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What's Happening *this Month:*

- * Make sure to download the Baritastic app and join using our Capital Health code (76777). Use the app to log your food and get recommendations from your dietitian, be reminded of program events and updates, and access recipes!
- * Our September Support Group for post-weight loss surgery patients is Tuesday, September 22 from 5 – 6 p.m. This support group will be hosted virtually, so please check our online support group for the link to access, or message the dietitian at tbalestrieri@capitalhealth.org to receive the link.
- * If you had surgery and are not a member of our Post-Op Online Support Group, the Capital D.R.E.A.M. Team, please e-mail [Theresa Balestrieri](mailto:Theresa.Balestrieri@capitalhealth.org) at tbalestrieri@capitalhealth.org so she can e-mail you the link and accept your request. This is a great way to obtain support from our program and other post-op patients in our program right at your fingertips, 24/7!
- * Is someone in your life thinking about weight loss surgery? Attend Dr. Chung's information session held virtually on Wednesday, September 23 from 6 – 7 p.m. To register, call our office to speak to Amy at 609.537.6777.
- * For individuals interested in weight loss without surgery, or for bariatric patients experiencing weight regain, try our Medical Weight Loss Program, featuring great tasting Robard's New Direction Products! Weekly visits with our dietitians help you develop skills to lose weight (and keep it off) and customize the meal replacement plan to meet your needs! Call our office at 609.537.6777 to schedule your first appointment with Dr. Chung.

MOVING FORWARD WITH PLANTS

by Elizabeth George, Dietitian at
Capital Health Metabolic & Weight Loss Center

When we think of protein, our brains tend to jump to foods like chicken, steak or fish, but did you know you can maintain adequate protein intake following a plant-based diet? It's true, but adopting a plant-based lifestyle doesn't always mean following a strict vegan or vegetarian diet. Going plant-based can be as simple as featuring vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, legumes and fruits as the main characters of our meals. Foods like meats, dairy products, and eggs can still be included, but just in smaller quantities.

Many plant-based protein options also provide other important macronutrients and micronutrients. By consuming more plant-based sources of protein, we can increase our intake of vitamins,

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MOVING FORWARD WITH PLANTS *continued*

minerals, and fiber. An increase in fiber can help maintain regularity, improve lab work, and aid in weight loss by keeping hunger at bay!

A VARIETY OF OPTIONS

- A plant-based diet isn't limited to just vegetables. Adding sunflower seeds to a salad, quinoa to a bean chili, or tofu to a stir fry are all great ways to incorporate protein into your meals without meat!
- Most plant-based protein comes from nuts, beans, and seeds.
- If you're unfamiliar with cooking with plant-based proteins but want to add more to your diet, keep an eye out for vegan meat substitutes (see product of the month or recipes included in the newsletter).

BENEFITS OF PLANT-BASED PROTEIN

- Making the occasional swap from animal-based proteins to plant-based alternatives can improve blood sugar and cholesterol levels and help control your weight.

- Unlike protein that comes from meat, plant-based options don't contain saturated fat. Be sure to pay attention to your cooking methods to ensure you don't undermine your healthy protein choices by adding too much fat from extra oils, butter, or dressings.
- Most adults don't meet the recommended daily allowance for fiber, which is 25g for women and 38g for men under 50 years old. Including more plant-based meals is an easy way to increase fiber intake without relying on supplements.

SIMPLE CHANGES IN MEAL PREPARATION

- Utilizing plant proteins in your diet can be a more convenient option than taking the time to cook meat-based proteins! On the go options include quickly throwing some beans on top of your salad, enjoying quinoa as a side, or adding chia seeds to your pudding for a protein boost.
- Tofu is a common substitute for meat-based proteins. To get a meaty texture from tofu, purchase a firm tofu block. Make sure to press the tofu to remove any extra fluid and create a texture that mimics muscle. Try marinating the tofu first to help infuse every bite with flavor.

OTHER FOODS ADD FLAVOR AND NUTRITION

- When going plant-based, it can be easy to pile on the carbs. By supplementing our plant-based diet with small quantities of eggs, egg whites, and low-fat dairy we increase our protein without additional carbohydrates or fat.
- For an additional protein boost, try adding low-fat cheese to your salad, substituting non-fat Greek yogurt instead of sour cream or mayonnaise in recipes, or enjoy cottage cheese with your produce!





SAUCY CHEESY VEGGIE STACKS

From HungryGirl.com

Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 50 minutes

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING

Makes 2 servings

254 CALORIES ■ 36g CARBOHYDRATES ■ 8g TOTAL FAT (2.5g SATURATED FAT) ■ 793mg SODIUM ■ 12.5g FIBER ■ 22g SUGARS ■ 15g PROTEIN

INGREDIENTS

- 6 eggplant slices (cut lengthwise from a medium eggplant)
- 2 small zucchini, ends removed, cut into slices ½-inch thick
- 1 large portabella mushroom, cut into strips ½-inch-wide
- ½ cup light/low-fat ricotta cheese
- ½ cup frozen spinach, thawed, drained, and thoroughly patted dry
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh basil
- 1 tsp dried minced onion
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- ⅛ tsp salt
- A dash of ground nutmeg
- 1 cup marinara sauce (with 70 calories or less per ½-cup serving)
- 1 tsp grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray two baking sheets and a 9" X 13" baking pan with nonstick spray.
2. Lay eggplant, zucchini, and mushrooms on the baking sheets and bake for 12 minutes.
3. Flip veggies and return to the oven, rotating the baking sheets. Bake until lightly browned and mostly softened, about 12 minutes (leave oven on).
4. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine ricotta, spinach, basil, minced onion, garlic powder, salt, and nutmeg. Mix well.
5. Spoon half of the marinara into the center of the baking pan, and lay two eggplant slices side by side over the sauce with an inch or so between them. These will be the bases of the two veggie stacks.
6. Spread half of the spinach-ricotta mixture over the eggplant. Top with half of the zucchini and mushrooms, followed by another eggplant slice on each stack.
7. Top with remaining ingredients in this order: spinach-ricotta mixture, zucchini, mushrooms, eggplant, and marinara.
8. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, and bake until veggies have softened and entire dish is hot (about 20 - 25 minutes).



ZUCCHINI NACHOS

From HungryGirl.com

Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 15 minutes

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING

Makes 1 serving

191 CALORIES ▪ 24g CARBOHYDRATES
6g TOTAL FAT (3g SATURATED FAT) ▪ 804mg SODIUM
6g FIBER ▪ 10.5g SUGARS ▪ 11.5g PROTEIN

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup fat-free refried beans
- ½ tsp taco seasoning
- 8 oz. (about 1 medium) zucchini, sliced into 1/4-inch coins
- A dash salt
- 2 tbsp shredded reduced-fat Mexican-blend cheese
- 2 tbsp salsa
- 2 tbsp light sour cream (or use plain non-fat Greek yogurt for a protein boost)
- 2 tbsp chopped scallions
- Jalapeño slices (optional topping)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray a baking sheet with nonstick spray.
2. In a small bowl, mix beans with 1/4 teaspoon taco seasoning.
3. Lay zucchini coins on the baking sheet and sprinkle with salt and remaining 1/4 teaspoon of taco seasoning.
4. Bake until slightly tender (about 10 minutes), flipping halfway through.
5. Move zucchini coins to the center of the sheet and top with seasoned beans and cheese.
6. Bake until cheese has melted (about 3 minutes).
7. Top with salsa, sour cream (or Greek yogurt), and scallions.



MEDITERRANEAN STUFFED PORTABELLAS

From HungryGirl.com

Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 20 minutes

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING

Makes 2 servings

139 CALORIES ▪ 14.5g CARBOHYDRATES
4.5g TOTAL FAT (3g SATURATED FAT) ▪ 464mg SODIUM
4g FIBER ▪ 7g SUGARS ▪ 11g PROTEIN

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large portabella mushroom caps (stems removed)
- 1/3 cup light/low-fat ricotta cheese
- 1/4 cup artichoke hearts packed in water, drained and chopped
- 2 tbsp bagged sun-dried tomatoes (not packed in oil), chopped
- 1/8 tsp garlic powder
- 1/8 tsp dried oregano
- 1/8 tsp salt
- A dash of black pepper
- 2 tbsp crumbled feta cheese
- 2 tbsp shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- Sliced olives (optional topping)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lay a large piece of heavy-duty foil on a baking sheet and spray with nonstick spray.
2. Place mushroom caps on the center of the foil, rounded sides down. Place another large piece of foil over the mushrooms. Fold together and seal all four edges of the two foil pieces, forming a well-sealed packet. Bake until slightly tender (about 12 minutes).
3. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine ricotta, artichoke hearts, sun-dried tomatoes, and seasonings. Add 1 tablespoon of feta cheese and mix well.
4. Cut packet to release steam before opening entirely. Remove foil, and carefully drain excess liquid from the baking sheet. Thoroughly blot excess moisture from mushroom caps.
5. Top mushrooms with ricotta mixture. Sprinkle with mozzarella and remaining 1 tablespoon of feta cheese. Bake until mushrooms are tender and cheese has melted (about 8 minutes).



MUSHROOM, ASPARAGUS & TOFU QUICHES

From EatingWell.com

Cook Time: 45 minutes

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING

Makes 6 servings

108 CALORIES ▪ 5 g CARBOHYDRATES
6 g TOTAL FAT (1 g SATURATED FAT) ▪ 319 mg SODIUM
1 g FIBER ▪ 2 g SUGAR ▪ 10 g PROTEIN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package (12.3 oz.) light firm silken-style tofu
- ½ cup refrigerated or frozen egg product (thawed), or 2 eggs
- 3 oz. cheddar-flavored soy cheese, finely shredded (¾ cup)
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh basil, divided
- ¼ tsp ground pepper
- ⅛ tsp salt
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 ½ cups sliced fresh assorted mushrooms (such as cremini, stemmed shiitake, morel, and/or button)
- ¼ cup finely chopped shallots

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine tofu and eggs in a blender or food processor. Cover and blend/process just until combined. Transfer to a large bowl and stir in soy cheese, 1 tablespoon of the basil, the pepper, and salt. Set aside.
2. Heat olive oil over medium-high heat in a large skillet. Add mushrooms, asparagus, and shallots. Cook and stir for 5 to 8 minutes or just until tender, then cool slightly. Stir vegetable mixture into tofu mixture, stirring until well mixed.
3. Divide mixture among six 6-oz. ramekins or au gratin dishes. Place filled ramekins in a 15" x 10" baking pan.
4. Bake uncovered until set and edges are bubbly (about 20 minutes). Sprinkle with the remaining 1 tablespoon of basil. Serve warm.



CARIBBEAN TOFU WITH BLACK BEANS AND RICE

From EatingWell.com

Cook Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING

Makes 4 servings

282 CALORIES ■ 30.7 g CARBOHYDRATES
11.7 g TOTAL FAT (0.5 g SATURATED FAT)
314 mg SODIUM ■ 4.9 g FIBER ■ 9 g SUGAR
14.7 g PROTEIN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 8 oz. can pineapple tidbits (juice pack)
- ¼ cup snipped fresh cilantro
- 2 tbsp tamarind paste
- 2 tbsp canola oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 package (16-18-oz.) firm or extra-firm water-packed tofu, drained and cut into 4 lengthwise slices
- ⅓ cup quick-cooking brown rice
- ⅔ cup water
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 cup canned lower-sodium black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- ¼ tsp crushed red pepper
- Lime wedges and fresh cilantro sprigs (optional)
- 3 cups snap peas

DIRECTIONS

1. Drain pineapple, reserving juice. In a 2-quart shallow baking dish combine pineapple juice, 2 tablespoons of the cilantro, the tamarind, oil, garlic, salt and pepper. Add tofu, turning to coat. Marinate at room temperature for 30 minutes, turning tofu once halfway through marinating time.
2. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine rice and the water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat. Simmer, covered, for 10 to 12 minutes or until rice is done.
3. Coat an unheated nonstick grill pan with cooking spray. Preheat over medium-high heat. Transfer tofu slices to grill pan, reserving marinade in the baking dish. Cook tofu for 6 minutes or until heated through and browned, turning once halfway through cooking.
4. Add drained pineapple, the reserved marinade from dish, the black beans, green onions and crushed red pepper to the cooked rice, stirring to combine. Return to heat to warm.
5. Place tofu slices on four serving plates. Spoon rice mixture over tofu. If desired, garnish with lime wedges and cilantro. Serve with snap peas.



Za'ATAR ROASTED CARROT AND CHICKPEA YOGURT BOWLS

From SkinnyTaste.com

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING

Makes 1 Serving

332 CALORIES ▪ 38 g CARBOHYDRATES
13 g TOTAL FAT (2.5 g SATURATED FAT),
626 mg SODIUM ▪ 7g FIBER ▪ 18.5 g PROTEIN

INGREDIENTS

- 16 small heirloom baby carrots (about 16 oz. total - wash, dry, and trim the stems)
- 15 oz. can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp Za'atar spice blend
- ¼ tsp kosher salt
- Fresh black pepper, to taste
- 1 oz. feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1 lemon
- ½ bunch kale (preferably lacinato) ribs removed and discarded (2 ½ oz. total without ribs)
- ½ tbsp freshly squeeze lemon juice
- 2 cups Stonyfield Greek yogurt

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a large sheet pan with olive oil.
2. Drain chickpeas in a colander or salad spinner and transfer to a plate lined with paper towels. Let them dry completely.
3. Place carrots and chickpeas on the prepared sheet pan and drizzle with 2 tablespoons of olive oil, Za'atar, salt and black pepper.
4. Bake until the carrots are crisp-tender and browned (about 40 to 45 minutes), turning halfway.
5. While they are cooking, slice the kale into ¼-inch thin ribbons and place in a large bowl. Toss with ½ tablespoon olive oil, lemon juice and ¼ teaspoon salt.
6. Massage the kale with your hands for about 1 to 2 minutes, until soft.
7. In four shallow bowls, swoosh ½ cup yogurt in the bottom of each.
8. While the carrots are still hot, transfer over the yogurt and season with more salt and lemon zest.
9. Scatter the chickpeas over each dish and drizzle the remaining oil, top with kale and crumbled feta.



BEEFLESS GROUND BEEF

From EatingWell.com

Cook Time: 15 minutes

NUTRITION INFO – PER SERVING
Makes 4 servings (1 serving = 1/2 cup)

152 CALORIES ▪ 3.9 g CARBOHYDRATES
9.4 g TOTAL FAT (1.3 g SATURATED FAT)
500 mg SODIUM ▪ 1.6 g FIBER ▪ 12.6 g PROTEIN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package (16 oz.) extra-firm tofu, drained, crumbled and patted dry
- 2 tbsp tamari
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp paprika
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine tofu, tamari, garlic powder and paprika in a medium bowl.
2. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat.
3. Add the tofu mixture and cook, stirring occasionally, until the tofu is nicely browned (8 to 10 minutes).



Product of the Month

PREMADE MEAT CRUMBLES

Available from your grocery store, premade meatless crumbles require little preparation and are perfect to mix into your pasta sauces, use in tacos, or layer in your vegetable lasagna! Various brands offer meatless crumbles, which range in price from \$4.20 - \$10, depending on the package.