

Summer Bounty

Local tomatoes are finally coming in. If you are a fresh tomato lover, I don't think anything beats the flavor of the season's first local *Lycopersicon esculentum*, AKA: tomatoes. If you are enjoying your own, even better!

This month's recipes celebrate this favorite native American vegetable that is really a fruit. The natives in what is now Mexico called it *xitomatl*, and variations of that name survived translation into other languages.

Though it was widely cultivated and enjoyed by ancient cultures, Europeans and their American descendents feared that the fruit would poison them. Today, we consume millions of tons of a variety of tomatoes.

Unless you grew your own, though, until recent years the only type readily available was the pretty but tasteless supermarket variety. Bred for travel and shelf life, it pales in every way with the rich colors and flavors of the heirloom varieties which are thankfully making a comeback. I can hardly wait to see my kitchen counters covered with ripe specimens awaiting their turn to be devoured.

Perhaps it is the Italians we should be grateful to for promoting our initial love affair with the tomato. Italian immigrants brought spaghetti sauce to our attention in the 1800's, and while they were then making pizzas, it was our returning WWII soldiers who helped make these dishes the mainstays they are today. Our Latin neighbors to the south have given us our most popular sauce ever, salsa. Can you imagine our "American" diet today without these foods?

As for their reputation for being poisonous, part of that stems from the fact that tomatoes are members of the nightshade family of plants. This species includes white potatoes, peppers, and eggplant, as well as toxic belladonna, jimson weed and tobacco. In truth, these fruits and vegetables are harmful to many people. If you suffer from arthritis or migraines, for example, you might find significant relief by eliminating nightshades from your diet. Some people can tolerate one of the vegetables but not others. Sensitive individuals often notice an unpleasant reaction within 24 hours of eating the offending food. If you are interested in knowing more about this, please contact me.



"A research project in Australia, entitled *The Congruent Garden: an Investigation into the Role of the Domestic Garden in Satisfying Fundamental Human Needs*, interviewed gardeners on the values of gardening in their everyday lives. The researcher, Mike Steven, established that gardens have the potential to satisfy nine basic human needs — subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity, freedom— across four existential states (being, having, doing and interacting.)"

Mike Steven, Lecturer in Landscape Studies,
University of Western Sydney, Australia

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I Think You Should Know . . .

Worldwide, we use about half a million plastic bags every minute, which create tons of everlasting litter, clog up sewer systems, and endanger a variety of marine animals.

In 2002, Ireland began charging a tax (currently 33 US cents) on plastic shopping bags. Within a few weeks, use of plastic bags had dropped by 94%. Today, everyone carries cloth or some type of reusable shopping bag, and most importantly, it has become socially unacceptable to use plastic bags. Tax money that is collected goes to the Ministry of Environment for environmental law enforcement and clean up projects.

The valuable red pigment antioxidant, lycopene, found in tomatoes, is more available to the body when consumed with a little oil and the tomatoes are cooked. The lycopene in orange “tangerine” tomatoes is absorbed twice as easily as that from red tomatoes when both are raw. The lycopene in watermelon is bioavailable as is— enjoy!

Whole or ground flaxseed is a great source of quality omega-3 fatty acids. However, ***I no longer recommend flaxseed oil***, as recent research has indicated that the oil may be harmful and contribute to cancer development. This is one reason why it is best to consume foods as close to their whole state as possible—separating the components disrupts critical interactions, creating potentially unhealthy consequences.

Herbs such as turmeric, ginger, and cumin offer significant health benefits including anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, and anti-cancer actions. These spices aren't just good for your palate, they are great for your health. Watch for upcoming articles about these spices in future issues, and in the meantime, enjoy them often.

Garlic is Amazing

As I write this, a small storage room in my basement is fragrant with (some would say *reeks of*) garlic that I have drying there following this month's yearly harvest. (Plant in the fall, harvest in the summer) This pungent herb is an essential ingredient in my kitchen, and I couldn't be without it. Fortunately, its fiery flavor is tamed with the slow cooking I am fond of.

Allium sativum, the “stinking rose”, has been used medicinally for thousands of years, and was even found preserved in King Tut's tomb. Research on garlic has been going on since Pasteur noticed its antibiotic action in the mid 1800's.

This aromatic bulb is known for boosting the immune system, reducing blood pressure, lowering cancer risk, calming inflammation, and more. It has been shown to be one of the most potent antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal agents found in nature.

Next month, I'll tell you why I consider garlic to be so essential to health.

Information contained in this newsletter is not intended as a diagnosis, prescription, or treatment for any illness or disease, physical or mental, nor is it intended to be a substitute for regular medical care from a licensed physician.

The Truth About . . . Fluoride

This article is taken directly from my website article on The Pure Water Dilemma, but I feel it is worth bringing to your attention again. My current comments appear in [] brackets.

Fluoride has been a hot topic of controversy since the 1940's, and it is hard to know what to believe. I can give you a few facts.

Until 1945, fluoride was considered to be an environmental pollutant. Keep in mind that the fluoride added to drinking water is not pure, pharmaceutical grade. It is a waste product of aluminum and phosphate fertilizer production. During World War II, Alcoa Aluminum found itself with huge waste product piles of fluoride. They commissioned a study, which "found" that naturally occurring fluoride seemed to help "fix" calcium in teeth, even as it caused damaging discoloration known as mottling. The researcher in charge, Dr. H. T. Dean, later admitted to manipulating the data he provided.

No testing for safety issues was ever done before it became standard procedure to add fluoride to our water supply.

A former head chemist of the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Dean Burk implored the EPA to remove fluoride from our drinking water back in 1985, because of its links to significant increases in cancer rates. Articles regarding fluoride-associated rates of hip fracture, osteosarcoma (bone cancer), osteoporosis, and neurological toxicity have been published by prestigious medical journals around the world, including our own Journal of the American Medical Association, The New England Journal of Medicine, and Neurotoxicology and Teratology. I encourage you to search these journals for the numerous fluoride related articles they have published. The Physicians Desk Reference (PDR) lists many effects of fluoride toxicity, including immune system disruption, skin irritations such as eczema, Down's syndrome, heart problems, and mottling of the teeth, called fluorosis.

About half of us have this tooth enamel discoloration, and numbers of those affected is growing. Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral, and present in small quantities in many of the foods we eat. There are a few communities, mainly in the west, in which it is found naturally in toxic amounts, and during the 1800's caused major tooth discoloration (called "Colorado brown tooth").

Contrary to what you have been led to believe, studies do not show that fluoride prevents tooth decay. What they show is that it hardens tooth enamel. What is often omitted is that the tooth also becomes more brittle in the process. [This only becomes apparent as we age]

I am thrilled that new parents are being warned not to mix infant formula with fluoridated water. Have you ever noticed the warnings on toothpastes urging small children not to swallow it, or to call the poison control center in case of ingestion? **A study done by Proctor and Gamble back in 1989, showed that genetic damage could occur with half the amount of fluoride that is normally added to municipal water.**

The only methods that can remove fluoride from our home water are reverse osmosis and distillation, which I will discuss later. I encourage you to check some of the resources I provide at the end of this article or do your own research into this national experiment in which we are all unwitting guinea pigs. [please see the website "Water" page for this info]

This is one of the few of many toxins that could be easily eliminated, and most other nations in the world have done so. Only a handful of countries still fluoridate their water and the healthiest ones have rejected or stopped water fluoridation. (Remember that the US ranks 27th in world health ratings.) A few cities in the US are getting fluoride out of their municipal water systems. Why not all of us? The words money, lawsuits, and propaganda come to mind. You should know that primitive societies have beautiful strong teeth without the help of fluoride. It isn't until they begin eating sugar like we do, that tooth decay becomes common.

[Alarmed? Skeptical? Please, confirm with your own research, and go fluoride free soon!]

Check It Out

Conditioned hypereating, says Dr. David Kessler, is a challenge. No kidding! You think?!

Conditioned hypereating is a relatively new term, but one that bears remembering. It means that we have been conditioned, or taught, to eat too much. It sounds like something out of a psychology lab, and well it should. We are food industry lab rats, and we are being set up to develop obesity, diabetes and dozens of other diseases in unprecedented numbers.

It's no secret that the food industry develops food product's appearance, flavor, ingredients, packaging, and advertising in ways designed to make us eat more and want more (more often). It is well known that many of the more common additives, such as MSG, Splenda, and High Fructose Corn Syrup switch off the "that's enough" mechanism in our bodies. They also create biological addictions in the form of cravings for more of the same substances to satisfy us.

Natural foods like salt, sugar, and fat create a desire for the food. How often have you known you wanted something crunchy and salty, or smooth and sweet? More often than not, we crave certain foods not because we are actually hungry, but because we *want* to eat a particular type of food.

Dr. Kessler, a former FDA commissioner, has made an admirable gesture in admitting that the commercial food industry in this country is the major cause of poor American health and obesity. I applaud Dr. Kessler's efforts, but I don't think he goes nearly far enough.

He describes how the body's hunger and appetite regulating mechanisms have been short circuited by the ever increasing amounts of salt, sugar, and fat pre-set in the foods most commonly eaten by the average American.

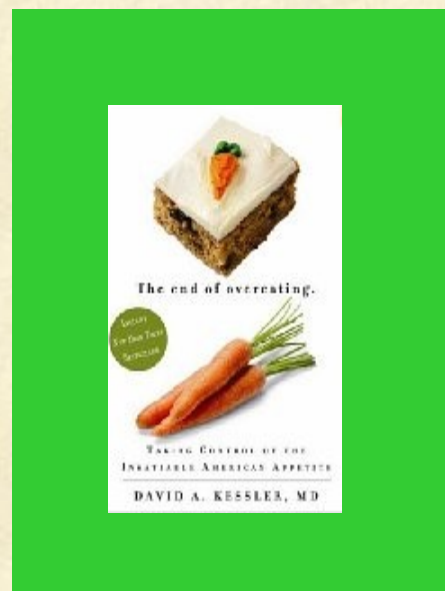
The movie theaters have known the power of the smell of fresh buttered popcorn since I was a small child. And how about the tantalizing waft of mall cinnamon buns? Higher fat content helps spread the aroma.

The ability to discriminate complex flavors is being lost. If it is sweet, salty, and fatty, and has what the industry calls good "mouth feel", down the hatch it goes. One reason fast food is fast is because it goes down easily, with little chewing required. Many people never really taste what they are eating.

The End of Overeating: Taking Control of the Insatiable American Appetite

By: David A. Kessler, MD

"Regular exposure to palatable foods rich in salt, sugar, and fat can change the way our brains work."



I doubt the average person is going to suddenly "wake up" one day and eat fewer processed foods and more whole, healthy ones. Dr. Kessler expresses the need for reform, but until our government supports small farmers and fresh fruits and vegetables the way it does sugar and corn, it isn't likely to happen anytime soon.

In closing, I think the book has many good points, but instead of encouraging you to read it, I will ask you instead to be more conscious about what and why you are eating. Ask yourself if what you are eating will help you look and feel your best now and in the years to come.

You are (and will be) what you eat!

From My Kitchen : In Honor of The Tomato

Tomato lovers know that there isn't much of anything that can beat a ripe summer tomato that's simply cut up and eaten. There are a few ways to make a meal out of fresh tomatoes that I wanted to share with you. You will notice that I always "drizzle with olive oil". This is because the oil serves to make certain important nutrients like lycopene more readily absorbed by the body, and because it helps satisfy our body's need for quality essential fatty acids. The oil also helps carry the flavonoids so that you are better able to savor and enjoy flavors and aromas.

Please use the freshest ingredients you can find, and choose local organic foods whenever possible. Exact amounts are not given for most recipes, because they aren't necessary. Just taste as you go and use amounts that taste right to you. It's impossible to go wrong.

Gazpacho (cold tomato based soup)

Origin: Spain

If a cold soup seems odd to you, just humor me and give it a try.

3-4 cups chopped tomatoes (canned also work well—homemade or a quality commercial brand like Muir Glen®)

1 medium cucumber (if not tender, remove peel & seeds)

1 small red bell pepper

1/4 small onion

1/2 garlic clove

1 tsp red wine or balsamic vinegar

1 TBS olive oil

Puree this in a blender, but not until smooth. The degree of chunkiness depends on personal preference. Salt to taste and set aside in a cool place for at least an hour before serving.

If you are using fresh tomatoes, the soup can become too watery. Tearing up a slice of stale bread and pureeing it into the mixture is a traditional method of thickening gazpacho. If your soup is a little too "acidic", add a pinch of sugar. It can be garnished with some finely chopped cucumbers, peppers, and onion, or a few freshly made croutons. Please do not use pre-packaged hard croutons, as these will not "melt" into the gazpacho the way homemade ones do.

Quick croutons: slice a stack of stale (or lightly toasted) bread into cubes and sauté in a skillet with a drizzle of olive oil mixed with a bit of butter. Stir over medium heat until the cubes are toasted and browned. Serve immediately. The contrast of warm croutons and cold soup is an experience in and of itself!

Pan con Tomate (Bread with Tomato)

Origin: Spain

Simple and positively delicious!

Take thick slabs of hot, lightly toasted country style bread, rub surface with a cut garlic clove and then quickly rub the cut side of a freshly halved, perfectly ripe tomato over the toast until it "melts" into it. Drizzle with olive oil and top with a sprinkle of freshly ground sea salt and pepper.

Bruschetta (Bread with Tomatoes)

Origin: Italy

Chop up juicy fresh tomato and transfer to a bowl. Sprinkle with sea salt and a very light drizzle of olive oil. I like to use a garlic press to squeeze in some fresh garlic, too. Add a few freshly chopped basil leaves. Stir together and use to top freshly toasted Italian bread. You can add a little chopped onion or other fresh herbs as you like, as well as a grinding of black pepper.

Salsa Fresca (Fresh Sauce)

Origin: Latin America

Mine is the mild mannered Costa Rican version, but you can spice it up by adding chopped hot peppers if you want.

Diced fresh tomatoes, minced white or yellow onion, minced fresh cilantro, a squeeze of lime, a drizzle of olive oil, and a generous sprinkling of sea salt.

Enjoy it alone or serve with tortilla chips, or over any kind of grilled fish or meat.

Probiotics: Necessary for Life

Probiotics (“pro life” bacteria) are the only supplements that I recommend for virtually everyone, regardless of age or health status. Probiotics allow your digestive and immune systems to work properly, resulting in a huge domino effect of good health for you. Your body is able to absorb nutrients and digest food correctly, and its ability to make other nutrients is greatly improved.

Most experts consider your “gut” to be your second immune system center. Good bacteria populations are vital to your good health. Animal studies have demonstrated that killing off all the gut bacteria always results in poor health, and usually, the eventual death of the animal.

The day we are born, our bodies begin accumulating populations of different probiotic strains. Over time, we accumulate a wide variety of good bacteria needed for optimal health—as many as 1,000 species! At least, we should. Bottle feeding, overuse of antibiotics (antibiotic means “against life”), and our obsession with cleanliness have changed our bacterial status. There is considerable speculation that even the passage through the birth canal helps inoculate infants with some of the mother’s good bacteria. A Caesarian birth, then, could immediately create a probiotic disadvantage. (Note: A C-section is often an unavoidable, life saving procedure, but I am opposed to it for the sake of mere convenience) There are good reasons why we do not have pockets like opossums!

Human breast milk contains several strains of Bifidobacteria, one of the primary strains required for digestion of breast milk (one reason why feeding infants cow’s milk isn’t a good idea—we don’t have the correct strains to digest it like a calf would). Bifidobacteria also impact immune system regulation, as our bodies learn to differentiate harmless from harmful substances. Failure of this process, which occurs throughout our life, is believed to be a major contributor to the current allergy epidemic.

Adults carry 5-10 pounds of bacteria in their guts at any given moment. 85% of it should be made up of the good guys, with 15% being the undesirables. Even the bad guys serve a purpose, but if they take over, they wreak havoc with our health in sneaky ways you wouldn’t imagine.

Antibiotics kill both helpful and harmful microbes, and as often happens, the bad guys recover more quickly. Antibiotics can be miracle drugs, but the cost of decades of abuse is coming back to haunt us in numerous ways. Every time you drink chlorinated water (or breathe in chlorinated steam-in the shower) you are killing off some of your body’s helpful bacteria.

If you have ever developed a yeast infection following a round of antibiotics, you have experienced this. Good bacteria control many organisms like harmful E. Coli, and common Candida yeast. E. Coli Shiga toxin 2 is responsible for some of the deadly food poisoning infections, while Candida overgrowth may cause a number of health problems, including fatigue, irritability, and joint pain.

Children who play in the dirt and/or have pets typically have fewer allergies and health problems than those who live in pristine environments. Research confirms that we need this early and varied exposure to germs for our immune systems to learn how to function well. Additional studies have shown that the dirt itself is a source for many vital probiotic strains. These are sometimes called soil based organisms or homeostatic soil organisms. Animals accumulate these naturally, and it appears we benefit, too. Who could have guessed how healthy those mud pies really were?!

What happens when you take probiotic supplements? First, you help restore the delicate balance of intestinal flora needed for optimal health. You will feel less gassiness and bloating, have fewer infections of all types, see clearer skin, and enjoy fresher breath. By decreasing the amounts of toxic waste in the body, even your brain benefits with clearer thinking and better concentration. Problems with yeast infections are diminished or eliminated. Leaky gut syndrome, in which particles from the intestinal tract are able to leak out into the blood stream can be reversed. (This syndrome exacerbates allergies, and increases inflammation throughout the body, making cardiovascular and arthritis problems worse, for example. It can have serious consequences.)

Probiotics, continued...

There are a number of excellent probiotic supplements in area health food stores. Many are found in the refrigerator cases. They come in many forms including beadlets, capsules, liquids, and chewables. I recommend enteric coated capsules or beads whenever possible, because your stomach's digestive juices do manage to destroy large numbers of the probiotic bacteria. Some of the "top of the line" brands are costly, but I often recommend them when someone's health is in critical need of a major and quick boost. I suggest buying a different brand each time you refill your supply. There are dozens of strains of probiotics, and by varying what you buy each month, you help populate your system with a good variety of them. I usually keep both refrigerated and non refrigerated versions on hand. If you are lactose intolerant, look for dairy free formulations. Some of the brands I recommend are by New Chapter, Young Living, Garden of Life, Nature's Way, and Jarrow. Several physician designed formulas are also worth ordering and these include those sold by Dr. David Williams, Dr. Julian Whitaker, Dr. Mercola, and Dr. Stephen Sinatra.

Beware of cheap brands that may contain few live bacteria, (as many as half the products on shelves may be worthless) Some may start out fine, but potency is lost in transport, through poor storage (at high temperatures), and age. You can find out which did the best in testing by going to www.consumerlab.com, which is the consumer reports of the supplement world.

People who regularly consume probiotic rich yogurts have fewer strep or sinus infections. One of the main reasons that fermented foods like yogurt, sauerkraut, kefir, and miso are so good for you is that they contain probiotics. Unfortunately, pasteurization kills probiotics off, so manufacturers replace them after processing. Of course, this is never as good as the original population. Despite all the media claims of commercial yogurts to boost probiotic populations in your body, the truth is that few of them contain enough live probiotic bacteria to do much good. Plus, the additives and sugar they contain often offset any benefits. The healthiest probiotic foods are those you make yourself, and it is easier than you might think. I have simple recipes for yogurt and sauerkraut that do not require specialized equipment. Just ask and I shall send! They are far superior to anything you have ever bought at a store, so I hope you'll give them a try. At least one client has told me they would never let their family taste my homemade versions for fear that "they'll never eat store bought again!"

Most people can tell a difference in how they feel within a week or two of starting their probiotics. I recommend different amounts and dosages depending on the individual and their needs, but a daily supplement of probiotics is beneficial to virtually everyone. I hope you'll consider making them a part of your regular health care regimen. Contact me or an appropriate health care professional if you have any questions about these vital "for life" supplements

Specific strains of probiotics and their benefits include, but are not limited to, the following:

Bifidobacterium lactis: Helps stimulate immune system response, promotes production of natural killer cells, and acts against ulcer causing *helicobacter pylori*

Lactobacillus acidophilus: Protects digestive tract, helps digest dairy products, and promotes female health

Bifidobacterium longum: Enhances the immune system and helps digestive function—particularly important for carbohydrate metabolism and protection from seasonal allergy response

Bifidobacterium bifidum: Promotes optimal immune system function and digestion—This one is especially important for infants and children

Lactobacillus casei: Helps promote good populations of other probiotics, and helps with digestion

Lactobacillus plantarum: Improves the absorption of nutrients by the body's cells

Lactobacillus gasseri: Improves upper respiratory tract health and function

Lactobacillus rhamnosus: Promotes vaginal and urinary tract health, and protects against "travelers' diarrhea"

The Last Word

As always, I hope you have found this issue to be helpful, enjoyable, and informative. It is often difficult to decide which topics to address. There are so many concerns and issues to discuss. Dozens of you have voiced your frustration with the limitations of conventional health care and the ever growing push to use more and more drugs. I appreciate all of you who call and email me with your questions and comments, and thank you for the opportunity to share my passion for holistic health with you.

I have an important change to announce—Beginning in December, this monthly newsletter will become a quarterly publication, with issues presented in a seasonal fashion. This is necessary if I want to continue writing all of my own material, as I prefer to do. There simply aren't enough hours in my day to do everything I want to do! I will continue to address your requests as time and space allow. Please keep those calls and emails coming in!

School begins for most of our children in just a few days, and this means many of us will be busier than ever. Please take time now to stock up on some healthy snack and lunch foods—both for your kids and yourself!

Make it more convenient to do this by organizing a drawer with baggies, reusable containers, napkins, thermos, etc. Just a couple of minutes at night to plan the next day's lunch equals savings in time and money, and healthier food, too. Easiest trick? Prepare extra for intentional leftovers.

Gardening season is nearing the peak of harvest time, so canning, freezing, and even dehydrating are now in full swing. (see June 2009 issue, page 4)

I encourage you to visit your local farmers' markets to take advantage of the bounty our area has to offer.

Above all, enjoy the last weeks and the delicious flavors of summer. Until next month,

Live, Love, Laugh, and Be Well,

Marie



Renew in 90!

There are only a few spaces remaining for the Fall session of the *Renew in 90!* wellness program.

This unique 90 day program is for women who want to make true health & wellness a priority in their lives. Do you want to feel more energized, more focused, and more in control of your health and weight? Do you want to learn how to nourish your body and soul? Meals, recipes, and supplement plans are designed for your unique needs and lifestyle requirements.

Renew in 90! combines the best aspects of private consultation with supportive small group workshops, and addresses the variety of ways we sabotage our own efforts to achieve our goals.

The session kicks off in mid August.
Call for more information. 423-367-1396

Upcoming Seminar: The Holistic Guide to the Cold & Flu Season

Monday, August 31, 6:00-8:00 pm
Location: Kingsport
Cost to Attend: \$25 per person, (includes valuable guide)

My focus is knowledge, preparation and precaution, not panic. Learn what you can do now to get ready for this winter's cold and flu season, and enjoy health and peace of mind.

Seating is limited, and I expect this one to fill up quickly so call and register soon!
423-367-1396

Coming in September

Synthetic Fragrances: Neurotoxins in your perfume?!
Wonderful, Stinky, Aromatic Garlic: Super Herb