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Recipe: Great Pumpkin Soup

In honor of the season, we bring you this recipe from the Mayo Clinic for a hearty and healthy *pumpkin* soup! The great pumpkin and its seeds are tasty and chock full of nutrients like vitamins C and E, iron, zinc, magnesium, and potassium. *Enjoy!*

Ingredients **Serves 4**

- 3/4 cup water
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 8 ounces pumpkin puree (fresh or canned) *Make your own puree by roasting a small pumpkin and whipping the flesh in a blender or food processor.
- 1 cup unsalted vegetable broth
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 green onion, green top only, chopped

Directions In a large saucepan, heat 1/4 cup of the water over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Don't let the onion dry out.

Add the remaining water, pumpkin, broth, cinnamon and nutmeg. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in the milk and cook until hot. Don't boil. Ladle into warmed individual bowls and garnish with black pepper and green onion tops. Serve immediately.

Nutritional analysis Serving size: 1 cup Calories: 72, Cholesterol: 1 mg, Protein: 3 g, Sodium: 241 mg, Carbohydrate: 12 g, Fiber: 2 g, Total Fat: 1 g, Potassium: 199 mg, Saturated Fat: less than 1 g, Calcium: 78 mg

Fall 2011

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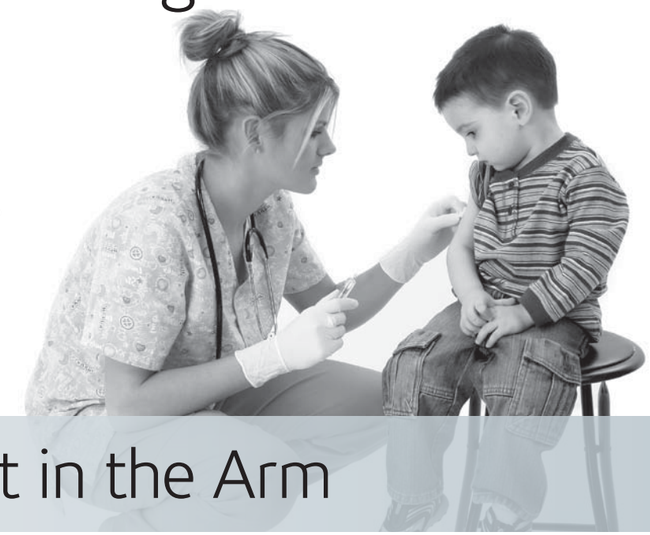
Smart Living with Diabetes



IN THIS ISSUE:

Flu Vaccine: A Shot in the Arm
Early to Bed... Shave Pounds?
Can Dentists Spot Undiagnosed Diabetes?
Diabetes: Five Lifestyle Factors Cut Risk
Red Meat, Hot Dogs Raise Diabetes Odds
Recipe: Great Pumpkin Soup

Flu Vaccine: A Shot in the Arm

Did you get the flu shot last year? Great. But now it's time to get it again.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone over six months of age get the flu vaccine. It's especially important for young children, people 65 and older, and individuals with asthma, diabetes, heart disease, COPD and other chronic conditions to get vaccinated. This is because their immune systems are weaker.

It's also important for pregnant women to get the vaccine, because the flu can hurt developing fetuses. Ditto for healthcare workers and caregivers so they won't infect the fragile populations (babies, elderly and the infirm) in their care.

And don't forget: the flu vaccine is seasonal. That means you must get it *every year.* Last year's vaccine will *not* protect you against this year's flu, the CDC warns.

The flu vaccine is given two ways – by needle or nasal (nose) mist. The shot is approved for people over six months of age. The nasal spray is approved for healthy people, 2 to 49 years of age, who aren't pregnant.

Side effects. Some people who get the shot may develop a low-grade fever and/or soreness at the injection site. Children who receive the nasal spray may develop a runny nose, headache, vomiting, muscle aches and/or fever; adults may develop a runny nose, sore throat, headache or cough. Severe reactions are rare. But call your doctor if you develop a high fever, difficulty breathing or other serious symptoms.

People who previously had a bad reaction or have a severe allergy to chicken eggs (the flu vaccine is grown in eggs) should not get the vaccine.

In addition to the vaccine, the CDC recommends you take the following precautions to cut your risk of getting – and spreading – the flu:

- Wash hands frequently.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your arm *(not your hand)* when you cough or sneeze.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Have flu-like symptoms? Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever goes away (without fever-reducing meds).

It takes about two weeks after you're vaccinated to become flu-protected. So the sooner you get jabbed – the better!

Early to Bed... Shave Pounds?

Need help keeping kids' weight in check? Try getting them to go to bed and wake up *early!*

A new study has found that children and teens that hit the sack early and wake up early are less likely than night owls to become obese.

University of South Australia researchers studied the bedtimes and rising times of 2,200 children, aged nine to 16. Their findings, published in the journal *Sleep*: kids who went to bed late and got up late were 1.5 times more likely to chunk up than those who packed it in and rose early.

Among other findings: kids who burned the midnight oil were nearly twice as likely to be couch potatoes and 2.9 times more likely to plunk down in front of the TV, surf the Net or play video games for more hours than guidelines recommend.

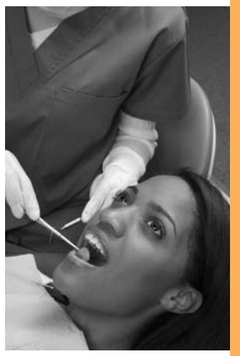
Obesity is a major risk factor for many chronic health conditions, including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and heart and lung disease. And this isn't the first study to link proper snoozing to weight control.

But this new research has an interesting new twist. "The children who went to bed late and woke up late, and the children who went to bed early and woke up early got virtually the same amount of sleep in total," said study co-author Carol Maher.

"Scientists have realized in recent years that children who get less sleep tend to do worse on a variety of health outcomes, including the risk of being overweight and obese," she added. "Our study suggests that *timing* of sleep is even more important."

Seems Ben Franklin got it right when he said: "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise"!

Can Dentists Spot Undiagnosed Diabetes?



We all know dentists can find cavities. But it looks like they can also help spot undiagnosed pre-diabetes and diabetes, a new study suggests.

Mouth disease is an early complication of diabetes. So researchers at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine studied 600 patients to see if symptoms uncovered during routine dental checkups could reveal hidden pre-diabetes or diabetes.

None of the patients had been previously diagnosed with diabetes. But 530 of them reported having at least one diabetes risk factor like high blood pressure, high cholesterol or obesity.

The volunteers were given dental exams and blood tests. The findings, published in the *Journal of Dental Research*: the number of missing teeth and percentage of deep periodontal pockets (gum disease) helped identify pre-diabetes or diabetes in the at-risk group.

It's estimated that one in four Americans with type 2 diabetes don't know they have the disease. But researchers said dentists could help change this by alerting patients if they suspect a diabetes link. "Relatively simple lifestyle changes in pre-diabetic individuals can prevent progression to diabetes, so identifying this group of individuals is important," said lead study author Evanthia Lalla. "Our findings provide a simple approach that can be used in all dental-care settings."

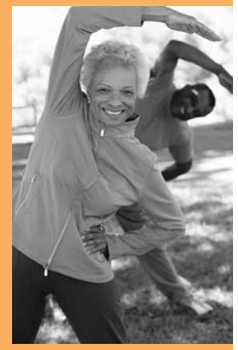
So don't skip those routine dental checkups! Your smile – and your health – may depend on them!

Diabetes: Five Lifestyle Factors Cut Risk

A new long-term study has found that a combination of five healthy lifestyle factors may significantly reduce your odds of type 2 diabetes, even if the disease runs in your family.

Researchers at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) studied more than 200,000 men and women, ages 50 to 71, for 11 years. They wanted to see if five behaviors could cut diabetes risk: eating a healthy diet, maintaining normal weight, exercising regularly, not smoking and limiting alcohol intake (to no more than one drink a day for women and no more than two drinks a day for men).

Their findings, published in the journal *Annals of Internal Medicine*: each healthy behavior lowered diabetes risk by about 39 percent for women and 31 percent for men. Women who adopted *all five* healthy lifestyle factors had an 84 percent lower diabetes risk, and men who adopted them all cut their risk by 72 percent.



Researchers found that even people with known risk factors like obesity and a family history of diabetes reduced their odds by practicing all or some of the other healthy behaviors.

Think you're too old for lifestyle changes to make a difference? *Wrong.*

"Our findings really highlight the fact that it's never too late to adopt a healthy lifestyle," said lead study author and NIH epidemiologist Jared Reis.

So what are you waiting for?

Red Meat, Hot Dogs Raise Diabetes Odds

You might *not* want to bring home the bacon. Or for that matter the franks, salami and bologna. Come to think of it, you might want to hold the steak and burgers, too.

A large new study found that regularly eating red and processed meats (bacon, hot dogs, salami and bologna) may raise the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health analyzed dietary and medical info from nearly 200,000 men and women enrolled in three studies (ranging from 14 to 28 years).

Their findings, published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*:

- Two ounces of processed meat daily increased diabetes risk by 50 percent
- Four-ounce daily servings of unprocessed red meat like hamburger, steak, pork and lamb upped diabetes risk by 20 percent.

The results held when adjusted for other diabetes risk factors like age, weight, physical activity level, smoking and family history. Previous research has shown a link between diabetes and processed meats. But this is the largest study yet to show that *unprocessed red meat* may also play a significant role.

"Clearly, processed red meat is much worse than unprocessed meat for raising the risk, but unprocessed meat is not benign," said senior study author Frank Hu, a Harvard University nutrition and epidemiology professor.

Researchers speculated that high amounts of salt (sodium) and nitrites (preservatives) in processed meats – and high iron levels in red meat – may be culprits.

Iron is a mineral the body needs for many functions. Too little iron can cause problems. But too much isn't good for you, either.

Researchers' advice: eat *less* processed and unprocessed red meats and *more* nuts, whole grains and low-fat dairy like yogurt.

According to the study, substituting these healthy goodies for a serving a day of meat may lower the risk of type 2 diabetes by as much as 35 percent. *So go nuts!*