we will send you a newsletter with a seasonal produce item that should be affordable, and you can often find locally grown at your local grocery store. Hope you enjoy some affordable, healthy and easy recipes featuring this month's produce highlight.

In May (and year-round), you can find spinach in the grocery store. Spinach is a very versatile leafy green with a long growing season in CT. Spinach provides a low calorie, nutrient dense option to add to many different recipes, or to use in a simple salad. Spinach is a good to excellent source of vitamins A, C, and folate, as well as minerals such as manganese, magnesium, calcium, zinc, and iron.

Spinach should be stored in your refrigerator in a clean dry container. Adding a paper towel or clean cloth can make it last longer by keeping extra moisture away from the fragile leaves.

Spinach in your kitchen:

- Wash and eat in salads, wraps or sandwiches
- Sautee and use as a side dish or with stir fries
- Add to soups, stews and smoothies

Check out these recipe links that highlight Spinach:

<https://extension.umd.edu/programs/family-consumer-sciences/snap-ed/eat-smart/recipes/spinach-squares>

<https://masnaped.org/recipes/spinach-salad-with-raisins-and-walnuts-2/>

<https://snapedny.org/recipes/spring-green-salad/>

<https://www.mainesnap-ed.org/recipes/spinach-pasta-salad/>

<https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/lemon-spinach>

Don't forget that if you don't like what you see here, Diabetes.Org has this searchable recipe filter that lets you search recipes by a variety of features. You can search for recipes by cuisine/regional preference:

<https://www.diabetesfoodhub.org/all-recipes.html>

As always, if you have any questions or need support, please reach out to our team!

Subject: Month 5, Powerful proteins!!

Hello and thanks for participating in the Griffin Hospital Produce Prescription Program!

We hope you are enjoying using those fruit and vegetable gift cards each month. Last month, we shared with you resources on whole grains. This week we are going to focus on a new food group, Proteins.

Just like last month, below is an assortment of resources and opportunities that might be helpful to you and your family.

Let's get started!

Classes available this month

EFNEP @

Classes with Griffin Population Health

Local Health Department

Want to work 1 on 1 with a health coach? Please ask for a referral and we will set you up!

An Introduction to Proteins

Vary your protein routine.

What foods are in the Protein Foods Group?

Protein Foods include all foods made from seafood; meat, poultry, and eggs; beans, peas, lentils; and nuts, seeds, and soy products. Beans, peas, and lentils are also part of the Vegetable Group. To learn more, visit the [Beans, Peas, and Lentils page](#).

Eat a variety of protein foods to get more of the nutrients your body needs. Meat and poultry choices should be lean or low-fat, like 93% lean ground beef, pork loin, and skinless chicken breasts. Choose seafood options that are higher in healthy fatty acids (called omega-3s) and lower in methylmercury, such as salmon, anchovies, and trout.

If you are vegetarian or vegan, the advice to eat meat, poultry, and seafood does not apply to you. Vegetarian protein options include beans, peas, and lentils, nuts, seeds, and soy products.

Learn more about this week's focus, Protein

Health Benefits

- Proteins function as building blocks for bones, muscles, cartilage, skin, and blood. They are also building blocks for enzymes, hormones, and vitamins. Proteins are one of three nutrients that provide calories (the others are fat and carbohydrates).
- Nutrients provided by various protein foods can differ. Varying your protein food choices can provide your body with a range of nutrients designed to keep your body functioning well. B vitamins help build tissue and aid in forming red blood cells. Iron can prevent anemia. Magnesium helps build bones and supports muscle function. Zinc can support your immune systems.
- EPA and DHA are omega-3 fatty acids found in varying amounts in seafood. Eating 8 ounces per week of seafood may help reduce the risk for heart disease.

Why is it important to eat a variety of seafood each week?

Seafood contains a range of nutrients, notably the omega-3 fatty acids, EPA and DHA. Eating about 8 ounces per week of a variety of seafood, the amount recommended for many adults, as part of a healthy diet, can support health. Some types of fish, such as salmon and trout are also natural sources of vitamin D, a nutrient that many people don't get enough of.

Seafood varieties commonly consumed in the United States that are higher in EPA and DHA and lower in a type of mercury, in the form of methylmercury, include salmon, anchovies, sardines, Pacific oysters, and trout. The amount of recommended seafood varies based on age, weight, and level of physical activity. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provide joint advice to limit methylmercury exposure from seafood for women who might become pregnant or who are pregnant or lactating and young children. See [Advice About Eating Fish](#) for more information.

Vegetarian Choices in the Protein Foods Group

Vegetarians get enough protein from this group as long as the variety and amounts of foods selected are adequate. Protein sources from the Protein Foods Group for vegetarians include eggs (for ovo-vegetarians), beans, peas, and lentils, nuts and seeds (including nut and seed butters), and soy products (tofu, tempeh). For more information on beans, peas, and lentils, see [Beans, Peas, and Lentils are Unique Foods](#)

To find more recipes try this!

Each and every month we will share with you more resources to help you find new and exciting ways to eat healthy and enjoy that abundance of produce. For us to include recipes in our monthly shares they need to meet certain criteria. They should focus on foods that promote health and wellbeing, like fruits and vegetables and limit ingredients that are less healthful like sodium, saturated fat and sugar.

This month we encourage you to give this recipe search engine a try! It's brought to us by Cooking Light. We like this resource because they have unique and creative recipes and not too many fancy ingredients. <https://www.cookinglight.com/food/everyday-menus/healthy-budget-recipes?slide=131320#131320>

Other resources you might like- this week... tech help with healthy eating

Many people find that the simple act of keeping track of what they eat each day helps them make healthier choices and simple improvements to their diets by studying their own patterns. You might want to consider using a diet tracker like:

<https://www.myfitnesspal.com/>

Live strong has an article comparing the tracking apps: <https://www.livestrong.com/article/13716393-the-3-best-free-calorie-counter-apps-to-keep-your-diet-on-track/>