Message from Project Coordinator

Aloha! Thank you for your continued support for the Hawaii Child Care Nutrition Program (HCCNP), a project funded by the Hawaii Department of Human Services.

This newsletter includes a few helpful tips on reading sugar content on beverage labels, thawing food safely, and dealing with picky eaters. As always, we included a healthy recipe for you to try. Please let me know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. I can be reached via e-mail at hccnp@hawaii.edu or at (808) 956-4124. We look forward to working together, for the health and safety of our children.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Kanechika
Project Coordinator,
Hawaii Child Care Nutrition Program

Do You Know - How Much Sugar is in Your Drink?

Have you ever wondered how much sugar is in your drink? If you ever attempted to figure out how much sugar you’re drinking, you might have discovered that it is quite a challenge to interpret the quantity in an understandable household measure. Nutrition labels identify how much sugar is in a product in a unit called “grams.” But how much is 1 gram of sugar? Take a look at the following example.

This label is from a carton of lowfat chocolate milk. To determine how much sugar is in the milk, let’s first look at the serving size located at the very top of the nutrition label. This carton indicates “1 Cup” as the serving size.

If you are planning to drink 1 cup of the chocolate milk, then you will consume all of the nutrients listed on the nutrition label, including 150 calories, 24 grams of sugar, etc. However, if you plan to drink more or less than 1 cup, then you will have to adjust all the nutrient values accordingly to accurately determine how much you will be consuming. For example - 2 cups of chocolate milk will provide you with 300 calories (150 calories x 2), 48 grams of sugar (24 grams x 2), etc.

For this example, imagine that you will drink 1 cup of this chocolate milk. That will provide you with 24 grams of sugar. To put that into perspective, consider that:

4 grams of sugar = 1 teaspoon of sugar

So how many teaspoons is 24 grams of sugar equivalent to? Let’s do the math!

24 grams of sugar ÷ 4 grams / teaspoon = 6 teaspoons of sugar!

The next time you open a carton of flavored milk, can of juice, soda or any bottled beverage, use this calculation to find out how much sugar you’ll be consuming! Rethink your drink as you compare beverages. Perhaps water or lowfat milk will do just fine quenching your thirst!
Food Safety Tip: Defrosting Food Safely

True OR False? It is safe to thaw frozen food on the counter at room temperature.

As hard as it might be to believe, the correct answer is FALSE. Even though the center of the food may be frozen as it thaws on the counter, the outer layer of the food may eventually reach the “Danger Zone” between 40 and 140°F, where bacteria can multiply to potentially unsafe levels. There are only 3 safe ways to thaw your food:

Refrigerator Thawing:
This is the safest method for thawing food, but it requires planning. Small items, about a pound in weight might take a day to thaw, while larger items, might take 24 hours for every 5 pounds of weight. Food thawed in the refrigerator can be re-frozen without cooking, however, there may be some loss in quality.

Cold Water Thawing:
This method is faster, but the food must be cooked immediately after thawing. Put the food in a leak-proof package, and submerge in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes.

Microwave Thawing:
Like with the cold water method, food thawed in the microwave must be cooked immediately, as some parts of the food may become warm and cook during the thawing process. Use the “defrost” or “low” setting on your microwave.

If you don’t have enough time to thaw frozen food, you can cook food from a frozen state safely. However, the cooking process will take slightly longer.


References:

Holiday Tip: Have a “Heart-Healthy” Valentine’s Day

Valentine’s Day is right around the corner! Help your children have a “heart-healthy” day by considering some of these tips:

- if you plan to give away “treats” - consider giving mini packages of dried fruit or whole fruit instead of the traditional candy or chocolate
  - have “heart-healthy” snacks that include fruits, vegetables, lowfat milk and whole grains
  - incorporate activities that tie in to the special day - such as making cards or drawing pictures for their family or friends
  - consider engaging everyone in “heart-healthy” activities, such as playing tag, dancing, walking, etc.
Feeding Tip: Picky Eating

“Sarah refuses to drink milk!”
“Joey will only eat pizza!”

Does this sound familiar? If so, don’t fret! Picky eating is very common for young children. It is just another step in the process of growing up and is usually a temporary phase. Try these tips when handling picky eaters to avoid stressful battles at the dining table:

- **NEVER be a short order cook!** Aside from accommodations for special needs, like allergies, everyone should be offered the same food. Remember—YOU are responsible for planning the menu. It is ok if children choose not to eat certain foods—they’ll make up for it at a later meal or day. Be consistent in setting appropriate limits.

- **Offer choices.** Instead of serving peas, ask them to choose what they would like: peas, green beans OR carrots.

- **Get them involved.** Have them select a fruit or veggie they would like to try or give them age-appropriate tasks to help you prepare the meal or snack. Personal involvement may encourage them to eat what is served.

- **Role model.** Children learn from watching their parents, and often end up copying what they do. Let them see you enjoying healthy foods!

- **Create a positive atmosphere.** All foods should be created equal. Never use food as a reward or punishment. For example, saying, “No cookie until you finish your beets,” may teach them that some foods are more desirable than others.

For more information and helpful tips on handling picky eaters, browse the [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) website:

www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/picky-eaters.html

Free Menu Reviews!

Would you like to assure your children’s parents that the meals and snacks you serve are balanced and nutritious?

If your program is not enrolled in the USDA Child and Adult Care food program and you are interested in getting your menus reviewed free of charge, please contact Kimberly at hccnp@hawaii.edu or at (808) 956-4124. Our program can assist you and provide suggestions as you create or work to improve your menu.

Our website has menu planning templates and helpful guides on recommended portions for young children. Feel free to browse our many menu planning resources if you need some tips or ideas:

www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/NEW/HCCNP/f ccp.htm

Mailing List: Going Green!

Thanks to those who signed up to be on our e-mail listserv!

If you are interested in getting our newsletter via e-mail instead of traditional mail, please e-mail Kim at hccnp@hawaii.edu and provide your name and mailing address. You can help to conserve our limited resources!
Recipe: Stew

Number of Servings: 10

Ingredients:
- 1 small round onion
- 1-2 ribs celery
- 4 medium carrots
- 4 medium potatoes
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 pounds lean meat
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1/2—1 teaspoon salt
- 1-2 bay leaves
- Water to cover

 Thickening:
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 cup water

Directions:
1. CHOP onion, celery, carrots & potatoes. SET aside.
2. CRUSH garlic.
3. CHOP meat into bite-sized pieces.
4. In a large pot, FRY garlic & meat. STIR.
5. ADD tomato sauce, salt, bay leaf & water to cover. STIR.
6. COVER & SIMMER for 1-2 hours or until meat is tender. Liquid needs to cover meat. ADD water as necessary.
7. ADD onions, celery, carrots & potatoes. STIR.
8. SIMMER for 10-15 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
9. MIX thickening ingredients & ADD to stew. STIR.
10. SIMMER & STIR until stew thickens.

Fun Veggie Facts—Eggplant!

Eggplants come in a wide variety of shapes and colors. Some are as small as an egg, others are round, or long and slender. They can be deep purple, green, white or cream colored.

Seasonality: Eggplants are available year-round in Hawaii, but its peak season is right around the corner, starting in March, running through June.

Buying: When picking or shopping for eggplant, choose ones that are firm and heavy. The skin should be smooth and evenly colored.

Storing: Store in a perforated plastic bag in fridge for up to a week.

Preparing: The flesh of eggplant discolors quickly when cut, so cook it soon after cutting.

Enjoy eggplant in all sorts of different dishes—in pasta or casseroles, in stir-fry dishes, pureed as a spread and more! Check out this website for different ways to enjoy eggplant:
www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/top-10-ways-to-enjoy-eggplants

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