

QuickTakes



Environmental Health Works Both Ways

This month's seminar looks at how the environment impacts health. Knowing about health problems related to the environment is an important part of making healthy lifestyle choices. This awareness starts at home. A safe, healthy environment in the home includes:

- Avoiding lead
- Testing for radon
- Preventing carbon monoxide poisoning
- Stopping mold growth

The health of our earth has a direct impact on our health. Helping to clean up our air, water and soil can help to make our world and our bodies healthier. This month's newsletter highlights some of the ways you can reduce your impact on the environment.

Reduce Outdoor Air Pollution

Air pollution contributes to asthma, emphysema, heart disease and other illnesses. Power plants, automobiles and industrial facilities are responsible for a good portion of outdoor air pollution. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends these tips to help reduce air pollution and conserve energy:

- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use.
- Recycle paper, cardboard, plastic, glass bottles and aluminum cans.
- Shop with your own canvas bag instead of relying on throwaway bags.
- Buy energy efficient appliances. Look for the ENERGY STAR logo on the label.



Bike or Walk When You Can

Limiting driving has a double benefit for your health. Less driving means less pollutants. And walking and biking are great ways to get more active. You'll burn calories and improve heart health and mental health, all while improving the air we all breathe.

Limit Indoor Air Pollution

When talking about air pollution we usually think about the air outside. However, the air you breathe while inside can also damage your health. Radon, secondhand smoke, molds and the chemicals in building materials and household cleaners are just a few of the things that can cause poor air quality inside the home or office. Respiratory diseases, heart disease and cancer can all be caused by air pollution in the home. There are a few things you can do to cut down your exposure to the dangerous airborne particles in your home:

- Make your home a smoke-free zone.
- Keep a clean house. Dust, vacuum and mop often to reduce allergens such as pet dander, dust mites and pollen.
- Clean with gentler products. White vinegar, baking soda and lemons are natural, pollutant-free ways to clean your house.
- Decorate with plants. Live plants act as natural air purifiers.
- Test your home for radon. This gas is the second leading cause of lung cancer.

The EPA's website www.epa.gov has more information.

Help Keep the Water Clean

Water pollution and overuse of water could threaten our supply of clean drinking water. Water becomes polluted either by garbage and chemicals being dumped into water systems or by runoff from roads, farms and factories. There are a few things you can do to help keep your water safe and clean:

- Use lawn and garden fertilizer sparingly. Always follow directions.
- Keep litter, pet waste, leaves and debris out of storm drains. These outlets drain into lakes, rivers and wetlands.
- Dispose of used oil, antifreeze, paints and other household chemicals properly. If your community does not have a program for collecting hazardous waste, ask your local government to create one.

The Foods We Eat

We know that a diet rich in plant foods like fruits, veggies, beans and whole grains is good for your health. But your food choices also have an impact on the environment. Check out these tips to be an informed consumer:

- When you can, select local produce. The fewer miles from farm to table the better. Plus, supporting local farmers helps limit urban sprawl. Check out farmers markets in your area too. The USDA maintains a directory of more than 8,100 farmers markets across the country. The directory is searchable by Zip code, region or products.
- When buying seafood, ask the counter person where it is from. Commercial fishing and fish farming practices are strictly regulated in the U.S. and Canada. Other countries may not follow the same environmental standards. The Seafood Watch program, sponsored by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, publishes a list that helps consumers select sustainable seafood.
- Try a meatless meal. Raising livestock for our meat takes a toll on the environment. The livestock industry generates a lot of air and water pollution. By limiting your intake of meat you're helping to cut down on this form of environmental damage.

Resources:

National Resources Defense Council: <http://www.nrdc.org/health/>

Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov

USDA Farmers Market Directory: <http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>

Seafood Watch Program: www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx

Super Salad, Greek Style

Serves 4 as a main course, 6 to 8 as a side dish.

You won't break a sweat to prepare this cool, summery main course.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 small head romaine or other crisp lettuce, sliced
- 2 sun-ripened tomatoes, cut into wedges
- 2 bell peppers (any color), seeded and sliced
- 1 cucumber, sliced
- 1 small red onion, very thinly sliced
- 1 can low-sodium chickpeas (garbanzos), rinsed
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cubed or crumbled feta
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup kalamata black olives, pitted
- 1–2 teaspoons fresh oregano leaves or $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon dried oregano
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons olive oil, preferably Greek
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



Recipe Source: Healthy Living Kitchens

DIRECTIONS

1. Spread sliced lettuce in a large, shallow bowl.
2. Combine tomatoes, peppers, cucumber, onion, chickpeas, feta, olives and oregano in a mixing bowl. Sprinkle with olive oil and vinegar. Toss to mix. Taste and season with salt and pepper.
3. Spread out vegetable mixture on top of lettuce.

Serve with whole-wheat pita.

NUTRITION PER MAIN-COURSE SERVING

285 Calories	15g Protein
6g Fat	24g Carbohydrate
2g Saturated fat	3g Fiber
0g Trans fat	313mg Sodium