



An Apple A Day

Health Newsletter from the U.S. Apple Association

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Happy New Year!

Welcome,

Winter is here and there is no time like the present to enjoy a nice hot mug of steaming apple cider or snack on a fresh apple or two while reading through this version of "An Apple A Day." Here at the U.S. Apple Association we are looking forward to a busy year ahead. This edition of "An Apple A Day" includes results of new USApple-funded research that shows that apples help keep your mind sharp as you age. Also included is the latest in health and nutrition news with regards to apples and apple products. Lastly, this issue features five new USApple recipes that focus on simple yet gourmet ways to incorporate apples and apple products into mealtime.

As always, please feel free to share this newsletter with friends and colleagues – or better yet, direct them to contact me and I can have them signed up to receive the newsletter. Follow the links to read more about each article and all the reasons you should continue to eat U.S. apples and apple products.

For more information, be sure to visit our website at www.usapple.org. Is there something you would like to learn more about or see in the *An Apple a Day* newsletter? Feel free to email me suggestions or your questions at aparker@usapple.org

Healthy Regards,

Allison Parker, MS, RD

USApple Director, Consumer Health and Education

Keep Your Mind Sharp in 2010 with Apples!



New USApple-funded research has shown that there is a link between consumption of apples and apple products and improved brain health and diminishing symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. A University of Massachusetts-Lowell research team

led by Dr. Thomas Shea has uncovered a wide range of brain-protective effects in apples and apple juice that accompany aging and contribute to Alzheimer's disease. The research is discussed in the November/December 2009 issue of *AgroFOOD Industry High-Tech*.

"Our studies, like similar studies from other laboratories, provide evidence that good nutrition can help maintain a healthy brain, even in the face of genetic risk factors that may otherwise cause a decline in brain function in adult life and aging," Shea said.

Nine published studies from Shea's group, discussed within this review article, demonstrate that eating apples or drinking apple juice may improve cognition (the ability to know or understand), reduce hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease, and improve mood and behavior in persons with Alzheimer's disease. To view the news release on the USApple website, please click [here](#).

Apples Contribute to a Healthy Heart



Cardiovascular diseases, including stroke, are our nation's number 1 killer. To urge Americans to join the battle against these diseases, Congress has required the president to proclaim February "American Heart Month" since 1963. To celebrate, why not eat an apple or two? Apples have been found to be one of the three foods (along with

red wine and pears) that decrease the risk of mortality for both coronary heart disease and cardiovascular disease among post-menopausal women. A study, published in the March 2007 *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* reported that consumption of flavonoid-rich apples helped lower the risk of heart disease in more than 34,000 women.

It's not just women who reap the health benefits of eating apples. All adult apple-product consumers had a 27 percent decreased likelihood of having metabolic syndrome—defined as having three or more of the associated symptoms related to cardiovascular risk, including elevated blood pressure, increased waist size, and elevated c-reactive protein

levels—when compared to non-consumers, a 2008 study reported in a poster presentation at the *Experimental Biology* meeting.

For more apple health benefits including heart health, visit our research web page by clicking [here](#).

Even “Gut Friendly” Bacteria Love Apples



As an e-newsletter subscriber, you may already be aware of many of the health benefits of eating apples. But did you know they might be good for your gut too? Researchers from the University of Denmark have discovered that they could give the health of your intestines as well as your immune system a boost – by increasing the numbers of good gut bacteria. The research was published in the January 2010 issue of the journal *BMC Microbiology*.

Why Are Good Gut Bacteria so Important?

Most people think of bacteria as being bad because they cause infection, but having the right kind of bacteria – particularly in the intestines – has its benefits. Friendly bacteria that make their home in the intestines help to fight off bad bacteria and fungi that can cause infection. They also help with vitamin and nutrient absorption. These are the kinds of bacteria you definitely want to have around.

How Does Eating Apples Help?

When scientists fed rats a diet of apples in all its forms including juice, applesauce, and the whole fruit, the rats developed larger numbers of good gut bacteria. While foods such as yogurt and fermented foods such as miso and tempeh are known to contain friendly probiotic bacteria, the apple comes as a surprise.

How Does Eating Apples Increase Friendly Gut Bacteria?

Researchers believe it is due to the pectin the apple contains. Pectin is a fiber-like substance found in the cell walls of plants, and is often packaged and used as a gelling agent for people who make their own homemade jams and jellies. Apples are a natural source of this fiber-like material; but how does this increase good gut bacteria? The friendly bacteria in the intestines like to feed on apple pectin which allows them to replicate and thrive while doing their good disease fighting deeds in the intestines.

To view the news release on *Science Daily* click [here](#).

Apple a Day Could Cut Risk of Bowel Cancer



Researchers in Poland have continued to show evidence for the age old saying “an apple a day keeps the doctor away.” A study published in the January 2010 edition of the *European Journal of Cancer Prevention* found that eating just one apple a day could slash the risk of colorectal cancer by more than one third. Colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon and rectum) is the second leading cancer killer in the United States (CDC). It is the fourth most

common cancer in men and women (NIH). In 2009, the National Cancer Institute estimated that new cases of colon or rectal cancer together reached just under 150,000.

The researchers surveyed 592 people with colorectal cancer and 700 cancer-free individuals about their diet and lifestyle. What did they find? The cancer-free individuals tended to eat more apples than those with cancer and the more apples per day that an individual ate, the less likely they were to develop colorectal cancer. They also found that the anti-cancer effect was seen even when an individual had a low total consumption of fruits and vegetables but consumed at least an apple a day.

Why? The observed protective effect of apple consumption on colorectal risk may result from the apple's rich flavonoid and polyphenol content, which can inhibit cancer onset and cell proliferation. In addition, apples are a good source of fiber and a high-fiber diet is known as a risk reducer for colorectal cancer. The American Dietetic Association recommends that healthy Americans aim to consume 25-35 grams of fiber per day. The American Heart Association suggests that on average, we only consumer 15 grams per day. One large apple has about 4 grams of dietary fiber or 11-16% of the recommended daily amount.

To read the scientific abstract from the *European Journal of Cancer Prevention* click [here](#).

Antioxidant-rich Diet may Cut Lymph Cancer Risk



A new study published in the February 15th edition of the *International Journal of Cancer* reports that increased intake of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables (like apples) may reduce the risk of developing Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma by about 30 percent. The researchers

analyzed dietary intakes for 35,159 women between 55 and 69 years from the Iowa Women's Health Study. Increased intakes of fruits and

vegetables were associated with a 31 percent reduction in risk of developing lymphoma. The results support a potential role for antioxidant-rich foods like apples as protective factors against the development of Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. To read the scientific abstract from the *International Journal of Cancer* click [here](#).

10 Years Later: Are Americans any Healthier?



The short answer: not really. About 10 years ago the U.S. government set some lofty health goals for the nation to reach by 2010. How did we do? Not so hot. There are more obese Americans (but read the next story and find out the good news about overweight and obesity in America), we eat a diet that is

higher in fat and salt, we have higher blood pressure and more of our children have untreated tooth decay. But all is not lost. The nation is doing better on vaccination rates, decreasing workplace injury and decreasing the death rates from stroke, cancer and heart disease.

As we move into a new decade, the government will analyze how we did at meeting the goals they set for us 10 years ago. Then, they will draw up a new set of goals for 2020. What is my suggestion? Perhaps consider goals that are easier to achieve and a little less ambitious, such as eating more fruits and vegetables, and focus on reaching them.

And that may in fact be what they do. "We need to strike a balance of setting targets that are achievable and also ask the country to reach," said Dr. Howard Koh, the federal health official who oversees the "Healthy People" project.

The "Healthy People" objectives were first created in the late 1970s to set an agenda for getting Americans to live longer, healthier lives. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reassesses the goals and reports on the progress that has been made in the previous decade every 10 years. About 41 percent of the 1990 goals were achieved. In 2000, only 24 percent were achieved. What does this mean? After 30 years, the goals are not well known by the public and only a modest number of them have been met.

Health officials are working on developing goals for 2020 right now. The panel of experts has recommended that the new goals be more realistic and user-friendly for the public, although details are still forthcoming. For more information, please visit Healthy People at www.healthypeople.gov.

U.S. Obesity Rate Appears to be Slowing



New government data shows that 68% of U.S. adults are considered overweight, defined as having body mass index (BMI) of 25 or higher. A third of Americans are considered obese (BMI of 30 or higher). While

obesity continues to be a significant health concern, it appears that the rate of increase in overweight and obesity is starting to slow.

Over the past several decades, U.S. researchers at the National Center for Health Statistics at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been tracking the rates of obesity. The number of adults who were overweight or obese rose 8 percentage points between 1988 and 1994. Prior to 1980, obesity rates were relatively stable.

While this is good news, health professionals, dietitians and the U.S. population can't relax. Seventy percent of the U.S. population is still overweight and one third is obese which is among the highest in the world. In addition, there are differences demographically with African Americans and Mexicans tending to be more obese than whites. To read the research, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, click [here](#).

Trends for Food in 2010



At the beginning of any year food writers, editors and marketers tend to focus on what trends lay ahead for food in the upcoming year. Here are some that I found particularly interesting for apple fanatics.

- Epicurious.com, a website for "people who love to eat" felt that an "immunity-building" diet would be one of the health trends this year. Why? With H1N1 hysteria continuing, they suggested that building your immunity with foods will become a big health trend in 2010. Apples and apple products contain phytochemicals which help boost your immune system. To view more trends according to Epicurious.com, click [here](#).
- FoodProcessing.com suggests that consumers will tend towards healthy, fresh, natural and minimally processed foods in 2010, putting the produce category in the prime position for a great year ahead. They also note that 2010 will bring a new set of dietary guidelines which will likely place a greater emphasis on fruits and vegetables. In addition, they

acknowledge that consumers will continue to be concerned about food safety and social responsibility—including issues of fair trade, locally grown and environmental sustainability—when it comes to produce in 2010. To read more of their suggestions, that span the departments in the grocery store, click [here](#).

- Marlene Parrish, a writer for the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* who has had a life-long professional relationship with food and cooking as a cooking teacher, restaurant reviewer, marketing director for a restaurant group, food stylist and nationally syndicated columnist, wrote a great article on food trends for 2010. In it she suggests that consumers will be doing more home-cooking in 2010, eating less meat, searching for more functional foods (or foods with health benefits like apples) and aiming to eat more of the “right stuff.” To view her article click [here](#).

New USApple Recipes focus on Making Mealtime Simple yet Gourmet



Five new recipes are now “live” on the USApple [website](#). The recipes were created with the home chef in mind and are simple to prepare, delicious and will impress guests and family members. The new recipes include:

[Apple-Balsamic Salmon](#)

[Apple-Cheddar Mac and Cheese](#)

[Bacon 'N' Apple Cheeseburger Sliders](#)

[Caramelized Onion-Apple Soup with Blue Cheese Croutons](#)

[Chicken, Apple and Basil Sausage Patties](#)

Do you have a favorite apple recipe you'd like to share? Let us know. Email me at aparker@usapple.org to share or for more information.



The U.S. Apple Association (USApple) is the national trade association representing all segments of the apple industry. Members include 40 state and regional apple associations representing the 7,500 apple growers throughout the country, as well as more than 400 individual firms involved in the apple business. USApple's mission is to provide the means for all segments of the U.S. apple industry to join in appropriate collective efforts to profitably produce and market apples and apple products.