

May 2024



NEWSLETTER



Farmer's Market with fruits and vegetables

Share with Your Clients:

- Black Bean Taco Salad
- Summer Cobb Salad
- Moderate Physical Activity Reduces Childhood Obesity
- Light Physical Activity 101
- Summer MyPlate
- Build A Higher Fiber Salad
- 7 Fast Healthy Meals

Research Corner:

- Lipids and Cognitive Decline

Editor's Note:

This issue talks about the benefits of light physical activity and its benefits for all especially for obesity prevention for children. It has a great handout for MyPlate and summer PLUS our fastest, healthy meals!

-- Judy Doherty, MPS, PC II



High Fiber Salad

Here is a fun twist on a taco and a salad with the combination of both together!

Black Bean Taco Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 2 small corn tortillas
- 1/4 cup black beans, drained and heated
- 1 tablespoon shredded Jack cheese
- 1 tomato, cored and diced
- 1 cup lettuce, rinsed and sliced
- 1 tablespoon diced red onion
- 1 tablespoon nonfat plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon guacamole

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the heated beans on the tortillas followed by the cheese and heat in the microwave for 30 seconds or until the cheese just melts.
2. Top with the rest of the ingredients as pictured.
3. Add a little dressing or oil and vinegar to the lettuce.
4. Enjoy!

Chef's Tips: Mashed avocado makes a great stand-in for guacamole if you don't have time to make it or can't find it prepared.

Serves 1. Each 2 cup serving: 168 calories, 6 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 9 mg cholesterol, 0 mg trans fat, 90 mg sodium, 21 g carbohydrates, 7 g fiber, 6 g sugar, 9 g protein.



High Fiber Salad

Summer Cobb Salad

Ingredients:

- 4 cups bibb lettuce, cut, rinsed, spun dry
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, remove stem and cut in half
- 1 tablespoon blue cheese crumbles
- 1 avocado, peeled, cored, and cut into slices
- 4 eggs, hardboiled, peeled, cut in half
- 1/2 red onion, sliced thin
- 1 red pepper, cut into strips

Directions:

1. Prepare all the ingredients. Chill until ready to assemble.
2. To assemble, toss the lettuce in vinaigrette. Place on a plate. Top with all the ingredients. Serve immediately.
3. Chef's Tips: We opted to omit the bacon bits and use more avocado than the traditional Cobb salad. The lettuce here is cranberry bibb lettuce but any bibb or green lettuce will do.

Serves 4. Each 2 cup serving: 185 calories, 12 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 165 mg cholesterol., 0 g trans fat, 98 mg sodium, 11 g carbohydrate, 5 g fiber, 9 g protein.

Reversing Childhood Obesity Through Light Exercise

Being a couch potato in your younger years is directly related to childhood obesity, but a new study shows that light exercise may totally undo this chronic disease.

The study was completed as a collaboration between University of Exeter, University of Eastern Finland, University of Bristol, and University of Colorado and recently published in *Nature Communications*.



The research is one of the biggest and longest follow-up studies to monitor physical activity and fat mass. It utilized the University of Bristol's Children of the 90s data (also known as the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children). Over 6,050 children (53% girls) aged 11 years that were monitored until they turned 24.

Recent studies suggest that over 80% of teenagers globally don't meet the World Health Organizations' (WHO) advised average of one hour per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity.

It's predicted that being sedentary will have caused 500 million new cases of diabetes, heart disease, obesity or other noncommunicable chronic disease by 2030 which annually costs 21 million.

This scary statistic regarding sedentary lifestyle requires urgent research on the most effective prevention.

However, results of this recent study find that moderate-to-vigorous exercise is up to ten times *less* effective than light physical activity in reducing overall fat mass gain.

Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity was fairly stable at 50 minutes per day from childhood to young adulthood **while light exercise decreased from six hours per day to three hours daily.**

For each minute spent being sedentary, a 1.3 gram increase in total body fat mass was observed. Male and female children both picked up an average of 10 kg of fat mass through growth from childhood to early adulthood.

Light Physical Activity 101

Light physical activity refers to any movement that expends energy but doesn't significantly raise your heart rate or cause you to break a sweat. Examples of light physical activity include:

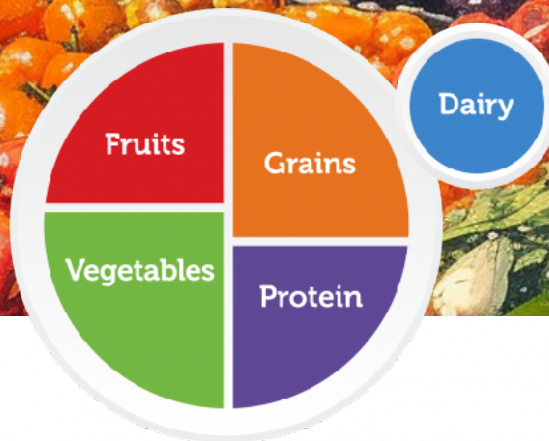
- **Household Chores:** Activities like sweeping, dusting, vacuuming, washing dishes, and light gardening can all contribute to light physical activity.
- **Active Transport:** Choosing active modes of transportation such as cycling, walking, or using stairs instead of elevators or escalators.
- **Yard Work:** Light gardening tasks like watering plants, weeding, or planting flowers can provide gentle exercise.
- **Stretching:** Gentle stretching exercises or yoga can help improve flexibility, reduce stiffness, and promote relaxation.
- **Standing:** Spending time standing instead of sitting can also be considered light physical activity. For example, standing while talking on the phone or while waiting in line.
- **Playing with Children or Pets:** Engaging in light play activities with children or pets, such as playing fetch, tag, or tossing a ball around.
- **Casual Sports:** Participating in low-intensity recreational activities like mini-golf, leisurely cycling, or casual swimming.

Here are some tips to increase physical activity in children throughout their lifespan:

- **Be a role model.** Limit your screen time and participate in walking, jogging, or other light activity. Limit your children's screen time. Using a screen or watching TV often are sedentary behaviors.
- **Schedule play time with family.** Kick a ball in your yard or go for a family hike. Take a tumbling class with your toddler. Go for a family bike ride when the weather is nice.
- **Find a family-friendly gym or recreation center in your neighborhood.**
- **Encourage children to join a sports team or league so they have regular physical activity built in.**
- **Join a neighborhood pool in the summer.**
- **Use a DVD or YouTube video for indoor exercise in colder months**
- **Praise children for being active, but don't reward them with food.**



MyPlate: Get Ready for Summer



Adapting MyPlate guidelines for summer helps you make the most of seasonal produce and maintain a balanced diet. Here's how you can enjoy MyPlate recommendations for the summer months:

Fruits and Vegetables: Take advantage of the abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables available during the summer. Aim to fill half of your plate with a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables. Choose options like berries, melons, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, corn, zucchini, and leafy greens. Enjoy them raw in salads, as snacks, or grilled for added flavor. By visiting a farmer's market you can be more aware of fresh, local seasonal produce while getting great prices and meeting the people who grow your food.

Grains: Incorporate whole grains into your meals for sustained energy. Choose whole grain options like whole wheat bread, brown rice, quinoa, barley, or whole grain pasta. These grains provide fiber, vitamins, and minerals to support overall health. Try incorporating whole grains into chilled salads, side dishes, or as a base for grain bowls.

Protein: Include lean protein sources in your meals to support muscle health and satiety. Opt for grilled chicken, fish, tofu, tempeh, beans, lentils, or legumes. **Grilling is a popular cooking method during the summer** and can add delicious flavor to your protein choices. Consider making kabobs with vegetables and lean meats for a balanced meal.

Dairy or Dairy Alternatives: Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy options or dairy alternatives fortified with calcium and vitamin D. Enjoy yogurt parfaits with fresh fruits, smoothies with Greek yogurt, or calcium-fortified plant-based milk in your cereal or as a beverage.

Healthy Fats: Incorporate healthy fats into your diet for heart health and satiety. Add avocado slices to salads or sandwiches, drizzle olive oil over grilled vegetables, or include nuts and seeds in your snacks or meals. Remember to practice portion control, as fats are calorie-dense.

Hydration: Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of **water**, especially in hot weather. Choose milk or water as your primary beverage. Limit sugary drinks and alcohol, as they can contribute to dehydration and excess calorie intake.

Movement: It is also a time to enjoy physical activity like walking outside.

Enjoy a wide variety of foods from all food groups in moderation. Summer is a great time to experiment with new recipes and flavors using seasonal ingredients.

Build Higher-Fiber Salads

Creating a high-fiber salad is easy and delicious! Here are some of the highest fiber salad ingredients you can include:

1. Leafy Greens: Start with a base of dark leafy greens like spinach, kale, arugula, or mixed salad greens. These are low in calories and high in fiber.

2. Vegetables: Load up your salad with fiber-rich vegetables such as:

- Bell peppers
- Tomatoes
- Carrots
- Broccoli and cauliflower
- Radishes
- Zucchini
- Cabbage

3. Legumes and Beans: Add cooked beans or legumes for an extra boost of fiber and protein. Popular salad options include:

- Chickpeas
- Black beans
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Edamame

4. Whole Grains: Incorporate cooked whole grains into your salad for added texture and fiber. Options include:

- Quinoa
- Brown rice
- Farro
- Bulgur
- Wheat berries

5. Seeds and Nuts: Sprinkle seeds and nuts on top of your salad to add crunch, flavor, and additional fiber. Try:

- Chia seeds
- Flaxseeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Pumpkin seeds
- Almonds
- Walnuts
- Pecans

6. Fruits: While fruits are not typically associated with salads, adding some can bring a sweet and refreshing touch while contributing fiber. Consider:

- Berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries)
- Apple or pear slices
- Dried fruits
- Grapes
- Orange segments
- Avocado

By combining many of these ingredients, you can create a variety of delicious and nutritious salad packed with fiber to support your digestive health and overall well-being.



7 Of The Fastest Healthy Dinners

When you're short on time but still want a healthy dinner, opting for quick and nutritious recipes is the way to go. Here are some ideas for the fastest healthy dinners from our test kitchen:

1. **Protein and Veggie Foil Pocket Dinner:** Place fish or chicken fillets on a aluminum foil, add your favorite vegetables like bell peppers, zucchini, and cherry tomatoes, season with herbs, lemon juice, and a drizzle of olive oil. Seal the foil to create a packet and bake or grill for about 15-20 minutes until the fish or chicken is cooked through and vegetables are tender.
2. **Stir-Fry:** Stir-fries are quick and easy to make. Simply sauté your choice of lean protein (such as chicken, tofu, or shrimp) with vegetables (like broccoli, bell peppers, snap peas, and carrots) in a hot pan with a bit of oil. Season with soy sauce, garlic, ginger, and a sprinkle of sesame seeds. Serve over brown rice or quinoa for a complete meal.
3. **Vegetable Omelette:** Whip up a vegetable omelette with eggs and your favorite veggies such as spinach, mushrooms, onions, and bell peppers. Add a sprinkle of herbs for extra flavor and serve with whole grain toast or a side salad.
4. **Grain Bowl:** Cook quinoa or brown rice according to package instructions and let it cool. Toss cooked quinoa with chopped vegetables (cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, bell peppers, etc.), beans (such as black beans or chickpeas), herbs, a squeeze of lemon juice, and a drizzle of olive oil. Top with feta cheese or avocado for extra flavor.
5. **Tuna or Chickpea Salad:** Mix canned tuna or chickpeas with diced celery, red onion, and a dollop of Greek yogurt or mayonnaise. Season with salt, pepper, and a squeeze of lemon juice. Serve over mixed greens or whole grain bread for a quick and satisfying meal.
6. **Pasta Primavera:** Cook whole wheat pasta according to package instructions. In a separate pan, sauté a mix of vegetables such as cherry tomatoes, zucchini, bell peppers, and broccoli in olive oil with garlic and herbs. Toss cooked pasta with the vegetables, a splash of pasta water, and a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese.
7. **Burrito Bowl:** Assemble a quick burrito bowl with cooked brown rice or quinoa, black beans, sautéed peppers and onions, salsa, avocado slices, and a dollop of Greek yogurt or sour cream. Customize with your favorite toppings and enjoy a nutritious and satisfying meal in minutes.

These are just a few ideas for fast and healthy dinners. Remember to keep your kitchen stocked with staple ingredients like eggs, tuna, frozen lean protein, salad, canned beans, whole grains, and frozen vegetables to make meal preparation even quicker.



Lipids and Cognitive Decline

We recently reviewed how serum lipids and CSF lipids shouldn't be treated the same when it comes to preventing dementia. This week we'll take a look at HDL, triglycerides, and other factors in protecting your precious noggin.

HDL and Triglycerides: Not a Simple Story

The numbers in a lipid profile to be concerned about do not include just total cholesterol and LDL. We recently reviewed an expert's panel on lipids and brain health. This week we'll focus on HDL and triglycerides.

We typically think of HDL (healthy cholesterol) as being protective against heart disease and dementia. However, Betsy Mills, PhD, Assistant Director of Aging and Alzheimer's Prevention at the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation suggests that HDL in the periphery is "very complicated," and the idea that HDL, as a measure on its own, is "necessarily 'good' isn't particularly informative."

HDL is "extremely heterogeneous, very diverse, has different lipid compositions, different classes, and different modifications." For example, similar to oxidized LDL, oxidized HDL is also "bad," which prevents HDL from its protective function.

Also, the [apolipoproteins](#) linked with HDL can impact the function of the HDL. "Our understanding of the HDL-like particles in the CNS is limited, but we do understand the *APOE4* link," Mills said. "It seems that the HDL-like particles containing *APOE2* or *APOE3* are larger and are more effective at transferring the lipids and cholesterol linked to them relative to *APOE4*-containing particles."

As HDL is more complicated than being "good", monitoring HDL doesn't give you the full picture. Mills believes this could be why research that infers high HDL levels might not have protective benefits and [might even be detrimental](#). This makes it tricky to evaluate population studies where various subclasses of HDL are not studied in depth.

Mills notes an additional confounding component. A big part of the risk for AD development seems to be associated with the relationships between LDL, HDL, and triglycerides. "When you look at each of these individually, you get a lot of heterogeneity, and it's unclear what's driving what," she said.

The beauty of observational studies is that they offer insights about which of these markers is linked with trends and risks of disease in specific groups versus others.

"For example, higher levels of triglycerides are associated with [cardiovascular risk more in women](#), relative to men," she said. And the triglyceride-to-HDL ratio seems "particularly robust" as a [measure of cardiovascular health and risk](#).

The understanding of the links with triglycerides can be "tricky" and "confusing" as results differ between studies so often, she notes. "There are differences between middle age and older age, which have to do with [age-related changes](#) in metabolism and lipid metabolism and not necessarily that the markers are indicating something different," she said.

Uma Naidoo, MD, director of nutritional and lifestyle psychiatry, at Massachusetts General Hospital, and director of nutritional psychiatry at MGH Academy notes that some studies have suggested that triglycerides may have a protective effect against dementia.

This may be because the brain "runs mostly on energy from burning triglycerides," suggested Naidoo, who is the author of the books *Calm Your Mind with Food* and *This Is Your Brain on Food*.

Naidoo also notes that "having higher levels of triglycerides may be linked with having overall healthier behaviors".

Mills claims that in middle-aged people, having high LDL-C and triglycerides are "often indicative of more atherogenic particles and risk to cardiovascular health, which is a generally negative trajectory." Things become more murky in older people as there are differences in how people clear some of these compounds, as well as their tissue clearance, transport, and nutrient status.

Currently, for older people, it appears that fluctuations in either direction— too high or too low are an indicator that some dysregulation is happening in the system.

She stressed that, in this "emerging area, looking at only one or two studies is confusing. But if you look at the spectrum of studies, you can see a pattern, which is that the regulation gets 'off,' as people age."

What Can Statins Do?

Mills speculated that there may be "neuroprotective benefits for some of the statins which appear to be related to cardiovascular benefits. But at this point, we don't have any clear data whether statins actually directly impact brain cholesterol, since it's a separate pool."

She thinks they could benefit the brain "by increasing blood flow and reducing narrowing of the arteries, but any direct impact on the brain is still under investigation."

Scott Hansen, PhD, associate professor, Department of Molecular Medicine, Herbert Wertheim UF Scripps Institute for Biomedical Innovation and Technology, Florida directed to research supporting statins taken at midlife seem to be cardioprotective and may also protect brain health while statins initiated in older age don't appear to possess the same benefits.

He infers that statins started later in life may not be as helpful because the Blood Brain Barrier (BBB) has been damaged by systemic inflammation in the periphery. Inflammation in the neurons and consequential neuronal destruction are already occurring.

"I think statins aren't going to fix that problem, so although lowering cholesterol can be helpful in some respects, it might be too late to affect cognition because the nerves have already died and won't grow back."

Can Diet Changes Help?

Naidoo notes that when assessing neurologic and psychiatric disease, "it's important to think about the 'long game' — how can we improve our blood and cardiovascular health earlier in life to help potentiate healthy aging?"

Naidoo's focus is on nourishing the gut microbiome and decreasing inflammation from a nutritional psychiatry point of view. "A healthy and balanced microbiome supports cognition, while the composition of gut bacteria is actually drastically different in patients with neurological diseases, such as AD."

She advises a nutrient-dense, anti-inflammatory diet, rich in probiotic foods including kimchi, miso, plain yogurt, and sauerkraut. In addition, "the quality and structure of our fatty acids may be relevant as well: Increasing our intake of polyunsaturated fatty acids and avoiding processed fats like trans fats and hydrogenated oils may benefit our overall brain health."

Naidoo also suggests extra-virgin olive oil for its health fat. Intake of this fat is linked to lower incidence of AD by way of encouraging autophagy, which she calls "our own process of "cellular cleanup."

Naidoo suggests clinicians should advise their patients to "focus on healthy nutrition and other lifestyle practices, such as exercise, outdoor time, good sleep, and stress reduction."

Mills also cites the importance of omega-3-fatty acids including docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) for brain health. "DHA is a major lipid component of neuronal membranes. Because of inefficiencies in metabolism with APOE4, people tend to metabolize more of the lipids on the membranes themselves, so they have higher lipid membrane turnover and a greater need to supplement. Supplementing particularly through diet, with foods such as fatty fish rich in omega-3, can help boost the levels to help keep neuronal membranes intact."

How Can Clinicians Help Their Patients?

Despite the relationship between lipids and dementia, Mills notes it's not exactly clear what an individual's lipid levels mean. It's a complex situation that's growing and changing, so the clinical application isn't yet clear.

One suggestion she offers is for clinicians to track lipid levels over time. If you follow a patient and see an increase or decrease [in lipid levels], that can be informative." Looking at ratios of lipids might be more useful than looking only at a change in a single measure. "If you see trends in a variety of measures that track with one another, it might be more of a sign that something is potentially wrong."

Lifestyle interventions are certainly advised but medication is a personal clinical decision an individual should make depending on their risk factors and the direction their lipids are going.

Below are some takeaways in reducing risk of dementia.

- Get a baseline lipid panel and recheck them as needed according to your healthcare provider's advice.
- Increase omega-3-fats in your diet with fatty fish twice per week or vegan sources such as chia seeds, flaxseed, or walnuts. Talk to your doctor or dietitian to see if supplements are appropriate.
- Maintain physical activity to keep your weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels in healthy ranges.
- Reduce ultra-processed foods including fast food, sugary beverages, and high-fat, high-sugar snacks. These have been linked with higher rates of cognitive decline. 2
- Keep blood sugar in good control if you have insulin resistance, prediabetes or diabetes. Diabetes is an independent risk factor for cognitive decline. 3
- Include plenty of high-fiber foods in your diet to maintain a healthy gut microbiome, which may impact the brain-gut axis. 4

By Lisa Andrews, MEd, RD, LD

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10582 King Street, Westminster, CO 80031
Phone: 800-462-2352 Fax: 800-433-7435
<https://foodandhealth.com>

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