



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

April-May 2009

Layne A. Langley  
Extension Agent  
Family Nutrition  
Program and  
Family & Consumer  
Sciences

## **Earth Day April 22**

Earth Day is a time to celebrate gains we have made and create new visions to accelerate environmental progress. Earth Day is a time to unite around our new actions. Earth Day and every day is a time to act in protecting our planet. What are you doing to **save energy**? Are you turning off appliances and lights when you leave the room? Are you using the microwave to cook small meals? Are you replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL)?

Are you **using less water** by taking shorter showers instead of tub baths? Are you turning off the faucet while shaving or brushing teeth? When washing clothes, do you wash only full loads of laundry? Have you repaired any leaks? (A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons of water a day.)

Have you thought about **practicing the three R's...Reduce/Reuse/Recycle**? Are you buying permanent items instead of disposables? Are you buying products with less packaging? Have you started reusing grocery bags as trash bags? Are you using cloth napkins or towels? Are you participating in a recycling program? Have you thought about composting food scraps, grass, and other yard clippings?

When it comes to the kitchen, what are you doing to save the planet? Why not try these 10 Tips for Going Green in the Kitchen?

### **10 Easy Tips for Going Green in the Kitchen**

- 1. Ditch the bottles.** Bottled water is pricey and uses a lot of fuel to transport, as well as to make and store the bottles. Use what comes out of your tap instead. Get a good filter to boost its purity. You can filter your water for drinking and cooking.
- 2. Compost leftovers.** Composting leftovers will ease the burden on the landfill, give you great soil, and keep your kitchen waste basket from smelling.
- 3. Dispose of disposables.** Instead of relying on single-use containers, get real dishes, and wash them. The resources saved will really add up!
- 4. Bring your own bags.** Since plastic and paper bags take resources to produce and distribute and end up as litter, transport groceries in reusable tote bags or canvas produce sacks.



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

5. **Use your appliances wisely.** Unplug unused devices and pick Energy Star when it's time to replace. Fill empty spaces in your refrigerator or freezer with crumpled newspapers or water bottles. It improves cooling and saves electricity and money.
6. **Cook!** Preparing foods from scratch is more time consuming but often less costly than purchasing ready-made meals. Ready-made meals are only environmentally friendly if they are not frozen or over-packaged. Plan meals ahead of time so you aren't scrambling to pick up something convenient, which is likely to be less healthy and wrapped in more packaging. You can also save electricity and/or gas by cooking for a short time. Outdoor grills take less energy than your stove and keep the heat out of the house, reducing costly strain on your AC. You can also conserve water by using one pot.
7. **Clean greener.** Turn off the tap while scrubbing dishes and only run a full dishwasher. Stock the pantry with the best natural cleaners: baking soda, lemon juice, white vinegar, and club soda.
8. **Use cast iron pots and pans instead of nonstick.** Scour cast-iron pans with salt to preserve seasoning. In two to five minutes on a conventional stovetop, cookware coated with Teflon and other non-stick surfaces can exceed temperatures at which the coating breaks apart and emits toxic particles and gases linked to an unknown number of human illnesses.
9. **Go easy on processed, canned, or fast foods and never microwave plastic to avoid chemicals leaching into food.** The USDA warns against microwaving in single-use containers not intended for that purpose, such as take-out platters and margarine tubs, which may warp or melt, giving possibly harmful chemicals in plastic a chance to taint food. Those containers with "microwave-safe" labels shouldn't melt, but the label is no guarantee that small amounts of chemicals won't migrate during heating or storage.
10. **Eat organic.** Cut out the additives and chemicals. Check the numbered stickers on fruits and vegetables. If they start with the #9, your produce is organic, meaning it is grown pesticide-free.

*Sources: The Daily Green, Environmental Working Group, Food Network, Tree Hugger, and U.S. Government Portal.*



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

## **LSU AgCenter Nutritionist Offers Advice for Cancer Control Month**

"It's never too late to begin healthy eating and exercise habits," says LSU AgCenter nutritionist Dr. Beth Reames. The nutritionist reflects on National Cancer Control Month observed during April.

According to the American Cancer Society, about one-third of the 500,000 cancer deaths in the United States each year occur from dietary factors. Another third occur from cigarette smoking.

"Although genetics is a factor in the development of cancer, factors such as cigarette smoking, dietary choices and physical activity can change the risk of cancer at all stages of its development," Reames says, adding, "Studies show the introduction of healthful diet and exercise practices at any time from childhood to old age can promote health and reduce cancer risk."

Many dietary factors can affect cancer risk: certain foods, food preparation methods, portion sizes, food variety and overall caloric balance. More than 200 previous studies indicate that a diet high in fruits and vegetables can lower cancer risk. "Americans often have unhealthy eating habits," Reames notes. In the past few decades, Americans have increased calories while reducing physical activity. This phenomenon has occurred in part because of increased eating of food outside the home, more sedentary lifestyle patterns and the advertising and promotion of high calorie foods.

The LSU AgCenter nutritionist offers these dietary suggestions to decrease cancer risk:

1. Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Eat other foods from plant sources, such as breads, cereals, grain products, rice, pasta or beans several times each day.
2. Limit your intake of high fat meats and dairy products.
3. Be physically active, at least moderately active for 30 minutes or more on most days of the week.
4. Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
5. Limit consumption of alcoholic beverages, if you drink at all.

The American Institute of Cancer Research recommends eating a healthy diet, exercising and maintaining a healthy weight to reduce cancer risk by 30 percent.

*Source: Beth Reames (225) 578-3329, or [breames@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:breames@agcenter.lsu.edu)*



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

## **When you garden, you GROW!**

Every April communities, organizations, and individuals nationwide celebrate gardening during National Garden Month. Gardeners know, and research confirms, that nurturing plants is good for us: attitudes toward health and nutrition improve, kids perform better at school, and community spirit grows. Join the celebration and help to make America a greener, healthier, more livable place!

### **Get It Growing: Healthy Gardening**

Gardening is a well-documented and beneficial form of exercise. It contributes to a healthy lifestyle. But the strenuous activities also can cause problems as well, especially for those of us who get very little exercise sitting at desks (and in front of TVs) during the week, only to get out and overdo it on the weekend. Sore muscles, aching backs, blisters and even sprains are common complaints of the weekend gardener.

The following information provides tips for maintaining your most important gardening tool – your body.

#### **Use proper body positioning to minimize muscle fatigue and soreness.**

- Before you begin gardening, take a few minutes to stretch, which will help minimize muscle soreness and the risk of tendonitis.
- Let your general daily physical activity level serve as your guide for how long you can garden.
- Even if you do not feel fatigued, take a break for a few minutes every half hour.
- Change gardening tasks frequently. For example, if you are weeding and using the small muscles of your hands, rotate this task with watering, hoeing or trimming shrubs where you are using larger muscles in a standing position.
- Bend at the knees and hips, not your back, to lift and hold objects. Maintain a firm grip with both hands.
- Use an erect body posture when working with long-handled garden tools such as hoes, spades and rakes.
- When it is necessary to work above shoulder level, perform the task for five minutes or less, then take a break or perform another activity before continuing.
- Keep the elbows partially bent while gardening, especially when doing resistive activities requiring elbow strength, like pushing.
- Avoid twisting the forearms back and forth on a repetitive basis (for example, pulling weeds by twisting the forearm palm up and then palm down).

So, take care of yourself just as you take care of your garden. After all, we only have one body, and it needs to last us as long as we have gardens to tend.

Source: Dan Gill (225) 578-2222, or [dgill@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:dgill@agcenter.lsu.edu)



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

## **Pecans are Tasty Way to Health**

Enjoy a guilt-free celebration in April by observing National Pecan Month with one of Louisiana's locally grown commodities. You'll be helping the state's economy and treating yourself to a nutrient-rich food.

LSU AgCenter nutritionist Dr. Beth Reames says pecans and other nuts contain antioxidants and phytochemicals that act like antioxidants, and these may have a protective effect against cancer, heart disease and neurological disease such as Alzheimer's. A bonus for pecans, however, is that they have more antioxidant capacity than walnuts, hazelnuts, pistachios, almonds, peanuts and cashews, according to a 2004 study in the *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry*.

Reames notes that pecans are rich in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, which are considered to be heart-healthy fats. Nearly 60 percent of the fats in pecans are monounsaturated and another 30 percent are polyunsaturated, with very little saturated fat and no trans fat.

Pecans also contain plant sterols, which are important parts of plant cell membranes. Research has shown that including plant sterols in the diet may lower blood cholesterol levels by blocking absorption of cholesterol in the intestine.

In 2003, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the following qualified health claim for nuts: "Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, such as pecans, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease." A 1 1/2-ounce serving of nuts is about one-third of a cup, or a small handful, Reames says.

Although nuts are high in fat and energy, most research suggests that they do not lead to weight gain. A review of pecan and other nut research suggests that nuts may aid in weight loss and maintenance by increasing metabolic rates and enhancing satiety. Pecans are part of the My Pyramid Meat & Beans group. They are high in fiber and contain more than 19 vitamins and minerals – including vitamin A, vitamin E, folic acid, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, several B vitamins and zinc. Pecans contain no cholesterol and are naturally sodium-free.

*Source: Beth Reames (225) 578-3929 or [breames@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:breames@agcenter.lsu.edu)*

Let's make pecans the new "almonds" of the South!

A Pecan Grafting Class will be offered in Pointe Coupee Parish in April. For more details, contact the Pointe Coupee Extension Office at 225/638-5533.



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

## **Vegetable of the Month for May: Potato**



Potatoes were introduced to North America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century via Irish immigrants, however their native home is South America. Potatoes were first cultivated in the Andes Mountains over 7,000 years ago. Many kinds of potatoes are seen in restaurants, grocery stores, and even homes today, but the most common of these are the russet, round white, and the red potato. Potatoes are tough and durable, store well, and have an impressive nutritional content including being a rich source of fiber, potassium and vitamin C. Like other fruits and vegetables, potatoes are a low calorie food and are free of fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Keep in mind, however, that the leaves and stems of a potato plant are poisonous and may cause illness when ingested.

Potatoes have been a staple in the diets of Americans for over 300 years, but they have been sustaining populations worldwide for much longer.

### **Availability, Selection, and Storage**

Potatoes are grown across the United States and are available year round. Store potatoes in a cool, dry place. Sunlight can cause the skin to turn green; if this occurs the skin must then be peeled off before consuming. Most of the nutrients are contained right below the skin, so avoid peeling when possible. Besides fresh potatoes, other forms are often available as well, including

- Refrigerated pre-cut fresh potatoes
- Frozen potatoes
- Canned potatoes
- Dehydrated potatoes

When choosing potatoes, be sure they are firm, smooth, and the color they are supposed to be. Softness, a green tinge, or wrinkly skin may indicate a potato that is past its prime.



# Mission: Nutrition

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

## Preparation

Potatoes should be thoroughly washed with clean tap water and scrubbed lightly before preparation. Any sprouts or eyes growing from the potato should be cut out. Common methods of preparation include: boiling, baking, microwaving, mashing, frying, and grilling. Consuming baked and grilled potatoes with the skin left on provides the most nutrients.

### Red Potato

Serving Size: 1/2 cup, cooked (85g)

Amounts Per Serving	% Daily Value
Calories 70	
Calories from Fat 0	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 5mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A	0%
Vitamin C	30%
Calcium	0%
Iron	4%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

### Russet Potato

Serving Size: 1 med. potato, baked (173g)

Amounts Per Serving	% Daily Value
Calories 160	
Calories from Fat 0	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 15mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	12%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Sugars 2g	
Protein 4g	
Vitamin A	0%
Vitamin C	30%
Calcium	2%
Iron	10%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

*Sources: Fruits & Veggies Matter and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

## **Which Came First... The Chicken or the Egg?**

Whichever answer you gave, it is okay. A chicken can't be born without a chicken egg and a chicken egg can't be laid without a chicken. Both chicken and eggs are important!

Did you know that May is National Egg Month? And, more eggs are sold in American during the Easter season- usually in April- than at any other time of year. Starting in May and running through the summer, eggs are usually an even better bargain than they are the rest of the year.

### **Egg Facts**

1 large egg provides:

75 calories

4.97g total fat

1.55g saturated fat

6.29g protein

166mg lutein & zaxanthin

70mg sodium

26mg calcium

Should you hard- boil eggs? No. Boiling makes eggs tough and rubbery. If you cook eggs too long or use heat that is too high, the eggs can turn green. Next time you think about boiling an egg, try hard- cooking them using the following steps:

1. Put eggs in one layer on the bottom of a pan. Run water into the pan until the water is one inch over the eggs. Place pan over a medium- high heat burner.
2. Let the water come to a boil. Put lid on pan when water is boiling. Move the pan onto a cold burner. Set timer for 15 minutes for large- sized eggs, 12 minutes for medium- sized eggs, and 18 minutes for extra large- sized eggs.
3. Put the pan in the sink when the time is over. Run cold water into the pan until eggs are cool. Be sure to use all the cooked eggs before a week is over.

With Easter around the corner, many families will be decorating eggs for their egg hunt. If you plan to be one of those, you will want to follow some food safety rules.



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

You will need to decide if you will be eating the eggs later. If not, you can use any decorating materials you want and display the eggs anywhere for as long as you like.

However, if you do plan to eat the eggs, follow these rules:

- Wash your hands between all steps of cooking, cooling, dyeing, and decorating
- Be sure all the decorating materials you use are food safe
- Keep the eggs refrigerated as much as possible
- Dye the eggs in water warmer than the eggs so they don't absorb the dye water
- If you hide the decorated eggs, put them where they won't come in contact with pets, other animals or birds, or lawn chemicals
- After the hidden eggs have been found, throw out any with cracks or that have been out at room temperature for more than two hours.

Remember, eat un-cracked, refrigerated hard-cooked eggs within a week of cooking them.

*Source: American Egg Board*

## **Strawberry Season**

When looking for a sweet treat, why not consider Louisiana strawberries. Louisiana strawberries are available from March through May. They are a healthy fruit, low in fat and calories. Strawberries are also packed with vitamin C, folate, potassium, and antioxidants. One cup of strawberries has 45 calories and 84mg of vitamin C. They are naturally high in fiber (3.8g fiber in one cup) and have 1/2 cup more fiber than a slice of whole-wheat bread. When purchasing strawberries, look for full red color, bright luster, firm, and a plump flesh. Select fully ripened strawberries since they do not ripen after picked. Also, look for bright green caps.

After returning from the market, remove them from their storage container. Leave the caps on, sort, and spread in a flat container and store in the refrigerator immediately. When you are ready to use them, wash gently.

For a copy of the LSU AgCenter publication "It's Strawberry Time", contact the WBR Extension Service at 225/336-2416.



# **Mission: Nutrition**

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

## **May is National High Blood Pressure Month**

Did you know 1 in 3 U.S. adults or 73 million people have high blood pressure? High blood pressure or hypertension is often called the “silent killer” with 1/3 unaware of it. Here are more startling facts about high blood pressure: more than 40% of African-Americans and about 2/3 of those over the age 65 have high blood pressure.

Untreated high blood pressure can cause heart failure, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke, and vision problems or blindness. If your blood pressure reading is 140/90 mmHg or higher you have high blood pressure. A blood pressure reading below 120/80 mmHg is considered normal. People whose parents or other close blood relatives have high blood pressure are more likely to develop it.

Hypertension damages body tissues and vital organs. It makes your heart work harder than it should to pump blood. If the pressure isn't controlled, your heart enlarges and arteries become scarred, hardened and less elastic. Your heart and arteries may not be able to pump blood properly leading to congestive heart failure (backup of fluid into the lungs). High blood pressure can also damage the inner linings of arteries which is a major cause of heart attack and stroke. This damage to the arteries may also cause kidney disease, vision loss, and shrinkage of the brain, leading to memory loss and damage to the thinking processes.

Your blood pressure is constantly changing depending on how hard your heart is working. The readings also depend on physical activity, emotions, and other factors.

By treating high blood pressure, you can help prevent a stroke, heart attack, heart failure, or kidney failure. Below are some tips you can do now:

- Lose weight if you're overweight. Reduce the strain on your heart. Eat a healthy diet low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and salt. Use the [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) site for recommendations for healthy eating. Limit your salt/sodium intake to 2,300 mg which is about 1 teaspoon salt. Learn to cook with herbs or salt substitutes.



# Mission: Nutrition

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE

- Be more physically active. Get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week.
- Limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day for women or two drinks a day for men.
- Follow your doctor's instructions for taking medication.
- Quit smoking.

Know what your blood pressure should be and work to keep it at that level.

*Sources: American Heart Association and LSU AgCenter*

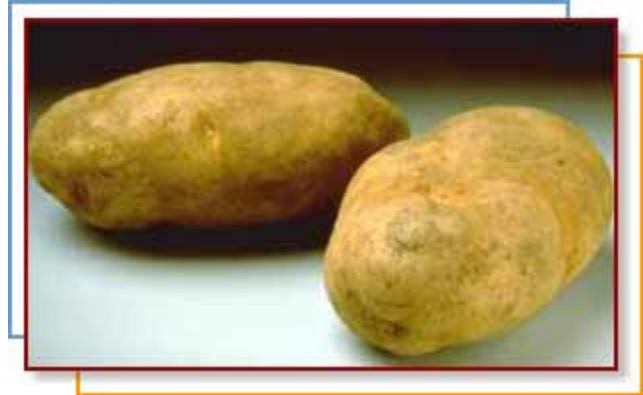
## Broccoli Baked Potatoes

Makes 6 servings (serving size 1 potato)  
Each serving equals 1 1/4 cups of fruit or vegetables

Source: Produce for Better Health

### Ingredients

6 medium Idaho potatoes  
3 stalks broccoli  
1/4 cup skim milk  
1 cup shredded low fat Cheddar cheese  
1/8 tsp pepper



Scrub potatoes. Make shallow slits around the middle as if you were cutting the potatoes in half lengthwise. Bake until done, 30 to 60 minutes, depending on size. Peel broccoli stems. Steam whole stalks just until tender and chop finely. Carefully slice the potatoes in half and scoop the insides into a bowl with the broccoli. Add the milk, 3/4 cup cheese and pepper. Mash together until the mixture is pale green with dark green flecks. Heap into the potato jackets and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Return in oven to heat through (about 15 minutes). Oven: 350°F. Time: 30 to 60 minutes; 15 minutes to melt cheese or to reheat.

Nutritional analysis per serving (1 potato): Calories 346, Protein 24g, Fat 7g, Calories From Fat 17%, Cholesterol 20mg, Carbohydrates 44g, Fiber 14g, Sodium 327mg.

LSU AgCenter  
Cooperative Extension Service  
West Baton Rouge Parish  
210 Turner Road  
Port Allen, LA 70767



# ***Mission: Nutrition***

IBERVILLE • POINTE COUPEE • WEST BATON ROUGE



Visit our Web site:  
[www.lsuagcenter.com](http://www.lsuagcenter.com)

*For additional information or comments, contact:*

Layne A. Langley, Agent  
Family Nutrition Program and Family & Consumer Sciences  
Cooperative Extension Service  
West Baton Rouge Parish  
210 Turner Road  
Port Allen, Louisiana 70767  
Office: 225-336-2416  
[llangley@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:llangley@agcenter.lsu.edu)