



Spring 2019

The Seasonal Eating Lifestyle

A Healthy Lifestyle Including Seasonal Produce is Good for the Body & the Environment

Although grocery stores are filled with a wide variety of fresh fruits and veggies all year long, many of these items are not considered to be “in-season.” Because growing seasons in the northern and southern hemispheres are opposites, Americans are not limited in their food choices and can enjoy a juicy peach in the dead of winter. As individuals renew their commitment to a healthier body and more sustainable planet, many are adopting a new style of eating. It’s called “seasonal eating,” and you need not look further than your local Farmer’s Market as an indicator of what’s in season. It means eating fresh fruits and vegetables at the time of year when they are naturally harvested. Furthermore, it really isn’t new. Prior to the surge and success of global trade, everyone consumed a seasonal diet.

For many seasonal eaters, “local eating” compliments the lifestyle. This means buying produce that is grown closer to the places individuals live, thereby placing less strain on the environment. When food doesn’t require long-distance trucking, the carbon footprint is greatly reduced. It also means that the produce can be harvested at the correct time, when nutrients are at their peak. Early harvesting helps the produce better withstand shipping, but it compromises nutritional value, flavor, and fresh taste. Produce from a Farmer’s Market or CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) group is typically harvested within the previous 24 hours.

If you don’t have access to a Farmer’s Market or a CSA, maximize the choices you do have at your local supermarket. As a general rule of thumb, be aware of which produce items are in-season. Most markets offer good promotions on in-season items. Also, check the signs, labels, and stickers that indicate where the produce was grown; if you’re not sure, ask the produce manager. Frozen foods are also an option, as they are typically processed soon after harvesting at the peak of ripeness. Backyard gardens are, of course, healthy and rewarding.

Seasonal Eating	
SPRING	SUMMER
Artichokes	Beets
Asparagus	Berries
Cabbage*	Corn
Carrots*	Cucumbers
Chives	Eggplant
Fava beans	Figs
Garlic*	Grapes
Green onions	Green beans
Leeks	Lima beans
Lettuce	Melons
Mushrooms*	Okra
Onions*	Peppers
Parsnips	Stone fruit (apricots, cherries, nectarines, peaches, plums)
Peas	Summer squash
Radishes	Tomatoes
Rhubarb	Zucchini
Swiss chard	

*Year Round

RESEARCH PEARLS: Heart Disease & Stroke Statistics

According to the American Heart Association’s 2019 annual report, nearly half (48%) of American adults have some type of heart or blood vessel disease. This includes heart attacks, strokes, angina (chest pain), abnormal heart rhythms, and narrowing of the arteries. The report, which is based on data collected in 2016, also shows an increase in the number of deaths attributed to heart disease from 2015 (836,546) to 2016 (840,678); this increase follows a decline in heart-related deaths in previous years. The data showing an increase in the prevalence of heart disease has been attributed to the more stringent definition of hypertension. Previously, hypertension had been defined as 140/90mm Hg or higher, whereas now it is 130/80mm Hg or higher.

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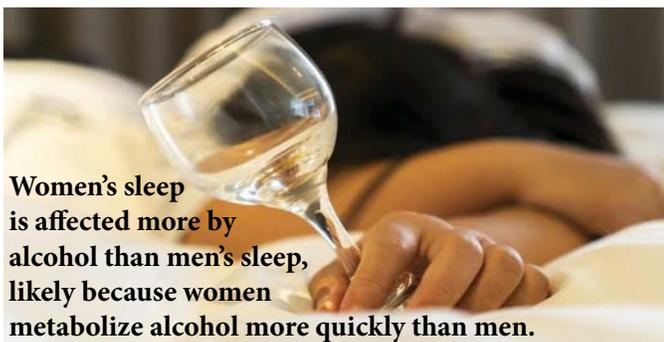
Alcohol & Insomnia

Alcohol Consumption Disrupts Sleep Cycles

Having a 'nightcap' before bedtime for the purpose of inducing sleep has long been a part of folk medicine. Alcohol in low doses does help promote sleep, but it's not recommended because it also interferes with sleep quality, and the sleep-promoting benefits usually wear off after several consecutive nights' use. Additionally, individuals who use alcohol frequently to help them fall asleep are more susceptible to dependency and experience changes in their sleep cycles over time. Alcoholism and insomnia are two chronic conditions that often exist simultaneously, regardless of which was the initial health issue.

Chronic alcohol consumption disrupts the normal functioning of thalamus, which is the part of the brain that helps regulate sleep. Even when non-alcoholics drink alcohol, their brain wave activity is altered during sleep. Normal brainwave activity fluctuates throughout the night according to the various stages of sleep. Alpha waves are present when an individual is awake, and when one initially falls asleep during the non-REM stages, the brainwaves transition from theta waves to spindle waves to slow waves, and finally to delta waves. As the body enters REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, the brain waves are similar to the alpha waves of being awake. Drinking alcohol before bedtime increases the amount of alpha and delta waves which interferes with the sleep cycle and diminishes the quality of sleep.

Insomnia is both a symptom of alcohol dependence and alcohol withdrawal, so even those trying to quit have difficulty staying asleep and getting enough quality sleep to be alert and productive the next day. For anyone tempted to self-medicate with a nightcap, consider sleep-promoting foods instead, especially those that contain tryptophan (milk), calcium (eggs, kale, leafy greens), magnesium (walnuts), melatonin (almonds, pistachios), and vitamin B6 (salmon, tuna).



Women's sleep is affected more by alcohol than men's sleep, likely because women metabolize alcohol more quickly than men.

Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I learn.

Benjamin Franklin

Dear Dr. Liker...

What are the health benefits of turmeric?



The major bioactive components in turmeric are the curcuminoids, which include curcumin (diferuloylmethane), the most active and widely studied component. Curcumin has potent anti-oxidative and anti-inflammatory action; in vitro (test tube) studies have shown curcumin to scavenge free radicals, inhibit lipid peroxidation and LDL oxidation, and prevent DNA oxidative damage. Its anti-inflammatory activity includes inhibiting COX-2, prostaglandins, leukotrienes, and other inflammatory mediators. These benefits have significance in the management of many chronic and autoimmune diseases that patients face today.

Curcumin is being widely studied, and both in vitro and in vivo (animal and human) studies have demonstrated improvements in cardiovascular health, gastrointestinal health, joint and muscle health, blood glucose control, brain/cognitive health and chemoprevention with curcumin/turmeric consumption. Specific benefits include: decreased cholesterol levels; improved bacterial balance in the gut microbiome; reduction of IBS symptoms; decreased joint pain in arthritis patients; greater blood glucose control in people with diabetes; preservation of memory and cognitive function in aging patients; and inhibition of carcinogen-induced tumors. Due to the wide-ranging benefits, including more curry dishes in your diet is more than just good for your taste buds.



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