



ON CALL

Lay Community Health Advisors

Seasoning in diet and nutrition

Introduction

This short handbook will provide you with some additional information about nutritional value of spices in our diet and will guide you how to season your food in order to benefit your health the most.

This handbook will be useful in promoting positive mental health with members of your local health network. Thanks to this textbook you will learn how to make your dishes not only healthier but also tastier by using the right kind of spices.

All of herbs and some spices we use to season our food have medicinal properties and it's up to us how much do we benefit from them. The best way is to use different spices and herbs to each dish and to combine few of them instead of focusing on one kind of seasoning.

This resource aims to provide you with knowledge about ways in which different kind of herbs and spices can benefit your health.

Eat your herbs

Flavourful herbs goes well with a lot of different dishes and can make them tastier without adding additional salt, fat or sugar. Herbs which are rich in antioxidants can help us fight some types of cancer and other civilization diseases.

There are variety of herbs that are both good for the taste of your food and your health, let's focus on the 10 most commonly used:

1. Basil – which comes great with different kind of vegetables and meat – can work as aspirin, reducing inflammation.
2. Oregano – which is best on pizza or with tomato sauce- – has high antioxidant content
3. Thyme – is really rich in antioxidants and is also anti-microbial.
4. Sage - reduce inflammation and is rich in vitamin K
5. Rosemary- can fight the pathogens that cause food borne illness,
6. Parsley –vitamin A, vitamin C, and folic acid.
7. Mint - soothes digestive system
8. Drill - has anti-bacterial properties
9. Chives - reduces the risk for cancer.
10. Cilantro – has anti-bacterial proprieties.

Spice it up

Seasoning your dishes with right spices can make you lose your weight – either by helping you to control your appetite, or by boosting your metabolism.

Adding cumin, cinnamon, ginger and hot peppers to your dishes and beverages will help you to lose more body fat.

- Cinnamon reduce effect of eating fats and helps with fighting cravings for sweets
- Cumin is great weight loss remedy
- Hot peppers – boost your metabolism
- Ginger – improves metabolism

Ease your pain

No wonder medicine woman's knowledge often was enough to actually treat a lot of diseases and ease different kind of pain back then. Some of herbs like cloves or rosemary, turmeric, and spices like cayenne pepper, ginger or cinnamon can help to ease your pain and has been found to reduce inflammation. Some of pain relieving herbs and spices act like medicine – helping us to fight what is causing the pain - and some only as painkillers. Let's look at few examples:

Nutmeg can be either eaten as it can reduce inflammation or be used externally in form of a paste to alleviate joint pain.

Cinnamon specializes in easing arthritis pain.

Rosemary herb can give us a relieve from muscle and joint pain.

Cilantro, mint and camomile relieve stomach pain.

Every hot spice which contains capsaicin makes us release endorphins and act as painkillers.

We can also help ourselves ease our pain by eating garlic or mustard, which work in the same way (by releasing endorphins to counteract the perceived pain), as hot peppers.

Stay healthy

Eating different kind of herbs and spices can be a great investment in your future health. Tumeric, which eaten on regular basic can prevent diseases like Alzheimer or dementia, can be a great example.

Lot of herbs and other spices (Tumeric included), are rich in antioxidants, which help you to prevent some kinds of cancer and some brain diseases. The highest amount of them we can find in Mediterranean spices (especially in oregano), ginger, turmeric and cinnamon. Thanks to ginger and cinnamon we can avoid, or cure, common cold.

A little effort goes a long way.

Never skip the occasion to add seasons to your food, but while seasoning remember about moderation. Adding too much of any of seasoning can make your dish inedible and lower it nutritional value. It is always better to add only a pinch or two, and check the taste before adding more. If you want to increase nutritional value of your food think about adding few types of herbs or spices at the time. Combining right seasoning not only makes your dish more delicious but also more beneficial for your health.

How to use this Resource with your Local Health Group?

This handbook presents information on the topic of healthy diet planning for different age group and shows how seasoning can increase nutritional value of our food. It helps to understand importance of spices in our cuisine

Reviewing this handbook before each session with the group will help you to lead a discussion with a group and answer their questions according specific seasoning.

However, you have to be aware that not all herbs and spices was mentioned in this handbook and that your students may provide you with examples of different spices they use. Be curious and open-minded. In the resources you will also find a PowerPoint presentation which will help

you to explain the topic to your group and start a discussion.

Group Activity

After you have shared the digital resource and the PowerPoint presentation with your group, you can start a group discussion about the importance of seasoning.

Once they are finished ask them to think what spices and herbs members of their community use. Give them the idea to ask their group (especially if it consists of people of different nationality what spices and herbs does they like with their food, and which ones does they find beneficial for their health.

Let your group compose menu for one day (breakfast, lunch and dinner), using different kind of herbs and spices that goes well with food of their choice.



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