

NUTRITION FIRST NEWS



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Laugh for Your Health

Nutrition Edition, Issue 89



A good laugh has great short-term effects. When you start to laugh, it doesn't just lighten your load mentally, it actually induces physical changes in your body, stimulating your organs, relieving your stress response, and soothing tension. Laughter is good for you over the long term as well and may improve your immune system, relieve pain, increase personal satisfaction and improve your mood!

Humor in children has been correlated with higher intelligence, creativity, sociability, empathy, self-esteem and problem solving, according to Louis Franzini, Ph.D.

According to Dr. Bob Arnot, "Children are so receptive to a smile that if a parent could just make one change in a thirty day period to vastly improve their parenting style, I would suggest smiling more

often at their children and offer more hugs and affection". Brian Tracy writes in *Million Dollar Habits*, "The simplest way to express acceptance of another person is simply to smile each time you see him or her".

Social benefits of laughter include the fostering of emotional bonds, the creation of positive bonds, the promotion of team work and conflict resolution as well as uniting people during difficult times.

A Good Hearty Laugh can...

- Boost positive energy, creativity and connection
- Boost immune function
- Exercise facial, abdominal and chest muscles
- Oxygenate the blood
- Improve brain function
- Increase alertness
- Change our mood
- Boost positive emotions
- Increase pain tolerance

Find a way to laugh about your own situations and watch your stress begin to fade away. Even if it feels forced at first, practice laughing. It does your body good.

A Sense of Humor Can...

- Improve your heart health by increasing blood flow which lowers your risk for blood clots and heart disease
- Fuel positive energy, connection and creativity
- Transform situations during challenging times
- Arouse curiosity and increase engagement in divergent or creative thinking
- Nourish children's growth, development, health and sense of well-being

Wake Up Laughing...

- Wake up with a smile
- The minute your feet hit the floor, smile some more
- The first time you look at yourself in the mirror, smile, giggle, medium laugh, and laugh heartily to wake up your laugh
- Greet the people you meet with a high five and say "It's a Belly Laugh Day! Ha, ha, ha, ha..."



Whether you're guffawing at a sitcom on TV or quietly giggling at a newspaper cartoon, laughing does you good. Laughter is a great form of stress relief, and that's no joke!

Brazilian Creamy Rice Casserole

- ✓ Spray oil
- ✓ 2.5 cups cooked brown rice
- ✓ Scant $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded raw carrots
- ✓ Scant $\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen yellow corn kernels
- ✓ 3 Tbsp. fresh chopped spinach
- ✓ $\frac{3}{4}$ cup canned black beans, drained
- ✓ 2 oz. pineapple juice
- ✓ 2 oz. mozzarella cheese, shredded
- ✓ 2.4 oz. cream cheese
- ✓ $\frac{3}{4}$ cup low-fat plain yogurt
- ✓ 1 oz. grated dry Parmesan cheese
- ✓ Salt and pepper to taste



Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray an 8x8 pan with cooking spray. In a large bowl, combine rice, carrots, corn, spinach, black beans, pineapple juice, mozzarella cheese and salt and pepper. In a separate bowl, combine softened cream cheese and yogurt until fully incorporated. Add cream cheese mixture to the rice mixture and combine. Place rice mixture in the pan and top with grated Parmesan. Bake in the oven until the Parmesan cheese is golden brown. Cut into 2x3 squares (serves 6) and serve warm.

Peanutty African Stew



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| 1 cup instant brown rice | 2 cups peeled and diced sweet potato or yam |
| 2 cups chicken broth, reduced sodium | 1 can diced tomatoes with liquid |
| 1 tsp. dehydrated minced onion (or fresh) | $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt |
| 1 tsp. garlic powder or 4 cloves fresh minced | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup creamy peanut butter (see notes) |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground ginger | 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups nonfat or 1% milk |
| 1/8 tsp. red pepper (optional) | 3 cups baby spinach leaves, chopped |
| | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped dry roasted peanuts (note) |
| | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup thinly sliced green onion (optional) |

Combine first 9 ingredients in a soup pot. Bring to a boil, then turn down to medium low, cover and simmer 10 minutes. Stir in peanut butter and milk. Return to a gentle simmer and cook uncovered for 5 minutes. Stir in spinach and cook until wilted, 2 to 3 minutes. Top with peanuts and green onion, if desired.

Notes:

Broth can be canned, boxed, or made with bouillon. For each cup of broth, use 1 cup very hot water and 1 teaspoon or 1 cube of bouillon. Substitute a 10 ounce package of frozen spinach for the fresh spinach. Flavor boosters: chopped cilantro, red and green peppers, raisins. To avoid peanuts or peanut butter, try sunflower seeds and sunflower seed butter. *Credit Food Hero, OSU*

Lemon Blueberry Chia Parfaits

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| ✓ 2 Tbsp. fresh or reconstituted lemon juice | ✓ 3 cups graham crackers, crushed |
| ✓ 2 cups fat-free or 1% milk | ✓ 3 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen* |
| ✓ $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chia seeds | |
| ✓ 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups regular or quick dry oats | |
| ✓ 3 cups yogurt, low-fat Greek vanilla | |

Mix lemon juice and milk. Add to chia seeds and oats and stir. Allow to set 4 hours minimum or overnight, refrigerated. Mix together the oats and chia mixture with the yogurt. To make parfait: Layer $\frac{3}{4}$ cup yogurt/oat mix (bottom layer), then $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crushed graham crackers, and top with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup blueberries.



*Frozen blueberries must be thawed and drained before using. Other fruits can be substituted for blueberries.



Some Good News from Our Funder (ODE/USDA)

After complaining loudly and often (and nicely) to the specialists at the Oregon Department of Education, they have granted a lessening of some of the USDA rules which we considered to be over the top. There are still plenty of rules, but the two they lessened the standards on may help you all out a bit.

The latest revision to the cereals and yogurts is this: *The actual cereal or yogurt must be documented on the menu – for example, write WG Cheerios or WG oatmeal or Rice Chex, and when serving yogurt, write blueberry yogurt or vanilla yogurt.*

You no longer have to write the brand of cereal or brand of yogurt at the top of the menu (even though we just added those new lines for that on your menus). Since we are required to see your labels in the home (and disallow meals if you don't have them), you don't have to write the brands/manufacturers anymore.

So again, you will just write Kix or Cheerios or oatmeal if you serve a breakfast cereal (and add the WG if you are claiming them as your whole-grain), and you will write peach yogurt or blueberry yogurt when you serve yogurt – no more brand names.

When we come to your home for a visit, we will of course look over your entire menu, meal count log, and attendance record. We are required to perform a 5-day reconciliation. At this point, we will need to see all labels of cereals, whole grain items, breads, rice, tortilla chips and yogurts that you served during that 5-day period. So if you served 100% whole wheat bread during those 5 days, and did not have the label for that bread, that meal would be disallowed (unpaid for). Your best bet is to save all your labels and when we come to your home, we will tell you which labels to keep, and which to toss. (For instance, whole grain Ritz is not actually whole grain – although they count as a grain, just not as a whole-grain).

Whole grains (at least one) must be served every day; otherwise we have to disallow the meal with the least reimbursement on the day that a WG item was not served. The meal removed has to be one in which a grain was required – in other words, not a snack unless a grain was served, because snacks do not require a grain.

Do remember that rice and tortilla and/or corn chips must be whole grain or enriched in order to be claimed at all. Please look at the ingredient list for the types of rice or tortilla chips you are serving; if the first ingredient does not state "whole" or "enriched", then the item is not claimable at all.

For infants, the date of birth and the name of the formula being served must be written on at least one page of the infant menu.

As always, please contact us with any questions, & remember to check over your menus before you send them to us.

Note: A holiday note is NOT required for Martin Luther King Day, 1/21/19.

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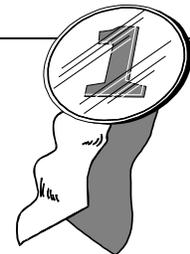
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Nutrition First USDA Child Care Food Program is a program of the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency



MENU WINNERS

- **The menu winners for Nov are: Carolina Hernandez of Cottage Grove & Jamie Ream of Albany**
- **The menu winners for Dec are: Mandy Johnson of Pleasant Hill & Amy Dustin of Silverton**
- **Keep those menus coming in on time – you might be next!**
- **Remember – to enter, menus need to be in an envelope with your name and address on the outside**



Thanks and Good Luck!!

"Good nutrition is the right of all children."

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- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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