

FIT/BITS

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HEALTH IN THE NEWS

Panel Recommends Against PSA Test for Men, For HPV Vaccine for Boys

A U.S. Preventive Services Task Force has concluded that the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test should no longer routinely be given to men. The panel concluded that the test causes harm and does not save lives. The task force is also recommending that boys be vaccinated against Human Papilloma Virus (HPV).

This is the same federal task force that caused a firestorm with its recommendations regarding mammograms in 2009. This time around, the focus was men's health.

Regarding the PSA, the task force performed a thorough review of scientific data and concluded that the test harms "significant numbers of men, on the order of 20-30%," with significant harms, according to Virginia Moyer,

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NUTRITION

Hidden Sugar

The controversy over whether or not high-fructose corn syrup is an unhealthy ingredient in food has continued to grow. It has come to the point that the industry is trying to rename the product "corn sugar," and some food manufacturers are hyping the fact that their products contain "real sugar," not high-fructose corn syrup. Coca-Cola bottled in Mexico is a perfect example of such a product.



Unfortunately, the argument should not be about the type of added sugar but whether or not any form of added sugar is detrimental to health. The real problem with high fructose corn syrup is not that it may be different from sugar (it is likely that it is metabolized just like any other sugar); but that it is such an inexpensive version of sugar, it is added almost automatically to processed foods to add flavor and to prolong shelf life. High fructose corn syrup happens to provide "superior moisture control" and "inhibits microbial growth." The fact that it is a syrup instead of crystalline makes high-fructose corn syrup easy to add to foods during the manufacturing process. The end result, though, is more empty calories in processed foods.

How much added sugar is too much? The government has not set guidelines regarding sugar consumption, only recommending that consumers should avoid taking in excess calories through added sugars. The American Heart Association (AHA), however, felt that consumers needed a specific target and developed their own guidelines. The AHA recommendations are no more than 25 grams (about 6 teaspoons) of added sugar for women and no more than 37.5 grams (about 9 teaspoons) for men. Keep in mind that one 12-oz. can of Coca-Cola contains 39 grams of sugar! It would take proactive work on the part of consumers to begin to approach meeting these recommendations.

The first step toward reducing added sugar consumption is to become an educated consumer. In addition to high fructose corn syrup and sugar, added sugar can take many forms as an ingredient. Look for the following in the listing of ingredients: agave nectar, brown sugar, cane crystals, cane sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, crystalline fructose, dextrose, evaporated cane juice, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, syrup and turbinado sugar. Remember that food ingredients are listed in descending order of weight in the

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Rotating Planks

Muscles Targeted: Rotator Cuff, Core

Complete 3 sets of 15-30 seconds in each position.

Beginner:



START: Place your forearms and knees on a mat. Keep your hips low so there is a straight line from your shoulders to your knees.

FINISH: Shift your weight onto your right forearm; rotate your body until your knees and hips are in line with your shoulders. Raise your arm.

Intermediate:



START: Place your forearms on a mat and your toes on the floor, lift your hips until there is a straight line from your toes to your shoulders.

FINISH: Shift your weight on to your right forearm; rotate your body until your feet and hips are in line with your shoulders. Keep your feet staggered for more stability.

Advanced:



START: Place your forearms on a mat and your toes on the floor, lift your hips until there is a straight line from your toes to your shoulders.

FINISH: Shift your weight on to your right forearm; rotate your body until your feet and hips are in line with your shoulders. Stack one foot on top of the other.

Note: All versions may be performed with straight arms for variety.

Ellen Histen and Shaun Carr, Perfectly Fit Corporate Services, Inc.

Turkey and Squash Chili

A great way to use leftover Thanksgiving turkey!



Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 c reduced sodium chicken broth
- Flesh from butternut squash
(pierce, roast 1 hr. at 400° F, cut in half, remove seeds and scoop out flesh)
- 1-4.5 oz. can chopped green chiles
- 2-14.5 oz. cans petite diced tomatoes
- 1-15 oz. can kidney or black beans
- 1-10 oz. package frozen corn
- 1-8 oz. can tomato sauce
- 1 Tbsp chili powder
- 1 Tbsp cumin
- 1 t allspice
- 1 t garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Sliced ripe avocado for garnish

Directions:

Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Stir in the onion and garlic; cook and stir for three minutes. Add the cooked turkey, butternut squash, chicken broth, green chilies, tomatoes, rinsed beans, corn, and tomato sauce; season with chili powder, cumin, allspice and garlic powder. Bring to a simmer, then reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer about 20 minutes. Serve and garnish with avocado slices if desired.

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product, so you should try to avoid products that list any of these sugars near the top of the list or products that contain several of these sweeteners in combination, resulting in a high level of added sugar.

One problem with nutrition labels is that natural sugars are not distinguished from added sugars on food labels. While natural or added sugars have the same caloric content, many foods with significant natural sugar content also have significant nutritional value as well—think fresh fruit or no sugar added-dairy products that contain beneficial vitamins and minerals in addition to naturally occurring sugars. Added sugars only add empty calories, and, admittedly, taste. Learning to choose products free of added sugar may require some taste adjustments as well, weaning off that super-sweet taste. Remember, though, that sweeter taste often masks poorer quality flavor due to inferior ingredients.

Breakfast cereals frequently are loaded up with sugar to the extent that sugar is often the first or second ingredient. For example, Trix cereal lists sugar as the second ingredient and corn syrup as the fourth ingredient. Lucky Charms lists marshmallows as the second ingredient (sugar is the main ingredient listed in the marshmallows), followed by sugar as the third ingredient and corn syrup as the fifth ingredient. Granola and flavored instant oatmeal are other offenders. Better choices are cereals with any added sugar farther down on the ingredient list or cereals like Shredded Wheat, a classic cereal with no added sugar.

While you may be conditioned to expect added sugar in cereals, added sugar is hidden in many products where you might not expect it, or sometimes in greater quantities than you would expect. Following is a list of products that may contain high levels of added sugar: tomato-based products like jarred spaghetti sauce, breads and crackers (Brownberry 100% Whole Wheat Bread lists sugar as the third ingredient and also contains raisin juice concentrate and molasses), seasoning mixes, condiments like ketchup and salad dressing, flavored yogurt, peanut butter, frozen dinners, canned soups, “shelf-stable” meals, canned vegetables, protein and granola bars, sweetened iced tea (Nestea sweetened iced tea with lemon has 33 grams of sugar in a 12 oz. can), juice drinks (Sunny D is water and corn syrup with less than 2% real juice), sports drinks and dried fruit. Sugar is often added to low fat or fat-free products to make up for the loss in flavor.

The only way to avoid added sugar in your diet is to learn to read the labels of every food you purchase. If you use prepared or frozen foods, you won't be able to eliminate all extra sugar. However, with careful choices, you should be able to reduce the amount of added sugar consumed by you and your family. If you make soda a rare treat and avoid sugary cereals, you are halfway there.

Nancy Tashman, *Perfectly Fit Corporate Services, Inc.*

Sources:

www.sweetsurprise.com

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professor of Pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine and chair of the panel.

Many people have long been skeptical of the PSA, which is notorious for false positives. These false positives cause anxiety and often result in unnecessary biopsies that are painful and may result in serious complications.

Prostate cancer is usually a slowly developing cancer. In fact, the cancer may remain undetected in a patient who goes on eventually to die from other causes. Even with a positive diagnosis, many men are only monitored for progress of the disease. For those who undergo treatment, frequent unwanted side effects include impotence and incontinence. Prostate cancer can be diagnosed with a physical examination instead of the PSA test.

The conclusions of the panel have received some criticism from patient advocacy groups who insist that lives will be lost as a result of discontinuing the PSA test. A criticism of the panel itself is that there is no urologist or medical oncologist on the panel. However, Howard Brody of the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, TX concludes that, “unfortunately, the best evidence is that while some men might be helped by screening, others would be harmed, and on balance the test is not useful overall.”

Regarding the HPV vaccine, the panel is recommending that boys start the vaccine at ages 11-12 years. It is given in the same series of three shots that girls receive.

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The panel noted that the vaccine will help halt the spread of HPV, reduce the risk of genital warts and help protect against several forms of cancer in men which have been increasing in occurrence. The hope is that the incidence of these cancers will be reduced if the spread of HPV can be reduced.



One problem with the vaccine is that since it is given as a series of three shots, each six months apart, not all girls receiving the vaccine go on to receive all three shots and complete the vaccination. This reduces the overall effectiveness of the vaccine. Vaccinating boys as well as girls will help the overall effectiveness of the vaccine in stopping the spread of HPV.

HPV is a sexually transmitted disease that often does not cause symptoms in those infected. However, the virus kills an estimated 4000 women and 1000 men each year through various malignancies.

Nancy Tashman,
Perfectly Fit Corporate Services, Inc.

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Stein, Rob. "Routine HPV Vaccination Recommended for Boys." www.washingtonpost.com. 25 October 2011. http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/routine-hpv-vaccination-recommended-for-boys/2011/10/25/gIQArdgBGM_story.html

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Zesty Roasted Butternut Squash

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
3 1/2 pounds butternut squash
1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Toasted pine nuts for garnish



Directions:

Prepare butternut squash: pierce it with a fork and bake the squash, whole, at 400° F for one hour. Let cool, then halve lengthwise and remove the seeds with a spoon. In a large bowl, combine the parsley, oil, garlic, salt and pepper. Add squash and mix. Transfer to an ungreased shallow 2-qt. baking dish. Bake, uncovered, at 400° F for 50-55 minutes. Top with pine nuts. Serve.

“Success is often achieved by those who don’t know that failure is inevitable.”

~Coco Chanel

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Contact Us:

www.perfectlyfitcorporateservices.com
Nancy Tashman, Editor
info@perfectlyfitcorporateservices.com