



the CommonHealth Compass



Chicken, Vegetable and Orzo Soup

Weight Watchers Recipe

Lemon and dill give this soup a fresh, bright note. It's a simple yet flavorful way to use up leftover cooked chicken.

- 8 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tsp. table salt, or more to taste
- ½ tsp. black pepper, freshly ground (or more to taste)
- 4 medium uncooked carrots, thinly sliced into rounds
- 1 medium uncooked fennel bulbs, thinly sliced and then chopped
- 1 cups uncooked orzo
- 2 cups (chopped) cooked skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- ¼ cups fresh lemon juice
- 3 Tbsp. dill, fresh, chopped, divided (or more to taste)

Instructions

In a large soup pot, combine broth, salt and pepper; bring to a boil over high heat.

Add carrots, fennel and orzo; bring to a boil.

Reduce heat to low and simmer, partially covered, until orzo and vegetables are tender, about 8 to 10 minutes.

Stir in chicken; cook until heated through.

Remove pot from heat; stir in lemon juice and dill. Makes eight servings. Yields about 1¼ cups per serving.

©Weight Watchers International, Inc.



Do you know the signs of a stroke?

Participants in CommonHealth's Think FAST About Stroke program will learn the sudden warning signs of stroke so they can recognize and respond FAST. Stroke is a medical emergency and a quick and informed response could save a life. Think FAST About Stroke will be available from March 1- June 30, 2013. Contact your CommonHealth Regional Coordinator today to schedule or visit www.commonhealth.virginia.gov for more information.

Knowing what to look for and taking action quickly can save a life or reduce complications from a stroke. Sometimes a person having a stroke does not immediately look sick. Here are some signs to look for.

FACE

Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

ARMS

Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

SPEECH

Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Is speech slurred/strange?

TIME

Minutes matter. If you observe any of these signs call 911 immediately! Advanced medical treatment in the first hour from when the symptoms started is critical.

Stroke is an Emergency - Act FAST - Call 911 NOW



Reap the Benefits of Gardening

Burn Serious Calories and Prevent Cancer



Bend, twist, reach, and pull.

While this may sound like an intensive aerobics class, these are actually movements you do while working in the garden. Researchers estimate that gardening burns an average of **300 calories per hour**, while heavy yard work can burn more than **600 calories per hour!** Engaging in regular physical activity like gardening is also an excellent way to lower your risk of some cancers.

Here's the Dirt

Gardening is an ideal form of exercise because it combines three important types of physical activity: strength, endurance and flexibility.

Spending time in a garden is also believed by many to have physical and emotional healing effects. According to the American Horticultural Therapy Association, gardening can benefit people who are recovering from physical illness by retraining their muscles and improving coordination, balance, and strength. In addition, simply spending time in nature reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, and relieves muscle tension.

But the cancer-protective benefits of gardening don't end there. Studies show that gardeners eat a wider variety of vegetables (rich in disease-fighting antioxidants and phytochemicals), and have a higher overall intake of vegetables than non-gardeners.



The Old-Fashioned Way Is Better

To reap the maximum health benefit from your gardening, labor intensively. Turn off your leaf blower and pick up a rake. Use manual clippers, trimmers and lawnmowers if possible.

Try to stick to a regular "garden exercise" routine. Rather than saving up your outdoor work for one marathon weekend session, schedule at least 30-60 minutes of gardening two or three times per week. If you're away from home during the day, early mornings and evenings are ideal gardening times.

Work at a steady, constant speed, but be sure to change positions every 10 minutes or so to avoid overusing a particular muscle group. If you start by bending down to pull weeds, stand to prune the hedges next. Also alternate which side of the body you use. Pull with your right hand, then with your left.

Find a Row to Hoe

Even if you don't own an acre, a small yard can provide ample opportunity to dig, plant, and weed. You can also look for a local garden on the American Community Garden Association's website (<http://www.communitygarden.org>). Although

Continued on page 3

Enjoy Virginia's Bounty This Spring

Flowers are blooming. Birds are singing. It's spring! Why not enjoy delicious, nutritious foods while also helping the local economy? Try spending just \$10 per week on food produced in Virginia. Visit a farmers' market - many operate year round - or sign up for a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) to guarantee a weekly supply of farm fresh products. You'll find fresh local products in your neighborhood grocery stores too, so there's no excuse not to enjoy the best of what Virginia has to offer.

Did you know?

Eating local and seasonal foods... reduces your carbon footprint. It takes a lot more fuel to get tomatoes or peaches from California or Mexico compared to your local market.

Eating local food... supports healthy farming practices because you can interview your local farmer about their sustainable growing practices before you make your purchase.

Eating local food... boosts both the state and your local economy. If each household in Virginia purchased \$10 a week on locally grown agricultural products, it could bring \$1.65 billion into the Virginia economy each year.

Eating local food... can improve your health if you incorporate more local vegetables and fruit as well as local meat, dairy and fish products that are sustainably managed. Local produce is more nutrient-rich than imported produce that has traveled for an extended time period. Also, you can choose to buy from farmers who do not use antibiotics, hormones or other toxic chemicals.

Visit www.vdacs.virginia.gov/vagrown/ for more information.

Source: Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services



Photo © Rachel Cooper, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Reap the Benefits of Gardening

Continued from page 2



your workout will be more limited if you garden on a balcony or patio, you can harvest a good crop of nutritious vegetables in a space as small as 16 square feet.

After your physician gives you the "green thumbs up," keep these tips in mind:

- To prevent muscle soreness, back pain, and repetitive strain injuries, warm up before starting and cool down after you are finished by walking and stretching.
- Use steady, smooth motions to avoid injury.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing sunscreen, long-sleeved shirts and pants, and a wide-brimmed hat.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated, especially if the temperature and humidity are high.
- When picking up tools or lifting bags of soil, bend your knees and keep your back straight.

Happy Gardening!

Article information: The American Institute of Cancer Research <http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/fitness.asp>



Willpower Pays Off!

The Growing Lighter Weight Loss Challenge was a success! **We lost over 7,000 pounds in 6 weeks!** Some of us didn't lose-but we didn't gain and that is a victory! How did we do it? There were teams as small as one and as large as 10 members. Participants received food and exercise logs and encouragement! Several agencies had lunch groups to weigh in and support their efforts. Others increased their walking throughout their workday. Those steps add up!

The challenge is complete but never finished! Please continue the healthy eating and increased exercise as a gift to yourself. Remember- you are worth it!

Be looking to join our next challenge during National Employee Health and Fitness month - **Make it to the Moon in May.** We are going to walk the 238,857 miles to the moon!

Want to Join Weight Watchers? Think Online!

Our society is turning more and more to the latest technology, such as social media and a variety of apps, for many of the things we do. Some of us have barely gotten used to sending emails and surfing the Web! Weight Watchers is making some changes to its partnership with the Commonwealth to bring state employee options a bit more into the 21st century. Most of what's coming is on the Web.

Watch for these changes beginning **June 1:**

- **Three ways to participate.** Choose from At Work or community meetings, or purchase a Weight Watchers online subscription. At Home Kits are no longer offered through the state program. You can order one through www.weightwatchers.com.
- **Online registration for all options.** Everyone who wants to join a Weight Watchers meeting or the online program may sign up at <https://wellness.weightwatchers.com>. Visit the Weight Watchers site at <http://commonhealth.virginia.gov/documents/DHRMWWGateway.pdf> to find the company ID and password you will need to sign up. Or you can call 1-866-204-2885. Please note the new telephone number.
- **A new way to pay for meetings.** You will purchase a Monthly Pass, which automatically renews each month, for both At Work and community meetings. Visit the Web site or call the toll free number listed above for these options and also an online subscription.

More details, including updated Frequently Asked Questions and a revised application form, will be coming soon on the CommonHealth website.



Visit CommonHealth Online!

www.commonhealth.virginia.gov

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



101 N. 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219