



the CommonHealth Compass



Grilled Vegetable Pasta Salad

Prep time: 25 min
Cook time: 12 min
Serves: 4

Designed for outdoor grilling, but to make it indoors, simply use a grill pan. Steam the asparagus and sauté the peppers in a skillet coated with cooking spray.

Ingredients

10 oz uncooked bow tie pasta
 2 tsp olive oil
 8 oz uncooked asparagus, tough ends trimmed
 1 medium yellow pepper, cut into 2-inch pieces
 ¼ cup white wine vinegar
 1 tsp sugar
 1 medium garlic clove, minced
 4 tsp blue cheese, crumbled
 1½ cups fresh cherry tomatoes, halved
 1 Tbsp parsley, or basil or chives, chopped (optional)
 ⅛ tsp table salt, or to taste
 ⅛ tsp black pepper, or to taste

Directions

1. Cook pasta according to package instructions; drain and toss with olive oil.
2. Preheat grill. Lightly coat asparagus and pepper with cooking spray. Grill over medium-hot coals until tender, about 5 to 8 minutes depending on size. Flip peppers once during cooking. Turn asparagus occasionally so it cooks evenly on all sides. Remove vegetables from grill and let cool; cut into bite-size pieces.
3. Combine vinegar, sugar, garlic and cheese in a small bowl. Toss together with pasta, grilled vegetables, tomatoes and herbs. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Let cool to room temperature before serving.

© 2011 Weight Watchers International, Inc. © 2011 WeightWatchers.com, Inc. All rights reserved. WEIGHT WATCHERS and PointsPlus® are the registered trademarks of Weight Watchers International, Inc. and are used under license by WeightWatchers.com, Inc.

Get Prepared to Lighten Up!



Do you ever find yourself in the drive thru lane more often than you would like? Are you constantly eating convenience food but feeling guilty about it? Does it seem like you don't have any time to prepare meals? Do you think it is too expensive to eat healthy? CommonHealth is tackling some of the biggest excuses that we make to overcomplicate eating well. Don't let these self-imposed obstacles derail you from a healthy meal.

Try the small changes, big impact method. Find a few minutes to think about a small nutrition goal, how you think you can reach it, and what can prevent you from success. Then devise a plan. It doesn't have to be complex, take a lot of time, be a pain in the neck, or so expensive that you can't make your mortgage payment. Feeding yourself and your family well can be easy – just make it happen!

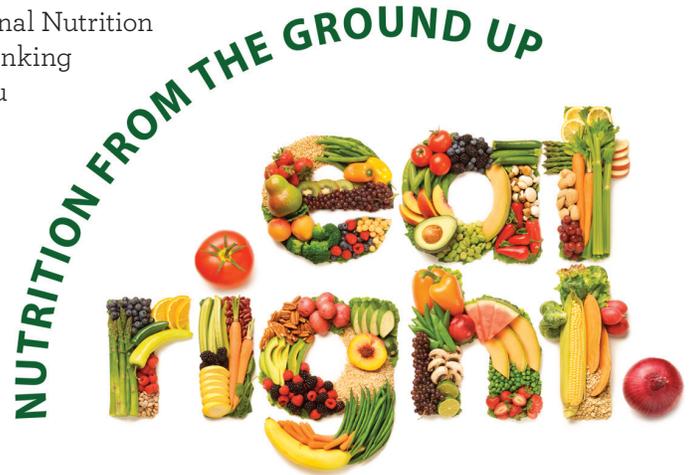
It's time to "Lighten Up". We find that people often deal with the same obstacles with healthy eating as they do with exercise. When asked why not eat healthier or eat more meals at home, there is a great deal of confusion out there. If you find yourself saying "I don't have time", "I don't have the money", "I don't know how" and/or "I don't like it", then let us help.

Isn't it time that you made a change for the better? Contact your CommonHealth Agency Coordinator today to participate in the "Lighten Up - Eating Well is Easy" Program running March through June 2012. Each participant will receive a flexible cutting board (while supplies last) designed to make preparing more fruits and vegetables easier.

Celebrate March with CommonHealth

When people think about celebrations in March, chances are National Nutrition Month is not the first thing that comes to mind. Rather than just thinking about wearing green on a certain day, why not think about what you consume every day and try to improve where you can.

Perhaps you can add a serving of fruit or vegetables or maybe have fewer servings of bacon, red meat, or cured ham. Maybe you can add fish and nuts, especially those high in the omega fatty acids, to your diet. Substituting a glass of water for a soda can be a quick way to save 100 calories and sugar. Making sure that you eat at least three meals a day, including breakfast, can help eliminate overeating and excess snacking. Eating in more than going out or having fast food can help you to be sure to get what your body needs and skip the stuff it doesn't. Try to make at least one change to improve your nutrition this month and perhaps for your lifetime.



National Nutrition Month® March 2012

2012 CommonHealth “Lighten Up” Weight Loss Challenge

What a great way to encourage our co-workers to lose those stubborn extra pounds and lead a healthier lifestyle!

Join us for six weeks as we “Lighten Up” Virginia’s workforce!

Visit www.commonhealth.virginia.gov to register or for more information.

Grab and Go! No Muss, No Fuss Snacks

- Fruit and yogurt parfait
- Carrots with ¼ cup hummus
- 1 serving *Wheat Thins* with 1 string cheese
- 1 granola bar and 1 cup coffee with skim milk
- 1 fat-free plain yogurt with 1 tablespoon honey
- 3 tablespoons each raisins and dry-roasted pistachios
- 1 Clementine and 1 ounce (about 22) roasted almonds
- 1 ounce each dark chocolate chunks and pretzel nuggets
- 1 slice low-fat cheddar cheese, 6 *Wheat Thins*, and 1 pear
- Celery sticks with 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter with 1 sliced Granny Smith apple
- Celery sticks with 2 tablespoons low-fat blue cheese dressing
- Half of a whole wheat bagel with 1 tablespoon cream cheese
- 2 Fig Newton cookies and 1 cup skim milk or plain light soy milk
- ½ cup low-fat chocolate ice cream (such as Edy’s Slow Churned)
- 1 low-fat chocolate pudding with ¼ cup thawed frozen raspberries
- A handful of grapes, 1 slice Swiss cheese, and a dozen roasted almonds
- 15 baked tortilla chips (about 1 ounce) with ¼ cup salsa
- 1 rice cake with ½ sliced banana and 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- ½ cup frozen yogurt with ¼ cup sliced strawberries and 1 tablespoon chocolate sauce - yup... chocolate sauce

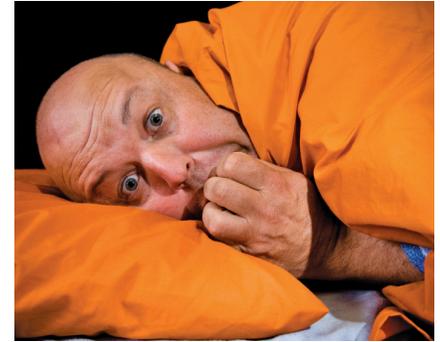
Take full advantage of your Commonwealth employee benefits by checking out Weight Watchers at www.CommonHealth.Virginia.gov or by calling 1-866-614-9129



Watch Out for Those Sleep Pirates!

Having trouble falling asleep at night or staying asleep once you doze off? If so, you are not alone. Lack of sleep, or insomnia, is a common problem. Fortunately, the solution may lie in simple lifestyle changes.

Bad diet, lack of exercise and stress are just a few of the common sleep pirates. Make some simple adjustments in your daily habits, and you're likely to snooze better.



DIET

Caffeine – It may affect you more than you think. Stay away from caffeinated food and drink in the afternoon and see if that helps you sleep better at night.

Alcohol – Helps you sleep, right? Wrong. It may get you to sleep faster, but alcohol makes for a much less restful sleep later in the night. So, skip the nightcap.

Food – A heavy meal close to bedtime is not good, but going to bed hungry can be just as bad. If you get late-night hunger pains, eat a small snack.

Fluids – Too much of any beverage will send you to the bathroom in the middle of the night.

LIFESTYLE

Stress – School or work pressures, family or marital problems ... any of life's stresses can ruin a good night's sleep. Reduce your stress level, and you're likely to sleep better.

Tobacco – Did you know that nicotine is a stimulant that keeps you awake? And, when you do doze off, your body goes through a sort of nicotine withdrawal that disrupts sleep. If you're trying to quit smoking, this same withdrawal may mean sleep problems, but stick with it. You'll sleep better in the long run.

Exercise – Regular exercise can make you fall asleep faster and sleep better. But, don't exercise too close to bedtime because it will keep you awake.

Be consistent – Erratic bedtimes and wake-up times won't help your sleep schedule. Missing sleep during the week and then "catching up" on the weekends is no match for a consistent schedule throughout the week.

ENVIRONMENT

Temperature and humidity – Most sleep scientists believe slightly cool is better than too hot. However, be sure to set your thermostat to the temperature that makes you feel comfortable. Use blankets, heaters, air conditioners, dehumidifiers or humidifiers to get your room just right.

Light – Is your bedroom dark enough? The extra light that creeps in the windows may be bothering you more than you think. Darken things up with curtains, blinds or a blackout shade.

Noise – Between sirens, barking dogs or a snoring partner, you may be surrounded by noises that make sleeping difficult. Earplugs, white noise or relaxing music can help drown out the bad noise. Rugs, heavy curtains and double-pane windows will keep some sounds out altogether.

Your bed – An uncomfortable bed can make falling asleep more difficult and cause a less restful sleep.

If changes in your daily habits do not work, talk to your doctor or a sleep specialist. You may have a medical condition that makes sleeping difficult. Arthritis and other painful conditions, hormonal shifts like premenstrual syndrome or menopause, and certain medications can rob you of a good night's sleep.

It also may be that you have a sleep disorder such as narcolepsy, sleep apnea, periodic limb movement syndrome, restless legs syndrome or circadian rhythm sleep disorder. Most sleep disorders can be successfully treated or controlled once your doctor finds the problem. Sleeplessness can contribute to a decrease in your quality of life or your health. So, if the sleep pirates are invading your sleep, don't wait. Whatever the cause of your insomnia, you deserve – and can have – more restful nights.

RESOURCES

American Medical Association
www.ama-assn.org

National Center on Sleep Disorders Research
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncsdr/index.htm

National Sleep Foundation
www.sleepfoundation.org

The CommonHealth Compass

When a Baby is Coming

Getting ready to be a new mom or dad is always a thrill! And state health plan members have a great resource with the Commonwealth's maternity management programs. These prenatal programs are available at no cost to you, your spouse or your dependents covered in a state health plan. They are designed to help women have healthy pregnancies and to reduce the chances of premature births.

Expectant mothers in COVA Care and COVA Connect should enroll within the first three months of pregnancy to get the most out of the program, and to have the inpatient hospital copayment waived as long as all requirements are met. Also, to be sure your baby has health coverage, remember to add the newborn to your health plan within the plan's required time limit. For state plans, that is within 60 days of birth or adoption.

For more information, visit the CommonHealth website at www.commonhealth.virginia.gov.



Celebrate the Champions

The *CommonHealth Wellness Champion Award* is a chance to celebrate the many ways that we work together to create a healthy workplace environment. A *CommonHealth Wellness Champion* may be an employee who models a healthy lifestyle, has made significant changes in health behaviors, motivates others to make health improvements, or has implemented a policy to help create a positive wellness culture for the Commonwealth of Virginia.



Rick Auckerman, better known as Moose, is a great example of a *CommonHealth Wellness Champion*. After attending the CommonHealth program, Outdoor Adventures, at Northern Virginia Community College in Manassas, he decided to lose some weight to help with his diabetes and to have some fun with his kids. His family's goal is to see all 36 of Virginia's state parks over 3 years, visiting 12 each year. To date, they have been to 24 parks and plan to visit the last 12 in 2012. He has lost 96 pounds, walked 7 million steps, and his blood sugar and A1C levels have improved greatly.

Do you know someone like Moose? Perhaps it is another employee in your agency or maybe yourself. Take a moment or two to make a nomination through the CommonHealth website. To be considered for the CommonHealth Wellness Champion Award, nominees must meet the following criteria:

- a current Commonwealth of Virginia employee
- models a healthy lifestyle
- has made significant changes in health behaviors
- motivates others to make health improvements
- implemented a policy, practice, or activity to help create a positive wellness culture for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Two employees will be selected from the nominees each quarter and spotlighted. Individuals selected for the award will receive a gift bag from CommonHealth for serving as an inspirational role model as well as a feature article in our Compass publication.

Visit CommonHealth Online!

www.commonhealth.virginia.gov

Questions? E-mail us at wellness@dhrm.virginia.gov.

Stay tuned for our next program on everything you want to know to prevent, reverse and manage Type 2 Diabetes.

