



# Nutrition Nibbles

## Shining Light on Vitamin D

Vitamin D has been receiving quite a bit of press lately. What exactly is vitamin D? What role does it play in our health? Where do you find vitamin D? Let me illuminate the subject for you...

- ☼ Vitamin D, also known as the **Sunshine Vitamin**, is actually a hormone produced in the body using ultraviolet B rays of the sun. Being outdoors and letting our skin absorb some sunny rays is our largest source of vitamin D. All it takes is 10-15 minutes of sun exposure, without sunscreen, 2-3 times each week (not enough to cause skin cancer but sufficient to produce adequate amounts of vitamin D).
- ☼ Vitamin D has been implicated in bone health and strength, along with calcium, for years and years. But did you know that vitamin D is being linked to immunity, cancer prevention, and longevity?
- ☼ Vitamin D prompts the body to make antimicrobial substances that act like natural antibiotics and antiviral agents. (Think of these agents as your own body's form of Purell or Lysol sanitizer). Vitamin D, via this mechanism, strengthens our immune system and keeps us healthy.
- ☼ Vitamin D has been linked to 17 different types of cancer, including breast, colon, prostate, and lung cancers. It appears that adequate intake of vitamin D provides a good dose of cancer prevention.

[More Details on page 2](#)

☼ Most recently, vitamin D has been associated with ...



## Favorite Food

Everyone always asks me "So, what does a dietitian eat?" Fall is my favorite season and I have been gobbling up pumpkin! Pumpkin puree is easy to work with and packs in beta-carotene, potassium, and vitamin C. I have used it for dessert (see the Pumpkin Pudding Recipe from last month) and mixed it in my morning oatmeal. To add some nutrients and nice pumpkin flavor, use pumpkin puree instead of oil in your favorite muffin and bread recipes. Yummy!



## College Corner: Shopping on a Budget

### Grocery List:

Raisin Bran Flakes

Fat Free Milk

Frozen Blueberries

Whole Wheat Bread

Turkey Lunchmeat

Sliced Cheese

Spaghetti Noodles

Marinara Pasta Sauce

Frozen Broccoli

"Groceries are expensive!" This is one of the most common complaints I hear from college students. This month I was a dietitian on a mission...a mission to find the most economical place to shop for some staple pantry items. Read on for my surprising results...



First, I chose some common items to compare that could be put together to make a few simple and popular meals (see list on left). Fresh produce was not chosen for two reasons: a.) it is unavailable at one of the stores I chose in my comparison, and b.) college students often complain of "fridge rot," or the spoilage that occurs when fresh fruits and vegetables are forgotten about and end up spoiling, or rotting, in the refrigerator.



Second, I chose 3 common stores that college students frequent in the Bay Area: Lucky Grocery Store (previously Albertson's), Target, and Trader Joe's.



Lastly, I went shopping! I compared the items on my list, using standard package sizing and store brands instead of name brands when possible.



And the winner was...Trader Joe's by a few cents! See the next page for actual price comparisons plus some economical shopping tips.

[More Details on page 2](#)



## Shining Light on Vitamin D continued...

living a longer life. Studies show those people with the highest vitamin D intake had a 7% decrease in all-cause mortality. Is vitamin D the newest fountain of youth?



- ⊗ Scientists are currently conducting research on vitamin D's connection with autoimmune diseases like type I diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and multiple sclerosis, as well as seeking out the relationship between vitamin D and conditions such as cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, kidney disease, and psoriasis. Speculation exists as to whether or not vitamin D is linked to autism and even weight gain during menopause.
- ⊗ Interestingly, as we age our ability to synthesize vitamin D decreases. Unfortunately, few foods contain vitamin D naturally in significant amounts. Fatty fish and egg yolks contain some vitamin D. Milk, orange juice, and breakfast cereals are commonly fortified with vitamin D. *Note: All milk is fortified with vitamin D—not just “whole vitamin D milk.”* Choose 1% or fat-free dairy for a healthy heart and a smaller waistline.
- ⊗ How much vitamin D do we need on a daily basis? If you're under the age of 65, live in California, and spend some time out in the sunshine, you probably are making enough vitamin D. Current recommendations for vitamin D intake are under negotiation. If you spend much of your time indoors, are a sunscreen fanatic, or are older than 65, aim for 600—1000 International Units of vitamin D daily between food and supplements.



## Thanksgiving Trivia and Facts

- Did you know that 90% of Americans eat turkey as a main course on Thanksgiving?
- Did you know that the most popular ways to serve leftover Thanksgiving turkey are as a sandwich, in stew or soup, in chili and casseroles, and as turkey burgers?
- Most Americans overeat on Thanksgiving, consuming an average of 3000 calories at the main meal!
- Tryptophan in turkey makes you sleepy ONLY if you eat large quantities on an empty stomach. Most Thanksgiving post-meal napping is the result of eating massive quantities of carbohydrates (not turkey) in a sitting.

## Shopping on a Budget continued...

	Trader Joe's	Target	Lucky
Raisin Bran Flakes	\$2.49	\$2.84	\$2.00
Fat Free Milk, 1/2	\$2.19	\$3.09	\$2.83
Frozen Blueberries	\$2.99	\$3.19	\$4.99
Whole Wheat	\$1.69	\$2.79	\$3.69
Turkey Lunchmeat	\$4.29	\$3.79	\$2.99
Sliced Cheese	\$3.99	\$2.79	\$3.49
Spaghetti Noodles	\$0.79	\$0.74	\$1.69
Pasta Sauce	\$1.49	\$1.02	\$2.00
Frozen Broccoli	\$1.09	\$0.99	\$2.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$21.01</b>	<b>\$21.24</b>	<b>\$25.68</b>

### Some tips for grocery shopping on a tight budget:

- ✓ Always shop with a list. This will help cut down on the number of expensive, unnecessary impulse buys you succumb to.
- ✓ Look the aisle up and down. Grocery items at eye-level tend to be pricier. Get in the habit of looking above and below these items for cheaper buys.
- ✓ Store brand items tend to be more affordable. Check them out!
- ✓ Many items at Trader Joe's are a good deal, especially frozen items, dairy, cereal, and many pantry essentials. Stock up when you are in the neighborhood.
- ✓ If you stop by Target for your usual toiletries, peruse the food aisles and pick-up cereals, granola bars, and crackers which are all ways nicely priced.

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