

Chewing Matters

Cornell Health and Nutrition

November 2007

In This Issue

Why Chewing Matters
Food Focus
Recipe of the Month
Become a Client

From Natalie's Garden

I've just returned from 10 days at my family's farm in upstate New York. (All the pictures in this issue were taken there). It made me think about what's happening to food and to farms in our country, once again. One big piece of local news was that the most successful dairy farmer in the county (whose farm is just south of ours) had given up his dairy cows to turn all his fields over to corn production to feed the ethanol demand. He won't know for a couple of years if he made the right choice.

What choices are you making about your food supply? The farmer's markets have now officially closed in Chicago, but several farmers (especially the meat producers) are still delivering, by appointment, to a central pick up

Why Chewing Matters

When it comes to increased health, it's not just what we eat, but how we eat. Digestion actually begins in the mouth, where contact with our teeth and digestive enzymes in our saliva break down food. But these days most of us rush through the whole eating experience, barely acknowledging what we're putting in our mouths. We eat while distracted-working, reading, talking, and watching television-and swallow our food practically whole. On average we chew each bite only eight times. It's no wonder that many people have digestive problems.

There are many great reasons to slow down and chew your food. Saliva breaks down food into simple sugars, creating a sweet taste. The more we chew, the sweeter our food becomes, so we don't crave those after-meal sweets. Chewing reduces digestive distress and improves assimilation, allowing our bodies to absorb maximum nutrition from each bite of food. More chewing produces more endorphins, the brain chemicals responsible for creating good feelings. It's also helpful for weight loss, because when we are chewing well, we are more apt to notice when we are full. In fact, chewing can promote healing and circulation, enhance immunity, increase energy and endurance, improve skin health and stabilize weight.

The power of chewing is so great that there are stories of concentration camp survivors who, when others could not, made it through with very little food, by chewing their meager rations up to 300 times per bite of food. For most of us 300 chews is a daunting and unrealistic goal. However, you can experience the benefits of chewing by increasing to 30 chews per bite. Try it and see how you feel.

Taking time with a meal, beginning with chewing, allows for enjoyment of the whole experience of eating: the smells, flavors and textures. It helps us to give thanks, to show appreciation for the abundance in our lives and to develop patience and self-control. Try eating without the TV, computer, newspaper, or noisy company. Instead just pay attention to the food and to how you are breathing and chewing.

This kind of quiet can be disconcerting at first, since we are used to a steady stream of advertising, news, media, email, and demands from others. But as you create a new habit, you will begin to appreciate eating without rushing. You have to eat every day - why not learn to savor and enjoy it?

Food Focus: Brown Rice

Brown rice, with its sweet nutty flavor, provides four times the amount of insoluble fiber found in white rice, because it is a whole grain that has not been stripped of its natural bran covering. It contains an impressive number of vitamins and minerals such as concentrated B vitamins (which

location. Large food producers have lobbied AGAINST labeling of the origin of foods but some supermarket chains do provide that information so you can still choose local produce. What's in season right now? Apples, pears, grapes and pomegranates; leafy greens like kale, bok choy, spinach, lettuce, swiss chard, mustard and collard greens (note that kale and swiss chard thrive after frosts and should be available locally for at least another month); root vegetables like potatoes, beets, turnips, sweet potatoes, yams, parsnips; and everything in the squash family. I'm making the last of the basil into pesto to keep in the freezer all winter and freezing tomatoes for sauces and soups.

Wow! These last few months have been enough to make anyone tired. November is the month when the earth finds that comfortable spot, pulls the covers up, sighs, and goes to sleep for a few months. You should take the hint and relax a little yourself. Ever wonder why you feel so "lazy" on a cold and rainy day? It's the earth telling you that it's your time to sit quietly and read or

help nervous systems and mental depression), niacin, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, selenium, and even some vitamin E. This whole grain also contains a small amount of high-quality protein in the form of the amino acid lysine, which helps boost the body's ability to fight viruses, especially those that cause cold sores.

In each grain of brown rice exists a matrix of whole, unrefined energy and nutrition. It is a complex carbohydrate and therefore burns slowly in the body, providing a steady stream of long lasting energy while increasing the brain's levels of serotonin, the chemical responsible for the feeling of well-being. Those who consistently eat brown rice report steady energy and an overall feeling of calm and balance in their daily lives.

For brown rice and whole grains in general, the majority of digestion occurs in the mouth through chewing and exposure to saliva. For optimal nutrition and assimilation, it is vital to chew your rice well and with awareness. A great meditation is to find a calm place, without distractions, to sit down for your meal. Make it a habit to chew each bite 20 times or more. See how this simple practice can help your digestion and overall focus for the rest of your day.

Recipe of the Month: Brown Basmati Pilaf

Prep Time: 3 minutes

Cooking Time: 30-40 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

1 cup brown basmati rice
2 cups of water, vegetable stock or chicken stock
1/2 cup of dried cranberries
1/2 cup of walnut pieces
1/4 cup of chopped fresh parsley
pinch of salt

Directions:

1. Rinse rice in fine mesh strainer until water runs clear.
2. Boil the water and add rice and salt, cover and reduce heat.
3. After 15 minutes add cranberries and walnuts to top, do not stir.
4. Cook 15-25 minutes more, until all the liquid is absorbed.
5. Remove from heat, add parsley and fluff with fork, cover and let set for 3-5 minutes and serve.

There are many ways to become a client:

- **NEW:** Want to jumpstart a weight loss program? Clear your body of toxins or fat? I now offer a variety cleansing programs using the #1 products on the market today. [Click here](#) to learn more

relax. I hope you get the chance to listen every now and then.

Happy Thanksgiving to all my US readers.

Natalie

Quick Links

[Register Now for an Upcoming Event](#)

[Michael Pollan's NY Times article on the US food supply](#)

about the programs and products.

- **Individual coaching** programs to help you meet weight loss or healthy living goals
- **Employer programs** to reduce absenteeism, increase productivity, and teach employees about things like healthy eating on the go and stress reduction
- **Group cooking classes** to learn how to put healthy meals on the table in fewer than 30 minutes - if you have a group of four to ten friends we can do a single or series of cooking lessons based on the skills of the group
- **Eating for Peak Performance** - Programs for athletes of all ages from middle school to adulthood to learn to fuel your body correctly
- **Group coaching** programs if an individual program is too much of an investment

[Contact me](#) to learn more about any of these services.

Upcoming Events

Eating for More Energy
November 6 at 7:45 pm
Chiropractic for Life, 5138 N. Clark Street, Chicago

Healthy Eating Tips
November 14 at 12 noon
TTX Corporate Fitness Center Grand Opening (for TTX employees only)

Survival Strategies for the Holidays
December 4 at 7:45 pm
Chiropractic for Life, 5138 N. Clark Street, Chicago

To register for any of these events, please [click here](#).

Thanks for reading the newsletter. It's such a pleasure to help those closest to us become happier and healthier. Please forward this newsletter to friends, family members or colleagues who might be interested and inspired by it. Until next month!

Contact Info

Natalie E. Cornell, CHC, AADP
Cornell Health and Nutrition
natalie@cornellhealthandnutrition.com
www.cornellhealthandnutrition.com