

November is National  
Healthy Skin Month

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American Diabetes  
Month

## November is National Healthy Skin Month

### *Caring for the skin you're in!*

Did you know your skin is an organ? In fact, the skin is the largest organ in the human body – approximately 20 square feet in area!

Skin is made up of three major layers:

- **Epidermis:** outer layer that provides a waterproof barrier
- **Dermis:** middle layer that contains connective tissue, hair follicles and sweat glands
- **Subcutaneous tissue:** third layer made of fat and connective tissue

This important organ protects you from infections and environmental attacks, regulates your body temperature and allows sensations such as touch.

### Caring for Your Skin

Your skin is your body's first line of protection and needs care. There are many simple ways to keep your skin healthy, such as drinking water to maintain hydration, eating the daily recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables, applying sunscreen and limiting sun exposure.

When caring for your skin, be sure to use a gentle cleanser with warm water, pat your skin dry and moisturize regularly. Choose moisturizers with glycerin, alpha hydroxy acids, urea and lactic acids (binders), combined with petrolatum, lanolin or silicone derivatives (barriers). Finding the best moisturizer for you is a process of trial and error, although a dermatologist may be able to recommend a moisturizer for your skin type. The best time to apply moisturizer is when your skin is still damp, like after a bath or shower.

Being aware of your environment is also vital to taking care of your skin. Too much cold or heat will rob your skin of moisture. If possible, try for a comfortable level of humidity in your home and workplace.

### Get to Know the Skin You're In

According to the American Cancer Society, we should examine our skin monthly, noting the patterns of moles, blemishes, freckles and other marks to make it easier to identify changes in our skin. Follow these simple steps:

1. Facing a full-length mirror, check your face, neck, chest and abdomen.
2. Next, check under your arms, the tops and palms of your hands, fingernail beds and between your fingers.
3. Sit down and check your legs, the tops of your feet, and in-between your toes and your toenail beds. Be sure to use a hand mirror to check the backs of your legs and the bottom of your feet.
4. Using a hand mirror, check your buttocks, back and the back of your neck.
5. Check your scalp by using a comb to separate your hair.

If you notice anything abnormal, see your primary care doctor or dermatologist.

Finally, don't forget to ask your doctor to perform a skin assessment at your next annual check-up. It could save your life!

# LUNG CANCER: What You Should Know

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer in both men and women in the U.S. Approximately 365,000 Americans live with lung cancer, and the majority of them have been diagnosed within the last five years.

Smoking causes nearly all lung cancer deaths in America, and is also linked to cancers of the bladder, larynx, mouth, throat, esophagus, pancreas, stomach, kidney, cervix, some forms of leukemia and heart disease. What's more, cigarette smoke can harm your health even if you're not a smoker. Exposure to secondhand smoke is believed to cause the lung cancer or heart disease deaths of about 49,000 non-smokers every year.

## Signs of Lung Cancer

- A new cough or a cough that does not go away
- Chest, shoulder or back pain that does not go away and gets worse with deep breathing
- New wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Hoarseness
- Coughing up blood or bloody mucus
- Swelling in the neck and face
- Difficulty swallowing
- Weight loss and loss of appetite
- Increasing fatigue and weakness
- Recurring respiratory infections, such as pneumonia
- Clubbing of the fingers and toes, nails appearing to "bulge"

To reduce your risk for lung cancer, quit smoking. Take precautions if you live with a smoker by asking them to smoke outside in the open air.

## Quitting now can make a difference.

No matter how old you are, or how long you've been smoking, quitting now can really make a difference. Here's how:

- Within **hours** of quitting smoking, your body starts to recover from the effects of nicotine and other additives. For example, your blood pressure, heart rate, body temperature and carbon monoxide levels, which are elevated because of cigarette smoking, return to healthier levels. The oxygen level in your blood also increases to normal, your risk of a heart attack decreases and your sense of smell and taste improves.

- Within **months** of quitting, shortness of breath decreases, your lungs improve their ability to self clean and fight infections, your overall energy level increases and your circulation improves.
- Within a **few years** of quitting, you are half as likely to develop coronary heart disease and your risk of dying from lung cancer is half that of a smoker.

For more information and guidance for successful quitting, check out WebMD's Smoking Cessation Program on MyBlueService. You'll find great advice and techniques to help you kick the habit successfully. Log on to MyBlueService from bcbsfl.com and access the **Living Healthy** tab. Select **Wellness Programs** then **Smoking Cessation**.

[www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco)  
[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)  
[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)

The American Cancer Society's 2010 Great American Smokeout is **Thursday, November 18!**

Put down your pack, pipe or cigar and be tobacco-free. Join millions of Americans and kick the habit once and for all!



# Fresh & Healthy

## Recipe of the Month

### *Creamy Light Cranberry Salad*

Here's a quick and delicious way to serve up cranberry for Thanksgiving.



#### Ingredients

3 cups fresh or frozen cranberries, thawed and coarsely chopped  
 1 can (20 oz.) unsweetened crushed pineapple, drained  
 2 cups miniature marshmallows  
 1 medium apple, chopped  
 Sugar substitute equivalent to 1/2 cup sugar (recipe made with Splenda)  
 1/8 tsp salt  
 1 carton (8 oz.) frozen reduced-fat whipped topping, thawed  
 1/4 cup chopped walnuts

#### Preparation

In a large bowl, combine the cranberries, pineapple, marshmallows, apple, sugar substitute and salt. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Just before serving, fold in whipped topping and walnuts. Makes 12 servings (2/3 cup servings).

#### Nutritional information per serving:

133 calories, 4 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 29 mg sodium, 24 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 1 g protein.

### *Ask the Health Coach*

**Q** Are fresh vegetables and fruits better than frozen or canned?

**A** Unless you purchase your produce from the local farmer's market, frozen fruits and vegetables are just as nutritious, if not more so, than the fresh stuff.

Produce found in your supermarket must be picked before it reaches its peak of ripeness so it can be packed and shipped hundreds and possibly thousands of miles to get to the store. When you bring this produce home, it likely sits on your counter or in your crisper for days before before you eat it. Because fresh produce loses nutritional value from the time it's picked, what you're eating is not as nutritious as you think.

In contrast, frozen fruits and veggies are picked at their peak and flash frozen so they retain more of their nutrients and flavor. Canned fruits and veggies are also picked at their peak but some of their nutritional value can be lost during the blanching (quick heating) process. In some cases, like with canned tomato products, the heating process releases more of the nutrients. So if fruits and veggies are canned in their own juices and without added salt, they can be a comparable alternative to fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables.

Purchasing frozen and canned produce also gives you more choices year round, and reduces the amount of produce you throw away.

[www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)  
[www.fruitvegquality.ucdavis.edu](http://www.fruitvegquality.ucdavis.edu)

To learn more about the health topics addressed in this newsletter, log in to MyBlueService from [www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com). Access the **Living Healthy** tab and select **A-Z Health Topics from WebMD**. You can also click the **Living Healthy** tab to access timely health information, online tools and calculators, symptom checkers, and tips for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

# AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH

## Understanding your nutritional needs.

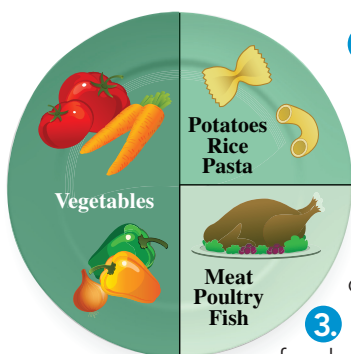
Diabetes is a disease where the body stops producing enough insulin or becomes resistant to the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone used by the body to regulate the amount of sugar in the blood stream by transporting that sugar (glucose) to the body's cells. Without glucose, our cells would starve.

Controlling blood glucose with a healthy diet is a good idea for everyone, not just for people with diabetes. We should all maintain a healthy balance of fats, proteins and carbohydrates. However, "carb counting" takes on a new meaning for people living with diabetes. If you have diabetes, it's important that you eat an appropriate amount of carbohydrates at each meal and determine how frequently you should eat, depending on your activity level and diabetes medicine. Meet with a Registered Dietician or a Certified Diabetes Educator for a personalized meal plan.

## Learn the rules of good nutrition.

If you've ever felt overwhelmed walking down the grocery aisle, you're not alone! It's difficult to identify which foods are actually good for us.

If you have diabetes, there are no "off limits" foods because it's mostly about variety and how much you eat. Portion control is easy when you create a "new" plate. Here's how:



1. Draw an imaginary line down the middle of your plate. Cut one side of your plate in half so you have three portions or sections.
2. Fill the largest section with non-starchy veggies like spinach, carrots, peppers, beets, broccoli, okra, mushrooms, etc.

3. Fill one smaller section with starchy foods like whole grain breads or crackers, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, beans, potatoes, peas, etc.
4. Fill the second smaller section with protein like skinless poultry, fish, seafood, lean cuts of beef or pork (think "loin"), eggs, cheese, tofu, etc.
5. Add a glass of non- or low-fat milk (or a serving of light yogurt) and a piece of fruit (or a ½ cup of fruit salad, canned or frozen).

Now you have a perfectly portioned lunch and/or dinner plate! For breakfast, keep your portions in check by filling half of your plate with starchy foods (oatmeal, grits, hominy, cereal), one smaller section with protein and the other section with fruit.

The best part is, it's okay to eat sugary treats in moderation, even if you have diabetes! Completely depriving yourself of sweets will surely backfire, so give yourself permission to indulge occasionally.

## Adding up to good health.

Healthy eating is only one part of healthy lifestyle equation. Be sure to get at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise (try walking or bike riding) most days of the week, and limit your alcohol intake. Remember, every gram of alcohol contains seven "empty" calories, and if you have diabetes, excessive alcohol can cause severe episodes of low blood sugar.

For more information about healthy eating, browse WebMD's Wellness Program on Healthy Nutrition. Log on to MyBlueService from bcbsfl.com and access the **Living Healthy** tab. Select **Wellness Programs** then **Healthy Nutrition**.

[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)  
[www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)



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