

Study says apple skin may combat onset of Type 2 diabetes

A new study conducted at the University of Massachusetts found that apples may combat the onset of Type 2 diabetes. The high concentration of antioxidants and other natural compounds found in apples, particularly in the skin, are believed to help in the early stages of diabetes by inhibiting the glycemic load of soluble sugars and starch.

During the two-year study, researcher Kalidas Shetty evaluated 10 varieties of apples for their potential in managing Type 2 diabetes. Though all varieties contained soluble phenolics to fight diabetes, Red Delicious and Honeycrisp apples contained between 10 to 15 percent higher levels of phenolics than the other varieties studied.

According to the American Diabetes Association, 23.6 million adults and children were living with diabetes in 2007, which is equal to about 7.8 percent of the population. An additional 1.6 million new cases were diagnosed that year, while 57 million people were on the verge of developing diabetes.

Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes, accounting for 90 to 95 percent of all cases. People with Type 2 either do not produce enough insulin, or the body's cells ignore the insulin. This causes glucose to build up in the blood (rather than going into cells) and can cause the body's cells to become starved for energy. Generally, Type 2 diabetes can be managed through diet, exercise and when necessary, medication.

In addition to helping combat the onset of Type 2 diabetes, Shetty suggests that a diet rich in soluble phenolics may also increase life expectancy.

For instance, people living in Okinawa, Japan consume an average of 600 to 800 milligrams of phenolics per day and average longer lifespans than anyone else in the world. On the other hand, the average per capita intake of phenolics in the U.S. is less than 50 milligrams per day. One large apple contains between 40 and 50 milligrams of phenolics, which means eating just one apple a day could significantly boost overall health in the long-term.

The U-Mass study adds to an array of existing research that links increased apple consumption to a reduced onset of cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, and other chronic diseases. In addition to eating apples regularly, people should strive to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

Sources:

Capital Press. "Study: Apple skin fights diabetes" D. Wheat. February 2010.
<http://www.capitalpress.com/print/djw-applediabetes-021210>

American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/>

Guide to understanding food expiration dates



Stemilt's AppleSweets sliced apples have a use-by date

We've all been there. You buy something at the store, go to use it a few days later, and the date on the package shows the product shouldn't be used.

Or should it? From perishable products to canned goods, many manufacturers voluntarily apply dates to the foods they produce. Though it's great that this information is available, the terminology used on packaging can often be confusing and lead you to throw something out that may still be edible.

To help you make decisions like these in the future, the experts at WebMD uncovered what the various terms used to describe the lifespan of food products actually mean:

Expiration Date: this term refers to the last date a food should be eaten or used. Infant formula and certain baby foods are the only food products required by federal law to have an expiration date on the package.

"Sell By" Date: tells the store how long to display the product for sale, and generally refers to freshness, taste and product consistency. Purchase products before this date so that you have time to enjoy it.

"Best if Used By" Date: the date recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase by or safety date.

"Guaranteed Fresh" Date: a term that typically refers to bakery items to indicate freshness. The item will still be edible after that date, but may not be at peak freshness.

"Use By" Date: This is the last date recommended for the use of the product for best quality. The date is determined by the manufacturer. For instance, Stemilt puts a use-by date on the packaging for all AppleSweets sliced apple products.

"Pack" Date: a date typically found on canned and packaged goods. It doesn't tell you much about how long the item will last, rather tells you when it was packed.

Along with using the manufacturer's date to determine whether or not a particular item is edible, WebMD recommends that you label all foods (even canned goods) with your own date of purchase. That way, you'll never have to question the lifespan of a certain product.

Source:

WebMD. "Do food expiration dates really matter?" S. Lawrence. March 2010.
<http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/guide/do-food-expiration-dates-matter>

Nutrition Roundup from Stemilt Growers

10 Ways to Go Green for Earth Day

Earth Day is April 22nd and there's no better way to celebrate than by 'going green' for the day! We've put together a list of 10 things you can do to help protect the environment (on Earth Day or every day!):

1. Carpool to Work: Organize an Earth Day carpool with co-workers who live nearby. For those with a long commute, take mass transit. For those close by, start your day a little earlier and bike to work!

2. Skip the Bottled Water: Swap out your bottled water for an environmentally-friendly reusable water bottle.

3. Go Organic: Shop for organic products on or around April 22nd. Not only will you be supporting organic producers, but you also may save a few bucks, as many retailers put organics on sale during the annual Earth Day celebration.

4. Wash Clothes in Cold Water: Almost 90% of the energy used to wash clothes is used to heat the water. Save money and energy with this tip!

5. Turn Off the Lights: Make it a point to turn off lights when you leave a room. Also,

keep your curtains open and enjoy natural light as long as possible.

6. Exercise Outdoors: If the weather is right, give the treadmill a rest and take your workout routine outdoors. Pick up trash along your way for extra 'green' points!

7. Power Down Your Computer: Make powering down part of your nightly routine. Also, put your computer to 'sleep' before break or lunch - this act alone reduces energy use by 60-70%.

8. Keep Car Tires Inflated: Cars with inflated tires will go more miles on less gas. Additionally, a well-tuned car uses 9% less gas than a poorly tuned car.

9. Recycle Glass: Glass takes years to decompose, making recycling your greenest option. The energy saved from recycling one glass bottle will light a 100-watt light bulb for four hours.

10. Green Your Workspace: Bring a potted plant (or two!) to work. Not only will it brighten up your space, but also helps reduce indoor air pollution. Spider plants, jade plants, and the peace lily are fairly low-maintenance.

Become a Stemilt fan & follower!

Want to receive fruit nutrition information, recipes and shopping tips as soon as they are available? Become our Facebook fan and follow us on Twitter and we'll provide you with just that!

Stemilt recently joined these social sites in order to provide consumers like you with timely information about our fresh fruit products. Look for regular updates from the field, as well as plenty of tips on including fresh fruit in your daily diet.

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Stemilt Apple Smiles

Quick, easy and fun snack recipe that is sure to please children of all ages. The best part? It gets kids to eat a serving (or two) of fresh fruit!



Nutrition Information (per serving):

58 calories, 4 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 37 mg sodium, 4 g carbohydrate, 1 g dietary fiber, 3 g sugar

INGREDIENTS

1 pound of peeled Stemilt apples, any variety (or try Stemilt's Applesweets sliced apples)

½ cup smooth peanut butter

PROCEDURE

Spread a small amount of peanut butter between two apple slices for a yummy, healthy snack that looks as good as it tastes!

Crock Pot Apple Butter

Apple butter is delicious served on warm biscuits, or fills in nicely for syrup over pancakes or waffles. Freeze up extra to give as gifts!

INGREDIENTS

4 quarts chopped, but unpeeled tart Stemilt apples (Granny Smith is a great choice)

2 ¾ TSP cinnamon

¼ TSP ground cloves

1/8 TSP salt



PROCEDURE

Place apples into a large crock pot. Combine the remaining ingredients and drizzle over the apples. Cover and cook on high 2-3 hours, stirring well with a large spoon every hour or so. Reduce heat to low and cook 10-12 hours longer until butter becomes thick and dark in color. Stir occasionally. Cool when the butter is finished and pour into freezer-safe containers to store. This apple butter recipe will keep in the freezer for up to one year.