



MARY'S MEMO

Recipes • Shopping • Cooking • Health Tips

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Chief and Rays Supermarkets

SAY CHEESE

Though it's high in saturated fat, cheese may not raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol, according to a recent Danish study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. When people ate a few ounces of either cheese or butter everyday for six weeks, the butter raised LDL and total cholesterol but cheese did not. Some previous research also found that cheese did not increase heart attack risk. Cheese is calorie-dense, and in a new study it partly replaced other high fat foods in the diet, so overall calorie intake went up only a little. But if cheese causes weight gain, that would have an adverse effect on cholesterol levels.

SOURCE: University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter, March 2012.

CHEWING GUM MAY PERK YOU UP

That's the suggestion of a new British study, though scientists aren't sure why. Researchers tested the effects of gum chewing on 30 Coventry University students who were put in a darkened room for 1 minute for three consecutive days. On the first day, they chewed gum; on the second, they did nothing; on the third day, they mimicked a chewing motion with no actual gum. Scientists measured changes in pupil size as a sign of sleepiness, and also recorded self-reported alertness. On both measures, volunteers were more alert when they'd been chewing gum compared to doing nothing or pretending to chew.

SOURCE: Tufts University Diet & Nutrition Letter, February 2012.

WHAT ABOUT BPA?

There is hardly a day goes by that we aren't told that something is injurious to our health. Bisphenol A (BPA) that's been used for years in clear plastic bottles and food can liners has now been restricted in Canada and some US states and municipalities because of potential health effects. The FDA has not yet decided what it considers a safe level of exposure to BPA, which some studies have linked to reproductive abnormalities and a heightened risk of breast and prostate cancers, diabetes and heart disease.

Consumers who are concerned might be able to reduce, though not necessarily eliminate, their dietary exposure to BPA by taking the following steps:

1. Choose fresh food whenever possible.
 2. Consider alternatives to canned food.
 3. Use glass containers when heating food in microwave ovens.
- SOURCE: Information taken from Consumer Reports Magazine "BPA Update: what you need to know 1/12."*

Perhaps anticipating a FDA ban on BPA products eventually, some manufacturers have vowed to stop selling BPA-containing products. The plastic lids for 2-cup Anchor Hocking and Pyrex brand glass containers that I bought last year are both BPA-free.

A SOUP FROM THE PAST

Judy Shilling of Bryan has shared a lot of good recipes with me including Hearty Hodgepodge from the December, 1969 *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine. The recipe calls for condensed minestrone soup but Campbell's® doesn't make a Healthy Request® version, the only kind I use in cooking, mainly because it's MSG-free. As a result I turned to Progresso® brand minestrone that is ready to heat and eat. Since I've personally cut back on red meat, I reduced the ground chuck from 1-1/2 pounds to a pound. Choose whichever amount you like.

HEARTY HODGEPODGE MY WAY

- 1 pound ground chuck
- 3/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 cans Progresso® Minestrone soup
- (1) 28-oz. can pork and beans in tomato sauce
- 1-1/2 cups chopped celery
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano

In large Dutch oven cook ground chuck, onion and garlic until beef is browned and onion is transparent. Stir in minestrone soup, baked beans, celery, Worcestershire sauce and oregano. Simmer, covered, for about 45 minutes. Recipe makes 8 to 10 servings. Recipe freezes well.

SOURCE: Adapted from 1969 Better Homes & Gardens recipe.

YOU ASKED

I mentioned making Tuna Chop Suey in the March 12 memo and you asked for a recipe. I've never had one to make it but I'll try.

TUNA CHOP SUEY

- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon each butter and light olive oil
- (1) 28-oz. can La Choy® Chop Suey Vegetables, reserving 1/4 cup for thickening
- (2) 5-oz. cans StarKist® Solid White Albacore Tuna, drained
- 4-ounce can mushroom stems and pieces, drained
- 1-1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
- Soy sauce to taste

In a Dutch oven sauté celery and onion until soft. Add partially drained chop suey vegetables, tuna and drained mushroom stems and pieces. Bring mixture to a boil and simmer for 30 minutes. Mix reserved chop suey vegetable liquid and cornstarch together. Stir into vegetable liquid. Cook until thickened. Season with soy sauce to taste. Serve over rice. Recipe makes 4 to 5 servings.