



# DINING ON A DIME

## *Eating Better for Less*

*February / March / April*

### **Food for Thought**

Did you know that what you feed your child could greatly affect his or her behavior and learning ability? Encouraging your family members to choose foods wisely and to cook and eat together often can be a *smart choice* in many ways.

**Eat Breakfast.** A healthful meal eaten soon after waking up will help your child be less likely to have disruptive behavior, and to be more alert, ready to learn and able to perform better in the classroom.



**Increase Omega 3 Fats.** These healthy fats promote both physical and mental growth. They help the brain, nerves and eyes function well. Good food sources of omega 3 fats include fatty fish (such as salmon, Pacific and Atlantic mackerel, jack mackerel, tuna and sardines), canola oil, ground flaxseed meal and walnuts.

**Limit Mercury.** Although most fish are healthful, certain fish have too much mercury. Eating these can decrease one's ability to learn or remember. Children and pregnant women are advised to avoid eating the following four mercury-contaminated fish: king mackerel, swordfish, shark and tilefish. If you eat fish from local lakes or rivers, check with the Department of Wildlife and Parks about their safety. For up to three or four meals a week, choose fish that are low in mercury, such as canned "chunk light" tuna, cod, catfish, flounder, sole, whitefish, haddock, salmon, pollock, shrimp, herring and anchovies.

**Cook and Eat Together as a Family Often.** Cooking together often prompts relaxed conversation between a parent and child. In addition, it helps build independence and self-confidence in your child. It will also help your child learn more math, science, logic and words. Seating infants and toddlers at or near the family table so they can watch everyone and hear the conversations will boost their vocabulary and reading skills later. Eating meals together regularly can improve your child's interaction with others, his or her participation in pre-school or school classes and family activities, and decrease negative or anti-social behaviors. 

Love your child by feeding him or her well! Do the body — and brain — good!

## Is there a catch to eating fish?

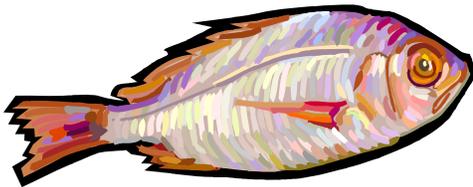
Along with benefits to the brain, nerves and eyes of getting enough omega 3 fats, which were mentioned on page 1, did you know that omega 3 fats also decrease risk for heart disease, stroke, dementia and Alzheimer's? Read on to find out more about getting plenty of these healthful fats.



Humans cannot make omega 3 fats, so we must get them from food. All three types of omega 3 fats have long names: EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and ALA (alpha-linolenic acid). The first two are found in fish, especially oily fish, while ALA is in certain plant foods.

Listed below are some commonly-asked questions and answers that you can use to improve your family's health.

**Why should I eat fish?** Fish is a good source of protein and is low in saturated fat. Eating fish regularly helps you replace other foods that may be high in saturated fats, such as fatty meats or full-fat dairy products. Eating fried, salted or dried fish is not recommended.



Love your heart by eating at least two servings a week of a variety of boiled or baked fish, in order to get about 500 milligrams per day of EPA/DHA. Adults at risk for heart disease should strive to get twice that amount, or one gram of EPA/DHA per day.

### **How safe is it to eat fish twice a week or to take fish oil supplements?**

Levels of contaminants are generally highest in older, larger, predatory fish and marine mammals. The story on page 1 of this issue of *Dining on a Dime* listed which fish to avoid and which to eat more often.

Taking fish oil supplements should only be considered after talking it over with your doctor. Since mercury accumulates in the meat portion of a fish, fish oil supplements contain almost no mercury. However, high doses of omega 3 fats can have harmful effects, such as putting you at risk for excessive bleeding.

### **Are there differences in the omega 3 fat content between wild fish and farm-raised fish?**

Sometimes wild fish have higher levels of omega 3 fats than farmed fish, but sometimes it is the opposite. The omega 3 fat content of wild fish can vary by the temperature of their environment, while the omega 3 fat content of farmed fish can vary based on what the fish are fed. Try to eat fish at least twice a week regardless of whether it is wild or farmed.

Source (Accessed 2/10/15): The American Heart Association, [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

You may view previous newsletters at [www.ksre.ksu.edu/HumanNutrition/p.aspx?tabid=184](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/HumanNutrition/p.aspx?tabid=184) This issue is an updated revision of the "Dining on a Dime Feb. 2010" newsletter. Contents of this publication may be reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Erin Henry and Mary Meck Higgins, "Dining on a Dime," Feb. 2015.

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.



## Keep Your Wealth & Good Health!



Want to save money AND be good to your heart? In the spirit of Heart Month, this issue of *Dining on a Dime* will help you do just that!

### High on Fiber ... Low on Cost

Did you know that adults are advised to eat 21 to 38 grams of dietary fiber each day? The average adult in the U.S. eats just 16 grams of fiber each day. Dietary fiber provides many benefits, including lower cholesterol levels and improved heart health. Here are three foods that would be easy to add to your and your family's diet to increase fiber intake. They're both tasty and inexpensive.

**Oatmeal.** At just 13 cents per 1/2 cup, a bowl of old-fashioned rolled oats provides 4 grams of dietary fiber. Add fruit for even more heart-friendly nutrition!

**Apples.** They're a perfect on-the-go snack, for 55 to 95 cents a serving. Naturally portable, one apple provides about 4 grams of dietary fiber.

**Beans.** Black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans ... Take your pick! Not only are these nutritional powerhouses full of dietary fiber (about 6 grams in 1/2 cup), beans also are very economical sources of protein. Canned varieties cost about 28 cents per serving, and the ones that you home-cook from dry are even less expensive. Keep cooked beans on hand to make quick dinners and to pack into brownbag lunches. One to two cups of beans a week are recommended for adults.

### Make Less-Meat Meals

Meats are usually the most expensive portion of a meal. Most adults eat more than the five to six and one-half ounces they need each day of cooked protein-rich foods. To stretch your food dollars, use smaller portions of red meats and poultry, and add plenty of vegetables, fruits and grains to the dish. For instance, think eggplant lasagna or a hearty stew with vegetables, rice, beans and meat or poultry. For more ideas, visit the websites [www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov](http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov) and [www.ksre.ksu.edu/HumanNutrition/p.aspx?tabid=198](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/HumanNutrition/p.aspx?tabid=198)

### Eat In & Cash In

Working-age adults in the U.S. buy a meal from a restaurant about four times per week on average, according to the USDA. The costs for those can add up fast! These habits are mostly at your health's expense, though, since foods eaten away from home typically are higher in calories, added sugars, sodium, cholesterol and unhealthy saturated and trans fats compared to meals eaten at home.

What to do? Limit the number of times you eat out. Instead, enjoy a heart-healthy meal at home featuring fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and low-fat dairy foods. For example, see page 4 for a meal suggestion and the recipe for *Simple and Quick Red Beans & Rice*. Your family's hearts — and wallet — will benefit!



Sources (Accessed 2/10/15): 1) Fiber intake of the U.S. population: What we eat in America, NHANES 2009- 2010. Food Surveys Research Group Dietary Data Brief No. 12, Sep. 2014, [www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/fsrg](http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/fsrg) 2) Changes in eating patterns and diet quality among working-age adults, 2005-2010, Jan. 2014, <http://ers.usda.gov/media/1259670/err161.pdf>

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office.

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## ***Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner***

### **Simple and Quick Red Beans and Rice (Makes 2 servings)**

*Be good to your heart! During Heart Month or for any occasion, serve this dish along with fresh salad greens with tomato wedges, slices of red apples and chunks of part-skim white cheese.*

#### **Ingredients**

- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup cooked brown (or white) rice
- 15 ounces canned (or 1 1/3 cups home-cooked) kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper flakes, as desired

#### **Directions**

**1.** Wash your hands and work area. **2.** Spray a saucepan with non-stick cooking spray. Heat it over medium heat. Add onion and cook until tender, about 2 or 3 minutes. **3.** Stir in water and cooked rice. Reduce heat to low. Stir in remaining ingredients. **4.** Cover and heat 5 to 10 minutes longer or until mixture is steaming hot, stirring occasionally. **5.** Cover and refrigerate leftovers within two hours.

**Nutrition Facts:** 1/2 recipe provides 250 calories, 2g fat, 0.5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 49g carbohydrates, 11g protein, 0mg cholesterol, 220mg sodium and 10g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 2% vitamin A, 6% vitamin C, 8% calcium, 10% iron.



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