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BecauseWeCare

Healthy Ideas for a Healthy Workplace



Photo by Christopher Hirsheimer

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Healthy Love

Valentine’s Day is coming up, so it’s time to be thinking about how you’re going to show the ones you care about how *much* you care. Luckily, Ellie Krieger, host of The Food Network’s *Healthy Appetite*, has some suggestions.

She believes that simple, healthy alternatives can be just as romantic as a box of chocolates. How about whole wheat pancakes (cut into heart shapes, of course) with strawberry sauce (*recipe on page 4*), chocolate-dipped strawberries, or even beef tenderloin with chocolate wine sauce? These recipes are great sources of whole grains, powerful antioxidants, and even high-quality chocolate (which studies have shown to have similar endorphin-like compounds that may mimic the feeling of being in love).

You’ll still need to figure out which card to buy on your own, but Krieger suggests, “Making your Valentine their favorite meal can be very romantic, and if you include foods you can eat with your fingers, like shrimp, you can feed each other to make things even more decadent!”

Even though her focus is on healthy eating, Krieger, a registered dietician, still cooks with butter, bacon, full-fat cheese, sugar, and cream – but she uses them sparingly and strategically to enhance flavor while “amping up the healthful stuff.” In her new book, *The Food You Crave: Luscious Recipes for a Healthy Life*, for example, she includes recipes like chocolate mousse made with high-quality dark chocolate and silken tofu, or macaroni and cheese that includes pureed butternut squash for color and a creamy texture.

Krieger is also mindful that every Valentine’s Day celebration doesn’t have to be all about food. Rent a bicycle-built-for-two, she suggests. Or go to an art house theater that shows old movies. She says, “Anything that’s active and helps you share a laugh is a great way to celebrate the two of you as a couple.” *–Jeff Silver*

The Common Cold – *An Uncommon Nuisance!*

It may be referred to as the “common cold,” but there’s nothing common or pleasant about the irritating stuffy nose, sore throat, fever, aches, and congestion that make up this winter nuisance. According to the Mayo Clinic, adults are likely to catch two to four colds each year, while children may come down with the “sniffles” up to 10 times during the same period. Here are some simple tips that may help you avoid your next bout with the bug:

- The cold virus is most often transferred through touching your hands to your eyes, mouth, and nose. Wash your hands regularly with soap and hot water, especially when you’ve been out in public; and keep an alcohol-based hand sanitizer in your purse, car, and/or work station for use when soap and water are not available.
- Avoid using a public or communal office phone if possible.
- Use alcohol wipes or a spray disinfectant on any home phone used by a cold sufferer.
- Did we mention washing your hands often?
- Don’t share a cup, glass, or any eating utensil.
- And we can’t repeat it enough – wash your hands often!



Help Your Kids Beat Sniffle Season

It’s sniffle season for kids across the nation, but with so many different choices in remedies for colds, it’s hard to know what to do to help your little one feel better. When your pediatrician tells you your child has a virus, here are a few suggestions from the American Academy of Pediatrics you may want to consider:

- Non-medicated saline nose drops may help thin out the mucus and help relieve a stuffy nose.
- A humidifier in the room may also help clear your child’s nasal passages.
- If your child has a fever, avoid using aspirin products – aspirin has been linked to Reye’s syndrome, which can affect some internal organs.
- Make sure your child is staying well hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids.

- If you are caring for a sick child, wash your hands often and encourage others to do the same to help prevent the virus from spreading.

Of course, parents should check in with the doctor before giving their child any sort of medicine, but with patience and the right care, your child can be back in action in no time.



Have A Heart: Tips to Prevent Heart Disease

Valentine's Day is a great time to take care of the people you love by taking care of yourself – especially your heart. According to the American Heart Association, heart disease claims approximately 700,000 lives in the United States each year, but you can prevent it with some simple lifestyle choices. And the best news of all? The same tips can also help you prevent cancer, diabetes, and other serious illnesses. So take care of yourself and your family during Valentine's Day and year 'round by following these heart-healthy tips:

- Talk with your doctor about your risk factors and what you can do to make changes in your lifestyle.

- Avoid tobacco, and if you consume alcohol do so only in moderation.
- Get moving! Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise on five or more days of the week.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Follow a heart-healthy diet. That means eating lots of fruits and vegetables, cutting out added salt, and eating less saturated fat and cholesterol.



CLICK HERE to learn more about maintaining a healthy weight.

Chocoholics, Take Heart!

It's often labeled as "junk" food. But before you feel guilty next time you reach for a piece of chocolate, consider this: it just might be good for you.

Recent studies in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and other publications have found that moderate amounts of dark chocolate – not milk chocolate or white chocolate – may be beneficial to your health. Eating small amounts of dark chocolate per day can lower blood pressure for people with moderately high blood pressure.

What's the magic ingredient in dark chocolate? The treat is rich in antioxidants, which can ward off harmful free radicals, according to the International Cocoa Organization, and potentially lower the amount of "bad" cholesterol in the body.

These studies don't offer a license to eat unlimited amounts of chocolate, however. The key is moderation, and to remember that it is only dark chocolate, and not the milk or white varieties, that boast health benefits. Another tip? Don't wash down that dark chocolate with milk – it can negate the dessert's healthy attributes.

The studies' authors also caution that simply adding dark chocolate to your diet isn't the best way to lower blood pressure – a healthy diet, exercise, and losing excess weight are also important.



CLICK HERE to learn about more healthy food options.



Put Your Sweetie to the Test!

This Valentine's Day, consider giving your sweetie a gift that shows just how much you care. A loving reminder about age-appropriate cancer screening tests says, "I love you and want you to be around for a long time."

Cancer screening can result in the early detection of many cancers – when treatment is more likely to be successful. Take a look at the American Cancer Society's guidelines for early cancer detection. They include recommendations based on age, family history, and other risk factors, and are a great resource you can refer to when you talk to your family doctor about the screening options that are right for you and the one you love.

So if your sweetheart hasn't had the recommended cancer screening tests lately, now's a great time to remind him or her. After all, who needs roses and chocolates when you can give the gift of life?



CLICK HERE for the American Cancer Society's cancer screening guidelines.

Bank on Buttermilk

Let's clear up one misconception right away – there's not really butter in commercially made buttermilk. The name of this sweet, creamy treat dates back to when butter was made the old-fashioned way. When fresh butter was removed from the churn, the residual liquid – spotted with flecks of butter – was coined buttermilk. Today, buttermilk is made by adding a lactic acid bacteria to pasteurized sweet, skim, or non-fat milk. But the result is the same – a rich dairy product thicker than regular milk but not as thick as cream.

Buttermilk is high in potassium, B12, calcium, and riboflavin. The body digests it quickly, so it may be a dairy option for people with certain digestive concerns.

Bank on buttermilk for a multitude of uses in the kitchen. Served chilled, it's a beverage with a flavor similar to that of yogurt. It's also excellent in baked goods and is a tasty base for soups, salad dressings, and meat marinades.

So while the name may be a misnomer ... the flavor and versatility of buttermilk are right on target!

Whole-Wheat Pancakes *with* Strawberry Sauce



Photo by Christopher Hirsheimer

3/4 cup all-purpose flour
 3/4 cup whole-grain pastry flour
 or whole-wheat flour
 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 2 large eggs
 1 cup low-fat buttermilk
 3/4 cup nonfat milk
 1 tablespoon honey
 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
 Cooking spray
 Strawberry sauce (recipe follows)
 Confectioners' sugar (optional)

In a large bowl, whisk together the flours, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a medium bowl, beat together the eggs, buttermilk, nonfat milk, honey, and vanilla.

Coat a large nonstick griddle or skillet with cooking spray and preheat over medium-low heat. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients, mixing only enough to combine them. The batter will be somewhat lumpy. Use a 1/4-cup measure to ladle the batter onto the griddle or skillet. Flip the pancakes when they are golden brown on the bottom and bubbles are forming on top, about 1 1/2 minutes. Cook the other side until golden brown, about another 1 1/2 minutes. Keep the pancakes warm in a 200°F oven as you finish cooking the remaining ones.

Ladle about 1/3 cup of the strawberry sauce onto each plate, place the pancakes on top, sprinkle with confectioners' sugar, if using, and serve.

Strawberry Sauce

2 pints (16 ounces) fresh strawberries, hulled, or 4 cups frozen unsweetened strawberries, thawed
 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup

Place the strawberries in a food processor and process them into a chunky purée. Transfer the purée to a small saucepan over low heat and heat just until warm. Stir in the lemon juice and maple syrup.

Reprinted with permission from *The Food You Crave*, by Ellie Krieger. The Taunton Press, 2007.

In the Next Issue

- Put a "Spring" in Your Step
- Dive into the Gene Pool
- Bashful No More

Articles Contributed by: Lisa Bade, Michelle Boone, Amanda Dobbs, Jim Ryan, Crystal Streuber, and Liz Taylor.

All content for BecauseWeCare is provided by the American Cancer Society.

Meeting the growing consumer and employee demands for increased health services on the job, the American Cancer Society Workplace Services program provides corporate tools and resources to initiate or enhance existing employee health and wellness services.

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