



Nutrition Nibbles

Functional Foods: Fitting or Folly?

PricewaterhouseCoopers, a research firm, recently released a report stating that consumers are shelling out extra funds for functional foods despite this tough economy. Americans are spending between \$20 and \$30 billion each year on these functional foods, or foods that have been enhanced with additives marketed towards prolonging health and longevity. Also called nutraceuticals, dairy products and soft drinks dominate the functional food market. Consumers are happy to purchase any food that boasts an “energy boosting” claim or promises to alleviate “bowel irregularity.” *Is this functional food frenzy fitting with a healthy diet or just plain folly?*

Originally, functional foods were born from necessity. Back when people were affected from nutritional deficiencies, foods were fortified with rickets-reducing vitamin D, goiter-fighting iodine, and pellagra-preventing B vitamins as a public health initiative. Today’s nutraceuticals include chocolate mocha bars that pack extra fiber, probiotic-rich ice cream, omega-3 margarines, and water with added vitamins and herbs. While adding folate to breakfast cereals dramatically decreased the incidence of neural tube defects in growing babies, are these new functional foods just appeasing our health-conscious minds while lightening our wallets at the same time?

College Corner: Sporty Students

The start of a new school, just like the beginning of the New Year, is a great time to get going on a fitness routine. As students tackle this endeavor, they often have some common questions:

- How do I make my exercise program “stick” this time?
- What is better: cardio or strength training?
- What dietary changes must I take into consideration?

Get your tips to stay in tip-top shape!

Making Exercise a Permanent Part of Your Lifestyle: Start by focusing on the different physical activities you enjoy. Face it, if you don’t like to run, then that is NOT the exercise for you! You are more likely to do something that makes you happy and doesn’t seem like a chore. Secondly, start slowly. Sure, you may want to exercise for an hour each day of the week but you might have a hard time maintaining that rigorous schedule from the get-go. Rather, start with 10 or 15 minutes a couple of times each week and gradually build up to your goal.



Check out my latest adventure!

Funfoodle is an 8-week series of food exploration classes for children ages 3-6. Your kids will love learning about new foods with surprise taste tests, lively music, and edible activities. Classes start this month in Campbell and Los Gatos. Visit www.funfoodle.com for more information or email me directly.

**Questions or Comments? Email me at
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Functional Foods continued...

If you have the extra cash and it is a food you regularly eat (i.e. yogurt, not ice cream), it may be worthwhile to buy the enhanced version. However, functional foods are generally unnecessary if you already eat a healthy, well-balanced, varied diet, if you must go out of your way to purchase and incorporate some “special food” into your daily menu, or if the added calories from the souped-up foods don’t fit with your health or weight management goals. Remember, your doctor is not regulating your use of functional foods so it is up to you to make wise choices. In

fact, you should always inform your doctor and dietitian of any nutraceuticals you consume in case they interfere with any health conditions or prescription medications you take. Just because you buy these items at the grocery store does not mean they are 100% safe!

Bottom Line: don’t rely solely on functional foods for your main source of nutrition. Remember, your best health comes from eating a variety of whole foods with a full carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamin, and mineral profile.

College Corner
continued...

Cardio vs. Strength Training:

When it comes to exercise, one type is not necessarily better than another. The more well-rounded your routine, the more physically fit you will be. Incorporate cardiovascular exercise to get your heart pumping and your body burning calories. Add in strength-training for muscle and bone growth. Don’t forget to get flexible--stretching is important to prevent injury and elongate those muscles so you look lean and mean.

Eating for a Reason

Participate in the **GREAT AMERICAN DINE OUT** from September 20th-26th, a tasty program targeted at ending childhood hunger. How can you help? Just dine out at a participating restaurant and you’ll raise funds to support local food pantries and other organizations that help feed children and families. To find out if your favorite restaurant is participating or to learn more about the Great American Dine Out, visit <http://greatamericandineout.org>

Savor some dessert for a good cause. Support **CANCER CARE FOR KIDS** by purchasing a cupcake at a participating bakery from September 21st-27th and the proceeds will help provide free support services for children affected by cancer. Can’t make it to the bakery? Decorate a virtual cupcake and send it to a friend in honor of the cause. For more info, visit www.cupcakesforacause.org

Nutrition to Keep You Super-Charged:

You will get the most out of your workouts if you follow a few basic sports nutrition tips. First, start and stay well-hydrated. Drink 2 cups of water prior to working out, sip on water while exercising, and quench your thirst afterwards with another 2 cups of water (at least). Second, fuel and refuel. Eat at least a light snack prior to exercising (try half an apple with some peanut butter) and then refuel within 30 minutes of finishing your routine (eat the other half of the apple or try a few whole grain crackers and a cheese stick). Happy trails!

Favorite Food

Lots of people are curious about what dietitians eat when they are “off-duty.” When I need a cool, refreshing, palate-cleansing treat, I scoop myself a bit of fruit sorbet. Sorbet is an icy mixture generally made up of fruit puree, but can occasionally be

found in rich chocolate flavors too. It is typically dairy-free and can be easily enjoyed by those who are lactose intolerant. When choosing a sorbet, look for fruit puree as the first ingredient, skip those containing high fructose corn syrup, and pay attention to serving sizes!