March Food Focus: Cruciferous Vegetables

Cruciferous vegetables are part of the Brassicaceae family and includes broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kale, cauliflower, bok choy, and collard greens. Cruciferous means “cross-bearing”, so the flower on these plants have four petals which resembles a cross.

Grocery Store Tip:
Cruciferous vegetables can be easily found year-round in the produce aisle. These vegetables are a great purchase because they keep well in the fridge for a few weeks, and are quite versatile in any dish. After they have passed their peak for eating fresh/raw, you can still steam or roast them to avoid having to throw them out.

Cooking with Cruciferous Vegetables:
Brussels sprouts look very similar to baby heads of cabbage. They are very easy to cook with and also fun to eat! Wash, cut off the base, and remove the yellowed leaves. Toss them with olive oil, salt, and pepper and roast in the oven. You can even do the same with kale leaves to make crispy “chips”!

Health Benefits:
Cruciferous vegetables are packed full of fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals. Nearly all are an excellent source of vitamin C, manganese, and vitamin K. Phytochemicals found in these veggies help prevent disease.

Fun Fact:
We eat around six pounds of broccoli every year! That is 4x more than what we ate 30 years ago!
Quinoa w/ Spiced Brussels Sprouts

Serving Size: 4

Ingredients:
- 2 1/4 cups vegetable broth
- 5oz quinoa, dry
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp coriander
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- 16oz Brussels sprouts
- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 1/2 tbsp fresh garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper

Instructions:
1. Add stock, dry quinoa, cumin, turmeric, coriander, salt, pepper in a sauce pan and bring to a boil. Turn head down and let simmer until small rings from quinoa start floating. Turn heat off, cover and steam for 10 minutes. Stir and set aside.
2. Remove hard end of sprouts and thinly slice.
3. In a skilled add oil and garlic and cook over medium until garlic is golden brown.
4. Added paprika, coriander, salt and pepper and cook for another 10 seconds.
5. Add Brussels sprouts and cook for one minute or until sprouts are bright green.
6. Add cooked quinoa and cook for another 30 seconds.
7. Serve and enjoy!

The amount of fruits and veggies we need to eat depends on our age, gender, and activity level. A good rule of thumb is to make half of every meal fruits and vegetables. Make sure to eat a variety of colors to help your body get all the nutrients it needs.

National School Breakfast Week

National School Breakfast week is March 6-10, which is great time for our students and staff to celebrate Lynn’s school breakfast programs! Breakfast is offered to all students in all of our schools and is a healthy and affordable way for students to start their day off right. All of our breakfast items meet federal dietary guidelines to ensure we provide a variety of foods like whole grains, assorted fresh and chilled fruits, low fat dairy and lean protein sources.

Here are some top reasons why you should choose to eat school breakfast:
- Better concentration in school
- Higher levels of achievement
- Retain more information learned
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get higher grades
- Reduce your number of nurse office visits

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