



Weekly Tip:

I know that I have written about 'eating the rainbow' of veggies before and explained how each different color of vegetable has different vitamins and minerals in it. Dark greens, yellow, reds, orange, etc..

Now I am going to take the info to a whole new level and actually challenge you to do something you have never done before. Try some new foods!

This week, a great week for trying new veggies as harvest is done and locally grown produce can be found cheap (no excuses) - I want you to try a new veggie every day. That is 7 new veggies this week.

When choosing your new veggies—remember to select different colors and things you can try both raw and cooked. No matter how many veggies you do eat, I am sure you can find something new.

Who knows—maybe you'll find a new family favourite!

Is Coconut Oil a Superfood?

There has been a great deal of media, well ok, internet hype lately about the health benefits of coconut oil ever since Dr. Oz suggested it as a superfood for weight loss and the prevention of certain aging diseases. I won't go into my opinion on professionals who sell their endorsements to the highest bidder but I will give you my unbiased opinion on whether or not I think you should be including Coconut Oil in your diet and as usual I will not mince words. My opinion is Hell No.

Yes it is true that in the studies conducted with cultures who use coconut oil extensively there have been results showing lower instances of heart disease, dementia, hypertension and Alzheimer's. I won't deny that but what these reports don't tell you as they buy stock in coconut oil plants is that these researchers conducted the majority of their studies in areas and with cultures who also perform incredibly hard labor jobs every day and eat a total diet that is low in fat, high in protein and include mostly raw, non-processed foods. That doesn't sound like our North American habits now does it? So what these studies have proved is that a lifestyle that is very active and includes a

healthy balance of all foods, has the propensity to prevent obesity, heart disease, hypertension and create longer living, stronger brain cells. That is not a revelation to any of us. At least I hope it isn't. What worries me about the irresponsible promotion of coconut oil as a part of a healthy diet here in North America is that we do not have the lifestyles to support it. Yes it contains many good things—Omega 6 fatty acids for example BUT more importantly we cannot forget the bad things it contains which too many people have seemed to overlooked like the high percentage of saturated fats. And when I say high percentage—I mean almost all of it - more than butter.

Here in Canada and the US, we already over-consume all of our dietary fats but especially the unhealthy saturated variety in alarming proportions, amounts that cannot be filtered through our sedentary bodies. This is one of the leading causes of the obesity and lifestyle related illness we have in our society, Epidemic amounts of these illnesses.

So should we now follow the advice of a celebrity instead of using our own common sense and add even more of these artery-clogging fats to our diets

and the bodies of our children—I think not. There are so many other ways to get the same good nutrients found in coconut oil from other sources that are not as risky or as controversial.

In my opinion—there are no 'superfoods'. There are no magic potions, no wonder drugs that are suddenly going to make us healthy and help us live longer—they just don't exist. The secret to living longer, stronger is balance. Balance in our diet, moderation in our treats and activity in our day.

As you read the internet, watch the TV, remember that these people are being paid to promote these ideas. Dr. O may be wonderfully charismatic but let us not forget that he promoted both Acai Berry pills and HcG drops as miracle weight loss supplements—against all medical research and advice. It makes you wonder if he owns shares in those companies as he was found to have owned shares in the vaccine company that made the H1N1 vaccines he told everyone in America they had to get or risk certain death.

Please don't ever substitute someone else's opinion for your own—not even mine. Do your research and form your own conclusions.

Recipe Corner

Delicious and nutritious snack and meal ideas that are perfect for the whole family!
Straight from Michelle's kitchen!



Low Fat Zucchini Bread

This delicious fall-time loaf is low in fat, high in nutrients and even better tastes great! Each slice (10 per loaf) has less than 150 calories and is nut free so a great edition to the lunch box!

Sift together: 3 cups whole wheat flour; 1 tsp. each salt, baking soda and powder; 3 tsps. ground cinnamon

Blend together in a stand mixer:

3 eggs; 2 medium over-ripe bananas - mashed; 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
1 cup unsweetened apple sauce; 3 tsps. Vanilla extract

After blending the wet ingredients well, add the dry ingredients and mix then add 3 cups of shredded fresh zucchini. Pour batter into two sprayed loaf pans and bake at 325 degrees F for 60 minutes. Check at 40 and 50—loaves are cooked when knife inserted comes away clean and top springs back to touch.

Let cool for 20 minutes then remove from pans and let cool an additional 20 minutes before slicing. Loaves freeze very well.

PLEASE NOTE: because there is no fat used for binding, your finished loaves may have the appearance of being under-cooked where the bananas or apple sauce have settled if not quite blended enough—don't worry! As long as your knife comes away clean—it is cooked and low fat! Enjoy!!

Are muffins the healthier choice?

I am always bombarded by questions regarding healthy choices in restaurants and fast food eateries. The reason people ask those questions is that they want to change their behaviors without actually changing their behaviors—too much. This really isn't a bad thing at all—unfortunately when it comes to most fast food restaurants, you would be surprised at what you are really eating when you think you are making the healthier choice.

I am going to use good ole' Timmy's for comparison sake, just because of the prevalence of Tim Horton's in Canadian culture. Please know that I am not singling out this one restaurant—as far as I am concerned—they are really all in the same category and Timmy's is no different than any other donut shop in this way.

If you look at a standard glazed old fashioned donut at Timmy's (according to their own reported nutritional

information) you are looking at approximately 320 calories with 19 grams of fat and 22 grams of sugar—that is roughly 5 1/2 teaspoons! You will also find 1 gr of fiber and 3g of protein stuffed in there.

Now let's take a look at the 'healthier' choice many people make, a regular blueberry muffin. Biting into this morning treat you may be surprised to find 340 calories, 11 grams of fat and 25 grams of sugar! That is over 6 teaspoons! You will also find 2 grams of fiber and 5g of protein.

Not quite as healthy as you thought huh? Yes the muffin will give you more protein and slightly more fiber—but the differences are really miniscule compared to all of the sugar and fat that you will still consume. Now don't get me wrong, I am not saying to skip the muffin and scarf down the donut BUT - do not fool yourself that having a muffin with your double-double (a whole other story) - is a healthy choice. It may be healthier than a donut but

it is far from healthy.

In a standard 1800 calorie, well balanced diet I recommend that you have absolutely no more than 50 gr of sugar daily. If you are pre or full diabetic or trying to lose weight—that recommendation drops to 35g or lower. Your fat intake should be no more than 35g a day and that should be the healthy kinds (not what you find in processed baked goods). So one muffin gives you over 1/2 of your allowed sugar a day—HALF and over 1/3 of your fat requirements! And you haven't even eaten a fruit, vegetable or meal yet!

Now for those of you shaking your heads and saying, 'Yeah but I always take the low fat options!' Take a look at Timmy's Low fat Double Berry Muffin - 290 calories, 2.5g of fat, 4 gr of protein, 2g of fiber and a whopping 30 grams of sugar!!! Next time you decide to hit the drive thru for your daily snack, think about what exactly it is you are putting in your mouth, and think—is it really worth it?