



Infusion

Vancouver Women's Health Collective Food, Glorious Food!

My Exploration of Eating for Wellness

by Lisa Herbert

The Collective

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective is a volunteer based, charitable, non-profit organization which has been in existence since 1972. We work to promote and support the idea of women helping women to help themselves, and to help women develop a pro-active approach to their own healthcare. We carry out a range of services and activities for women in Greater Vancouver and across BC, including a health information centre and helpline, health practitioner, holistic practitioner and therapist files, educational work, support groups, publications, lobbying and advocacy.

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Infusion

Infusion, Vancouver Women's Health Collective newsletter, is a forum to connect us with our members and the community at large around women's health issues and activities at the Collective.

Submissions relevant to women's health or well-being are always welcome and participation in this form is much encouraged. Leave any messages at the collective, or drop a note in our newsletter box. *Infusion* is published three times a year.

All opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the VWHC.

Newsletter Committee

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Lynn Wyminga
& the Wild Wimmen of the
Vancouver Women's Health
Collective.

Macrobiotics, vegetarians, vegans, fruitarians, eating for specific blood types, juicing, fasting, candida diets and eating for immunity; all of this made me wonder how something as natural and basic as eating had become so complicated. Food is our nourishment from the earth, yet our grocery stores are full of packaged and refined food products, simple carbohydrates with which we fill our stomachs and deplete our health. Has our modern life style pushed us so far off track that we are no longer aware of what we are really feeding ourselves?

I have explored healthy eating for my own well being and over time became aware that there were so many different philosophies about eating for wellness that I was confused and sometimes overwhelmed. We now have access to foods and cultural eating habits from all over the world. I questioned whether dairy products were really necessary for my calcium intake. Should I be paying attention to the Canada food guide or was this guide politically motivated? It made sense to me that cow's milk is for calves just as human mothers milk is for human babies. I purchased a juicer thinking this was the answer and found myself wondering why I wasn't just eating the whole food. Why would I throw all the fiber away? Wasn't the fiber important to my body as well? I discovered that vegetarians may not eat meat but that didn't necessarily mean they were eating nutritious meals. Some individuals I met loaded up on all sorts of health store treats that were actually empty calories. I met others who took handfuls of vitamins and supplements but didn't eat nutritious food. This seemed rather misguided and I began to ask around for educated opinions. I spoke to a few different health practitioners who felt it was more important to eat fresh and whole foods and to invest our money in organic foods before purchasing vitamins and supplements.

After all of these questions, I decided the best approach was to follow what felt sensible for myself, choosing to eat what personally made me feel my best and most vital. I began making lifestyle adjustments, learning it would be better for my body to adjust gradually rather than making any extreme changes which I knew I may not maintain. The idea of being vegetarian appealed to me mostly because of my concerns for the animals, how they were being treated and what they were

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My Exploration (continued)...

being fed. I stayed conscious of my protein intake, eating tofu, beans, nut butters, drinking soya milk as well as acknowledging that we do acquire some protein from vegetable sources. While I did feel better eating this way, I still found that every so often my body strongly desired some meat. This made me very curious.... perhaps I did require a small amount of animal protein from time to time. If not, why would my body be desiring it so strongly? I felt fine not eating dairy products, and in fact my system felt clear and less congested. The soya products I was eating along with some other foods may have been filling my calcium requirements, but I had also become aware that osteoporosis is a condition caused by many factors, one being our excessive intake of protein. I learned that sugar can be much more harmful to women than to men, disrupting our delicate hormonal balances. As I began to avoid sugar, my menstrual cycle improved and my familiar premenstrual tension diminished. In place of sugar I would offer myself small amounts of honey or maple syrup.

Eating what came from the earth organically, locally, and in its whole form, was now becoming my personal philosophy. I found this approach was simple and easy to follow. Fresh vegetables and fruits, whole grains which still maintained their cleansing fibre, soya products, beans, some fish and meat, along with lots of purified water were all helping me feel my personal best. I was listening to my body more and learning to distinguish unhealthy food cravings from my body's messages that were guiding me towards what I truly required for wellness. This took some practice and with time the unhealthy food cravings rarely occurred. My body now feels more balanced and I'm proud of the fact that I have become more responsible for my own well being. I now know that what I eat does effect me physically as well as mentally.

Perhaps eating for wellness doesn't have to be so complicated, when we are reminded that nature's intention is to supply us with whole foods rich with vitamins, minerals, enzymes, amino acids and other natural properties which our bodies require to function at their fullest potential. Nature has provided us with an incredible immune system and our own inner healing abilities. If we maintain and care for this delicate balance, our bodies will naturally move towards health.

A How-to Guide to Cheap Eats

by Lynn Wyminga

... In the Home

I was asked this month to write an article on "access to food." I interpreted that to mean something along the lines of eating nutritionally on a budget, figuring, even if mistaken, everyone could use some tips on saving a few bucks here and there. So my search began. Luckily, I work in a library. So I spent a few lunch hours looking through the VPL's catalogues hunting for books and articles on low-budget cooking. I came across several tips from several sources, some pertinent, some not so pertinent. For example, one tip tells us to buy a milking doe goat, and without room for that, to buy bulk milk from cow-milking neighbours — not so useful for the city-dweller. I also found such incredulous titles as "Feed a Family of 7 on \$50 a Week", and in response to that claim, the follow up article: "50? Easy! How about \$25 a Week?" — Of course we're not talking Canadian dollars, and we're definitely not talking Canadian dollars in 1998!

However, several of the different sources agreed on many useful suggestions, and it's these that I'd like to share with you. Some may seem quite obvious, but if we stick to them, we'll see the results in our pocketbook.

- Don't eat out. (Even that daily caffeine hit can add up to \$50 a month or more!)
- Know your prices, and compare.
- Steer clear of overprocessed, prepared, convenience foods.
- Buy in bulk. (Especially things like spices where you really just pay for the packaging.)
- Buy most produce in-season, with the exception of carrots, celery, cabbage, and potatoes, which stay low priced all year.
- Make anything you can from scratch. (i.e. cookies, salad dressing, bread, soups, etc.)
- Use your leftovers creatively.
- Use your freezer: cook in large quantities and freeze half.
- If you're a meat-eater, use meat as a flavouring ingredient instead of the foundation of a meal.
- Serve lots of starches and veggies.
- Legumes: canned or dried bulk, beans are nutritious, a good source of protein, and cheap to boot!
- Grains: fibrous and filling.
- Hearty soups are cheap, easy, and good for you. (see recipe pg.9)
- Use coupons only on things you would normally buy, and make sure they're actually saving you money.
- Use warehouse-type stores occasionally for your jumbo and bulk necessities, but be aware that they don't have the best prices on everything(remember the second tip!)
- If you're cooking for a small group, split your jumbo items with a neighbour or friend or two.



The library has a plethora of cookbooks on cheap eating — many directed toward the working person, without a whole lot of time. Fast, cheap eats are the name of the game for many of these books. So visit your local library, punch "low budget cookery" into the computer system, and see for yourself!

Here are a few books and magazine articles to get you started:

- Dayton, K., "Feed a Family of 7 on \$50 a Week." Countryside and Small Stock Journal, Sep/Oct 94, p.18.
- Dell'Aria, N., "Budget Meals." Woman's Day, Feb 1/97, p. 87.
- Dyer, C., Eating Well for Next to Nothing, New York: Mason/Charter, 1977.
- Eckhardt, L.W., Feed Your Family on \$10 a Day, Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, 1993.
- Higgins, S., "\$50? Easy! How about \$25 a Week?" Countryside and Small Stock Journal, Sep/Oct 94, p.25.
- McNeilly, L., The Economic Crisis Cookbook, BC: Selah Publications, 1995.
- 100 Meals Under a Loonie, Nanaimo, BC: Nanaimo Community Kitchens, 1994.
- Rothman, M., The \$5 Chef Family Cookbook, Rocklin, CA: Prima, 1997.
- Vassal, Anne, "Cheap Eats." Mother Earth News, Mar 97, p. 54.

... In the Community

In addition to the above tips, there are many community programs that can help us save money on food. I'm sure this is only the tip of the iceberg, but I will share with you what I managed to find out about community kitchens, buying clubs, food bags, and low-cost food shopping.

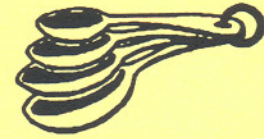
Community kitchens involve groups of people coming together on a regular basis to cook and eat and/or take food home. There are over 40 community kitchens now in existence in Vancouver, up from about 10 in 1995. The range of interests fuelling these community kitchens is quite wide and includes: economics, family togetherness, diet (e.g. vegetarian or diabetic), socializing, and education (learning how to cook or about nutrition). The types of people involved in them vary as much as the kitchens' reasons for being: all ages, incomes and walks of life. Anyone can join or start up their own community kitchen, and the Vancouver "Community Kitchens" coordinator, Diane (254-8300) can help you do just that. She runs free leadership workshops, gives information sessions about community kitchens, helps with many of the problems your group may run into, and brings people together. And if you do not live in Vancouver proper, she can point you towards a community kitchen program in your own area.

In North Vancouver, there is the North Shore Harvest Project (983-9488), which is a support program directed toward people who are working through transitional times in their lives and are actively seeking school training or employment. Among other services aiming to help you achieve the aforementioned goals, the Harvest Project runs a community kitchen which teaches low cost nutritional cooking.

There is also a group called Common Journeys, which is a buying club. This group of 7 women orders fruit and veggies from Pacific Produce once every 2 weeks. Then they get together with a scale and divide it all up, each paying for their portion of the goods. (contact: Blanca 254-9626.)

Then there is the Good Food Bag program run by Healthiest Babies Possible. Founded 21 years ago, the Healthiest Babies Possible is a support organisation which provides many different services to as many as 200 pregnant women at any given time. The various staff members know a total of 9 different languages. It is available to women from all cultures, age groups, and incomes, and home visits are provided to those who are not able to make it to their Victoria Drive location. Some of the services offered include: nutrition and pre-natal lifestyle counselling, a First Nations prenatal support circle, a Spanish speaking support group, a weekly young women's community kitchen, and the Good Food Bag. The Good Food Bag is currently available to 50 families in the Healthiest Babies Possible program. At the beginning of the month \$5 is paid by each of the 50 recipients and this money is pooled to buy wholesale foods, with a focus on fruits and vegetables. The produce is divided into 50, bagged by volunteers, and then distributed. For more information about either the Healthiest Babies Possible or the Good Food Bag, please call Jeanie at 877-4672.

And finally, if you must eat out, there is the Vancouver Community College's downtown campus at 250 West Pender St., (443-8481) which houses a culinary arts institute. VCC sells the wares of this program in their non-profit cafeteria at a low cost. Some of the prices (all prices include GST) quoted to me include: main course meal \$5.45; pasta \$3.75; small soup \$.85; large soup \$1.25; and salads (chef, fruit, cold meat platter) ranging in price from \$1.00-\$3.75. The cafeteria is open 7:15am-8:30pm, but hot food service runs at 7:15am-8:30am for breakfast, 11:30am-1pm for lunch, and 5:30pm-7pm for dinner. VCC also houses a bake shop as well as a meat and deli shop which might be worth looking into the next time you're in their area.



Low-Fat Brownies

from Lynn

The last issue of Infusion was on Pleasure, and to the dismay of many, chocolate was completely overlooked! I thought I'd add this tasty treat as a postscript with just that in mind.

This recipe, from the *Looneyspoons* cookbook, uses pureed prunes to replace most of the oil or butter, saving at least 25 grams of fat. They're great to use because they keep the flavour true and the brownies moist! And these treats are delicious to boot! (I brought them to the AGM, where you may have tried them yourself!)

- 1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup baby food strained prunes or pureed prunes (make your own: 1 1/2 cups pitted prunes + 8 tbsps water pureed in food processor until smooth, store excess in the fridge)
- 3 tbsps melted butter
- 2 egg whites
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 325F

Combine cocoa, flour, and salt in a small bowl and set aside. Using a wooden spoon or an electric mixer on low speed, blend together brown sugar, prunes, butter, egg whites, and vanilla. Gradually add flour mixture and blend after each addition. Stir in walnuts.

Spray and 8x8 inch baking pan with non-stick spray. Pour batter into pan and spread evenly. Bake for 20-22 minutes, until edges feel dry to touch but centre appears fudgy. Do not overbake.

Remove from oven and let cool in pan before slicing. For maximum moistness, store squares in an airtight container.

Podleski, Janet & Greta, *Looneyspoons Low-Fat Food Made Fun!* Ottawa: Granet, 1996, pg. 146.

Vegetarianism and Women's Health *by Kristin Campbell*

The idea that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure is being lost as western medicine becomes increasingly sophisticated in diagnostics and treatment of disease. However, as more and more people attempt to take control of their own health and well being, the impact of diet and lifestyle on well being have been receiving more attention. One aspect of particular interest is the increasing evidence of the positive impact of a plant based, vegetarian diet. Common health concerns facing women are no exception. Recent research has shown that a plant based, vegetarian diet can have a dramatic effect on the lives of women.

HEART DISEASE



It is a commonly held misconception that heart disease is primarily a concern for men. However, each year in Canada, heart disease claims the lives of more than 30,000 women, and is one of the leading causes of death for women. It has been found that diet and life style are major factors that impact on heart disease. One study found that vegetarians have a 24% less chance of developing heart disease, and those eating a vegan diet (one free from meat and dairy products) experience a 57 percent less incidence of heart disease compared with those who eat meat.

OSTEOPOROSIS

This condition is characterized by low bone density and deterioration of bone tissue, leading to increased bone fragility and fracture risk. It affects over 1.4 million Canadians, most of whom are postmenopausal women. It is estimated that 1 in 4 women over 50 years of age have osteoporosis. This condition is also closely linked to diet and lifestyle.

One of the most commonly discussed aspects of bone health is calcium. It has been shown that excessive amounts of dairy products, the main source of dietary calcium in the North American diet, actually interferes with calcium absorption, because of the amount of protein present in dairy products.

Research still suggests that women maintain good calcium intake at the recommended Dietary Allowance level of 800 mgs/day, but getting calcium from plant sources guards against excessive calcium losses due to leaching of calcium from the bones due to excessive consumption of animal

products. Calcium from plant sources is also well absorbed by the body, in comparison to milk products.

BREAST CANCER

In Canada, one in nine women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime, and it is the number one cause of death in Canadian women aged 35-54. Each year 17700 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 5,400 women will die of the disease. Currently, early detection is the primary focus of breast cancer treatment, with mammograms and self-exams.



Diet has been shown to impact on breast cancer risk. It is the amount of dietary fat consumed that is the primary focus of current research. It has been shown that breast cancer is many times more common in Western countries where diets are meat-centred. Jean Hankin, Ph.D., RD, was quoted in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association as saying, "breast cancer is perhaps the end product of a lifetime of insults to the system. Diet may well make the difference between promotion or prevention of the disease."

OVARIAN AND UTERINE CANCER

These types of cancer are thought to be strongly influenced by sex hormones, particularly estrogen. It has been shown that women who eat a vegetarian diet have significantly lower circulating estrogen levels than those women eating a non-vegetarian diet. A 1994 study by the Journal of the National Cancer Institute found that saturated fat intake was associated with an increasing risk of ovarian cancer. Most saturated fat consumption comes from animal products.

COLON CANCER

There is a link between a meat-centred diet and the high incidence of colon cancer. Studies from around the world suggest that 95 percent of colon cancer cases have nutritional connections. One study of 88,000 women found that those eating the most animal fat were twice as likely to develop colon cancer than those eating the least animal fat.



OTHERS

Diet has also been implicated in some other common women's health issues. According to Christiane Northrup, MD,

there is some evidence that symptoms that endometriosis often disappear when women adopt a "low-fat, high fibre diet free of all dairy products".

Also of note are the implications of diet on menopause. Michael Klaper, MD, a general practitioner for more than 25 years, has observed that women who eat a strictly plant-based diet pass through menopause without many of the complaints of other women. It has been found that Asian women, who eat a diet rich in soyfood and as a result have a lower estrogen level than North American women, experience very little discomfort associated with menopause. Diet is also thought to impact on menstruation. Women who eat a low fat, vegetarian diet, have periods that are more regular, lighter, and easier, and have lower levels of estrogen circulating in their blood, and are less affected by "premenstrual syndrome" (PMS). Consumption of animal fat and protein leads to increased severity of menstrual cramps. Dairy products have also been implicated in PMS. The increased calcium from dairy products can upset the balance between calcium and magnesium in the body, and interfere with magnesium absorption. This in turn causes cramping and heavy periods.

It is not yet known why vegetarian diets are protective against so many of the chronic degenerative diseases common in Western society. Theories centre around the abundance of fibre, antioxidants and phytochemicals in plant foods, and the absence of disease-promoting animal foods.

Changing your diet is a major step that requires a little research and dedication, but the results are well worth it.

Recommended Reading:

Becoming Vegetarian by Vesanto Melina, Brenda Davis and Victoria Harrison

Diet for a New America by John Robbins

Reclaiming Our Health by John Robbins

What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Menopause by John R. Lee, MD
Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom by Dr. Christine Northrop

Or contact Earth Save Canada: (604)731-588, 103-1093 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V6H 1E2

Any Cravings?

by Sue Hrischenko

Pregnant women seem to have an aura that invites people to ask questions and make comments about her appearance. How many non-pregnant people have been approached by strangers and asked, "Do you have any cravings?" or been told "You are HUGE"? I'll gamble that most non-pregnant people have not had her belly rubbed by a stranger on a bus. Pregnant women have had these experiences and many more.

With pregnancy comes weight gain, and with weight gain comes a changed body image, and a changed relationship with food, eating and health. Throughout my pregnancy, I gained quite a bit of weight – OK, a LOT of weight. I knew I would have to come to terms with my new body image when I was six months pregnant and well meaning co-workers would walk by me and wink "Any day now. You must be excited!" There were a few teary evenings when my husband had to assure me that I was, in fact, a very beautiful pregnant woman.

Though I had been reading everything ever printed about pregnancy, I always skipped over the *What to Eat when you are Expecting* chapters. I felt that eating was something I had mastered early in life. I know of pregnant woman who decided that during pregnancy that they are "allowed" to gain weight so they stock up on all of the forbidden goodies they do not usually eat. Other women are inspired to work out more regularly and put their whole family on an organic spinach and tofu diet. I tried to eat as healthy as possible

throughout my pregnancy but admittedly slipped into the less healthy "I'm eating for two – and the baby wants French fries" school of thought. The baby also wanted bananas - at least four daily - chocolate milk, an occasional Big Mac, hot fudge sundae, and boxes and boxes of Cheerios.

Most people start to feel hunger and think about what they will prepare to eat. Pregnant women feel hungry and want food NOW. By the time your partner has asked you what you feel like eating it is too late - you are beyond famished and have to feed the baby NOW. Through tears (because your husband was not considerate enough to have a meal ready 3 seconds after you said, "I'm hungry") you grab a box of crackers to eat in the car on the way to a restaurant.

It is such an immediate need for food that caused me to reach for not so healthy food choices. The following tips on eating during pregnancy may help you to make healthier choices.

- Take a multi-vitamin/mineral supplement specifically for pregnant women (folic acid is very important especially in the first trimester) to ensure that you and your baby have all of the essentials for a healthy pregnancy.
- Know that you are eating for two. If you are at a healthy weight or overweight before you are pregnant your baby only needs about 200 calories a day. If you are under weight before pregnancy, you should consult your doctor or midwife about increased caloric intake.
- Eat well-balanced meals incorporat-

ing at least 3 food groups in each meal or snack. For example, a snack of cheese, crackers and some fruit is better than a snack of crackers alone. Several smaller meals usually sit better in your compressed stomach than 3 big meals a day

- Drink plenty of water. You can sometimes feel hungry when you are actually thirsty. Hydration is important for you and your growing baby. Later in pregnancy dehydration can cause premature labour.
- Plan your meals in advance and be sure to have all the ingredients on hand. Eating out and convenience foods tend to be lower in nutrients and higher in unhealthy fats.
- Pack snacks to take to work. I always carry a *Cliff Bar* with me for those emergencies.
- Enjoy your food.

It is important to be aware of what is happening to your body and to ensure that your baby is getting the nutrients needed. There is a lot of information out there with which to familiarize yourself on nutrition during pregnancy, so use it. And remember, before you change your eating habits dramatically be sure to consult your midwife or doctor.



The issue of late pregnancy - between the ages of 35 & 45 yrs. - has become a big issue for "career" women. Whether it's a first pregnancy or a subsequent one there are special physical and emotional concerns around having a baby at this time of a woman's life. A workshop and a support group are in the zygote stage. It hasn't been sorted out which will come first - the workshop or the support group. It's something that will have a healthy gestation period. If you are interested in contributing in some way please contact Tamara Flick-Parker, the Education Coordinator.

Wimmin's View: *Early Menopause*

This is a forum for stories on women's personal journeys of healing. Your stories are welcome.

by K. Duncan

In 1995, having survived years of ups and downs, much counselling, a year's separation from my husband, and numerous heartbreaking episodes concerning our oldest son, things were starting to work out. My husband and I had decided to buy a house and live on separate floors in order to have a more balanced life for our sons. In the middle of the seemingly endless renovations we decided to get back together — there's a first! I won't go into the details of the work on the house, but will say that it was an **ordeal**.

Finally I made it to the week of the big move — almost! The last day I collapsed. My dear friend took me in, fed me and made me a safe place to hide out and recover. We figured it was all due to exhaustion, but nearly a month passed and my mood stayed very low — lots of crying and a helpless/hopeless feeling. The house I had planned and worked so hard on seemed cold and scary. Every time I went into it, I would collapse again. We thought I was reacting to the gassing off of all the building renovations.

I spent a lot of time on the phone (from the bed I couldn't get out of) trying to get information on sick house

syndrome. My husband, who had been a rock through everything, finally got so worried he called in four trusted friends who convinced me to see a doctor we know and figure out what was going on. I was diagnosed with major depression and put on an antidepressant. Slowly, with the help of family and friends, I pulled out of the bleak, black hole. Massage, reiki, aromatherapy, and counselling all had their place in my recovery. I got out in the air, walked the dogs and let go of the guilt I felt about falling to pieces.

As I listened to my body I started realizing that perhaps there was a hormonal connection involved. This came to me gradually —, as I'd get tests done, as my periods became erratic (after years of regularity). I had thought that the breaks of 3 to 5 months were due to my stress and breakdown. My memory was non-existent so keeping track was tricky during the winters of 1996 and 1997. I had 2 more episodes — each nipped in the bud as we'd caught on to the symptoms. During the last episode I started digging with the help of a naturopath. Testing showed that I'm post-menopausal.

Could lots of what happened be related to menopause? I had had a few short episodes of hot flashes, worsening memory, and fibromyalgia — like

aches, pains and weakness. Maybe it was all connected. At 44, I'm considered young for menopause, but putting the above symptoms together and the fact that my mother was also very young when she experienced menopause, led me to believe that this was in fact what was happening.

I'm now approaching everything with a different attitude — better diet, more exercise (I've gained 25 lbs over the last few years), regular massage and reiki, and homeopathy and vitamins to address things as they come up. I will be using a progesterone cream as suggested by my naturopath. I hope to use natural products to help keep balance rather than pharmaceuticals.

Looking back, I feel that much of what I've been through is related to hormonal swings, plus life's twists and turns and my own inability to say "no" when I should have. Now I'm looking after myself and doing things that I enjoy.

At this point I haven't had a period in 8 months. The hot flashes are a bit too regular for my liking but I'm not grieving the lack of flow — I've had two great kids and have no urges for more. I'm sure in a few years I'll look back and be happy that I'm through menopause and raising teenagers — but hey, at the same time? I suppose one must have a sense of humour.

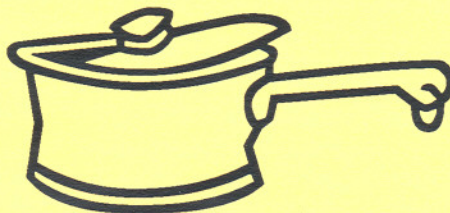
Easy Couscous Vegetable Salad

from Kristin

- 3/4 C water
- 1/2 C couscous
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, grated
- 3/4 C diced cucumber
- 1/4 C chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tbsp. sunflower seeds

Lemon Cumin Vinaigrette

- 2 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. each olive oil and water
- 1/4 tsp. ground cumin



salt and pepper to taste

Bring water to boil, add couscous and cover. Remove from heat. Let stand for 5 minutes, and fluff with a fork. In a bowl, combine couscous, celery, green onion, carrot, cucumber, parsley and sunflower seeds.

Whisk together lemon juice, oil, water, cumin, salt and pepper. Pour over salad and toss.

Makes 4 servings.

Food Prescription to Cure Colds

by A.J.Gray

Food. It tantalizes, teases and pleases the tongue. It nourishes the hunger of a crying child. Its multitude of colour and texture add a joyous presence to the holiday spirit, and also it heals.

Whether the idea of healing foods potential erupts from the folklore of thousands of years or the present day culmination of scientific diagnosing the population at large is more than warming to the study that foods use is more than providing a meal at breakfast, lunch and dinner.

"Health is a state of spiritual and physical harmony with nature, in which yin and yang are in dynamic equilibrium. Illness on the other hand represents an imbalance or dis-equilibrium in these forces."¹

Dating back to 2698 BC, Yin and Yang is a concept the Chinese have been utilizing in the balancing of many aspects of their lives. Presenting itself in Feng Shui to Chinese astrology, "Yin and Yang are the positive phases in the cyclic flow of chi"² Chi is the life force energy of which everything in the universe is comprised. They are the polar opposites that cannot flow without each other. Yin (feminine energy) refers to that which is cool, dark and restful while Yang (masculine energy) connects with that which is warm, light and active. In Chinese folklore and Chinese medicine the dualistic nature of Yin and Yang energy presents itself in rebalancing illness through the eating of hot (yang) and cold (yin) foods. In the case of a feverish flu the Chinese will eat cold foods such as fruit and vegetables and iced water. If they are dealing with a cold then a hot soup extract (broth) will be the nourishment and healer of the day.



Iced water or cold drinks will be avoided in cases of asthma or a chronic cough for they feel these illnesses are attributed to excessive cold therefore a warm substitute will then be imposed.

As much as the Chinese are likely to eat hot and cold foods according to their particular illness or daily maintenance for which hot soup is also used, they may also attribute an illness such as the flu to have eaten something such as roasted duck which may be perceived as poisonous. So is it folklore or food poisoning? Who knows? Eating animal brains in order to grow wiser or eating animal pancreas to cure diabetes is another habit which will certainly stir up controversy but the fact remains western culture too has eating

habits to cure illness that really does not find itself far away from some Chinese healing ideals. Perhaps chicken noodle soup, ginger tea or the combination of cayenne, lemon juice, maple syrup and hot water are adaptations from what the Chinese have been doing for thousands of years to cure colds.

Whatever your food prescription, eating and drinking warm foods for colds and working with the polar opposite to help with flus such as fresh cool alkaline juices, and a good book may be all the comfort needed to assist if this years cold and flu season finds you parked on the couch for an extended period of time.

1. Cross Cultural Caring - A Handbook For Health Professionals edited by Nancy Waxler-Morrison, Joan Anderson, and Elizabeth Richardson pg 78

2. Feng Shui Step by Step by T. Raphael Simons pg 16

Easy Chocolate Cake

from Kristin

- 1 ½ C unbleached white flour
- 1/3 C unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 C sugar or scant
- ½ C vegetable oil
- 1 C cold water or brewed coffee
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp. Vinegar

Glaze

- ½ lb. bittersweet chocolate
- ¾ c hot water or soy milk or half and half
- ½ tsp. pure vanilla extract

Pre heat oven to 375 C

Sift together the flour, cocoa, baking soda, salt, and sugar or sucanut, into an ungreased 8 inch square, or 9 inch round baking pan. In a 2 cup measuring cup, measure and mix together the oil, water or coffee, and vanilla. Pour the liquid ingredients into the baking pan and mix batter with a fork or a small whisk. When

the batter is smooth, add the vinegar and stir quickly. There will be pale swirls in the batter when the baking soda and the vinegar are reacting. Stir just until the vinegar is evenly distributed throughout the batter. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes. Set the cake aside to cool, and if you choose to make the glaze, reset the oven to 300 C.

For the glaze, melt the chocolate in a small ovenproof bowl or heavy skillet in the oven for about 15 minutes. Stir the hot liquid and the vanilla into the chocolate until smooth. Spoon glaze over the cooled cake. Refrigerate the glazed cake for at least 30 minutes before serving.

HOLISTIC HEALING for Women

Lisa Herbert
Holistic Counsellor
731.0946 in Kitsilano

Stir-Fry Asparagus

- 1 T. fresh ginger
- 2 (or more) cloves garlic
- 3 green onions (chopped in 2" pieces)
- 2-3 T. olive oil

Fry for about 30 seconds. **ADD:**

- 1 1/2 lbs. asparagus
- 1 red pepper (julienne)

Fry for 2 minutes. **ADD:**

- Dash of salt
- 1/2 sugar
- 2-3 T. lemon juice

Cook for 2-3 minutes

Simple and **VERY YUMMY**

Green Bean Casserole

- 2 pkgs. frozen cut green beans (or 1 1/2-2 lbs. fresh)
- 3/4 c. milk
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1/8 t. pepper
- 2 T. diced pimento (I use finely chopped red pepper - much cheaper)
- 1 can french fried onions (Duke's)

Cook beans (frozen) in salted water according to the directions minus a few minutes (do not overcook). Drain. Put into a 1 1/2qt. casserole dish and mix in red pepper. Combine milk, soup, pepper, pour over beans and add 1/2 can onions mix thoroughly. Bake at 350 deg. for 20 min. Garnish with 1/2 can of onions and pimentos (unless using red pepper) and bake for another 5 min.

Serves 6

Sunshine Salad

- Mix:
- 2 c. grated carrots
 - 1 c. pineapples
 - 1 c. mandarin oranges
 - 1/2 c. raisins
 - 1/2 c. coconut
 - 1/2 c. raw or toasted sunflower nuts
 - 4 T. yogurt, sour cream or mayo

Cucumber Salad

- Mix:
- 2 T. cream/oil
 - 2 T. vinegar
 - 2 T. honey
 - crushed oregano to taste
 - onions, cucumbers and red/green pepper thinly sliced

Holiday Eggs

- 6 slices of bread
- 4 eggs mixed with
- 1/2 c. milk
- t. salt, pepper & dry mustard
- 1/2 lb. cheddar cheese (or whatever else you like)

All or any of the following: green/red pepper, bacon/sausage/ham, mushrooms, onion, garlic... but not too much of each unless you increase the other ingredients. Mix everything together in a large bowl and put into *greased* 13"x9" pan. Put in fridge overnight. Next morn. preheat oven to 350 degrees and bake for 30-35 min.

Spinach Casserole

- In one bowl:
- 1 1/2 lb. boiled mini shrimp
 - 1 c. sour cream
 - 1/2 t. dry mustard
 - 1/2 t. salt
 - 1/2 t. basil
 - 1/2 t. dill
- In another bowl:
- 2 small pkgs. frozen, chopped spinach
 - 8 oz. washed and dried mushrooms
 - 1 can cream of mushroom soup
 - 2 T. white wine
 - 1/2 c. parmesan cheese

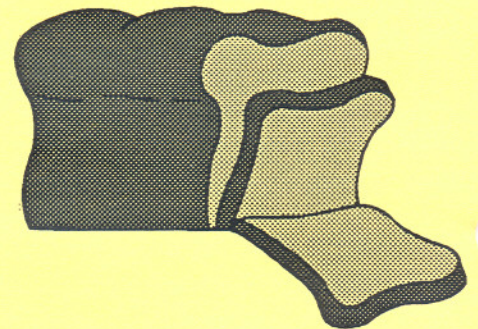
In a 13"x9" pan layer 1/2 spinach mixture, shrimp mixture and the other 1/2 spinach mix. Dot with butter pats and bake for 35-45 min. at 350 degrees.

Ratatouille

- Mediterranean vegetable stew 4-6 servings (can be halved)

- Takes about 35-45 minutes to prepare and simmer
- 1 med. onion (fist size), chopped
 - 2 med. bell peppers, in strips or cubed
 - 2 small, or 1 med. zucchini, cubed (or summer squash or a combo)
 - 1 small eggplant, cubed
 - 4 cloves crushed garlic
 - 2 med. tomatoes, in chunks
 - 1 bay leaf
 - 1 t. each: basil & marjoram
 - 1/2 t. oregano
 - dash of ground rosemary
 - freshly chopped parsley
 - 3 T. burgundy or dry red wine
 - 1/2 c. tomato juice
 - 2 T. tomato paste
 - 2 t. salt (approximately)
 - black pepper to taste
 - 1/4 c. olive oil

Heat olive oil in large, heavy cooking pot. Crush the garlic into the oil. Add bay leaf and onion, salt lightly. Saute over medium heat until onion becomes transparent. Add eggplant, wine and tomato juice. Add herbs. Stir to mix well, cover and simmer 10-15 over low heat. When eggplant is tender enough to be easily pricked by a fork, add zucchini and peppers. Cover and simmer 10 min. Add salt and pepper, tomatoes and tomato paste. Mix well. Continue to stew until all vegetables are tender. Just before serving, mix in the fresh parsley. Serve on a bed of rice, or in a bowl accompanied by some good fresh bread. Top with fresh grated parmesan cheese and chopped black olives.



Nina's Bookmark Selections

Here's some suggestions for all the webheads out there:

Wicca <http://www.conjure.com/COG/cog.html> - A comprehensive page for "Wicca 101", excellent overview, rituals described, Wicca calander and holidays explained.

Cooking

Top Secret Recipes <http://www.topsecretrecipes.com/> - Ever wonder how to make your own twinkies, oreos or mcdonald's taste alike? Here' the ultimate page for junk food junkies.
Usenet Cookbook <http://www.astro.cf.ac.uk/misc/recipe/index.usa.html> - A comprehensive all purpose cooking site, you may never buy another cook book again.

Jewish Food Archive <http://www.eskimo.com/~jeffree/recipes/index.html> - Ever want to hold a seder but you're not Jewish? Questions about kosher foods? Good hearty soul filling eats.

Lesbians

LGBT Resources <http://www.igc.apc.org/lbg/lbg.resources.html> - A major link page for all things lesbian.

Voice of Shuttle Gender Studies <http://humanitas.ucsb.edu/shuttle/gender.html#cyber> - Excellent Essay on transgendered issues.

Visibilities - Lesbians On Line Mag http://www.wowwomen.com/visibilities/visib_home.html - The first Lesbian all on-line magazine, accepts submissions of essays, fiction, etc.

Miscellaneous

Body Atlas http://www.ama-assn.org/insight/gen_hlth/atlas/atlas.htm - Human body information about organs, systems, all in more graphic colour than you'd ever want. Medical oriented.

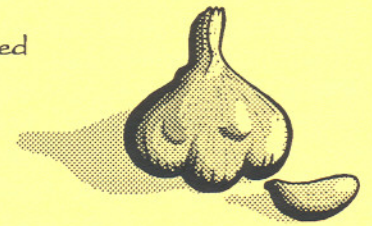
Lunatrix-L is a feminist e-list for women who consider themselves survivors of the conventional psychiatric system. It was created in May of 1998 to be a safe space for women to break isolation and discuss their experiences as "consumers" of the system; develop strategies for political action and alternatives that are survivor-friendly. For subbing information and to read our Introduction, Manifesto and Netiquette, please send email to: listserv@home.ease.lsoft.com with: "SUBSCRIBE LUNATRIX-L" + YOUR NAME in the body of the message. Hope to see you there!

Tomato Basil Soup

from Tamara F-P

Serves 6 people

1 T. butter
1(or more) large clove garlic, minced
1 med. carrot, diced
1 med. onion, chopped
4 c. chicken or veg. broth
3 c. ripe diced tomatoes*
3 T. fresh Basil(*)
Salt & pepper to taste



you can use canned chopped or crushed tomatoes & even puree fresh tomatoes
(* fresh dill if basil is unavailable)

In heavy saucepan melt butter, stir in garlic, carrot & onion. Cook over med. low heat till onion is tender. Add stock, cover & simmer for 20 min. Stir in tomato and simmer 19 min. Just before serving, stir in basil, salt & pepper.

Cover and cook on High for 2 hours or low 8-10 hours. One hour before serving, turn to high. Mix butter and flour. Add & stir until thickened. Serve with warm bread or rolls and maybe a green salad.

Hearty Split Pea Soup

from Lynn

Well, I suppose I should practice what I preach (in the "cheap eats" department) and a great place to start is with a cheap and hearty stick-to-your-ribs soup recipe, varied only slightly from the *Moosewood*.

3 cups dry split peas(bought bulk, of course!)
about 7 cups water(more as needed)
1 bay leaf
2 tsp salt
1/2-1 tsp dry mustard
2 cups chopped/minced onion
4-5 cloves crushed garlic
3 stalks chopped/minced celery
2 medium sliced/diced carrots
1 small cubed or thinly sliced potato
lots of freshly ground pepper



Place split peas, water, bay leaf, salt, and mustard in a kettle or dutch oven. Bring to a boil, lower heat as much as possible and simmer, partially covered, for about 20 minutes.

Add everything but pepper. Partially cover, and leave simmering gently for about 40 more minutes with occasional stirring. Add water if needed.

Add pepper to taste. Serves 6.

Katzen, Mollie, *Moosewood Cookbook*, Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1992, pg. 17.

Committee Happenings...

Information Centre

This fall the Info Centre has been preparing for the coming cold La Nina winter by updating the library with new books. What better way to spend those long winter afternoons than reading about a topic important to us all – our health and wellness. Let us know about any books you have read or videos you have seen that you feel are important to share with all women. We welcome your suggestions for additions to the library.

The Info Centre is also now accepting health questions by e-mail at VWHC@axionet.com. A volunteer will be in twice a week to direct the e-mail messages. As a result, responses to e-mail inquiries may take a bit longer than those left on the voice mail.

Through the energy and support of all the volunteers, the Info Centre continues to be a vital place for women to meet, share their stories, and obtain important health information.

Info Centre Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Tuesday, Wednesday: 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Saturday: 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Call the Info Centre for additional hours

Publicity Committee

The Publicity committee celebrated the coming of Fall with our first Gallery opening on October 16th, 1998 in our series to join women's health and women's art. Rachel Brett's exhibit was very well received. There were approximately 30 people who attended the night and Rachel sold four of her pieces. Special thanks goes out to Tamara and Nicole for all their effort and time. The evening was a definite success and thank you to all who came out to support a VWHC event.

The other focus of the Publicity Committee is to have a new logo created to bring the VWHC Women's Health Information Centre into the year 2000. Many talented artists have been submitting their ideas and their work. We would like to say thank you right now to all artists who have put time and energy into this process. We will let you know when we have found the right fit. If anyone has any suggestions or wants to submit an idea please leave a message for the Publicity Committee through our Administration office phone number 736-4234.

Administration & Budget Committee

Many of the extraordinary tasks having been completed in the last 11 months, we are now concentrating on the day-to-day administration of the VWHC. The collective's 1998/99 budget expenditures are on target. However, we are hoping to harness some volunteer power to undertake a direct-mail fundraising campaign in the coming months. If you have any fundraising experience you could bring to this project we could use your help! At the September AGM, Christine Campbell and Tamara Cowan volunteered as co-treasurers. Thanks for taking this on! We will be striking a Budget Committee in January 1999, so if you are interested; in setting the collective's 1999/2000 budget, or would like to learn how it is done please contact the collective.

Education Committee

The Education Committee has been pretty busy this fall. We have had three Education Sessions, three movie nights, decided on a regular meeting time, started working on a new Menopause Kit to go with a workshop (yet to be developed) and hopefully a support group, and birthed another new workshop/support group idea. So hang on and have a look!

At this writing we have had only three of the four scheduled fall sessions.

September's workshop on the One Brain theory of stress relief was presented by Devorah Seaman who shared very useful information with the group. **October's** session was on Shiatsu with Vanessa Wiebel who presented a whole new way to think about the systems of our body and how everything is interconnected. **November's** session on homeopathy with Surinder Mahil, was very informative, even for those who had some previous knowledge of homeopathy.

In August our movie night featured "Still Killing Us Softly" with Shari Gradon of MediaWatch as our guest speaker. September's movie was "If These Walls Could Talk" with a facilitated discussion. In October we got into the spirit of Halloween and presented "The Burning Times". Lisa Forian, proprietor of Aunt Agatha's Occult Emporium (1888 W. Broadway), came at the last minute to be our speaker on Wiccanism, particularly British Wiccanism.

Regular meetings will be the 4th Mon. of the month at 7pm. Unless there is something pressing we will not meet in December. For now they will continue to be at the Collective, but in January we will discuss the idea of meeting other places, just to make it more interesting and fun.

Community Health Advocates

We have just finished our training of 12 Community Health Advocates in the Vancouver/Richmond Region! They are a dynamite group of women who will be really making a difference in their communities! In a few months, we will be highlighting each advocate and outlining the type of work they are doing in their communities...what have they learned? What health care issues are at the forefront in their communities? What changes need to be made to make the health care system safer for women? These questions will be pondered in the next newsletter.

We would like to welcome **Roberta Sciarretta** as the Community Health Advocate Outreach Trainer. Roberta is visiting all of the advocates in their communities to help them set up their advocacy plan, and provide them with any additional assistance. She is helping Brenda Kent, the Project Coordinator/Trainer, gather information on how to enhance this project for next year!

☺☺☺☺☺☺ Calling All Readers ☺☺☺☺☺☺

Infusion is seeking FEEDBACK and SUBMISSIONS. If you are literarily- or artistically-inclined and have work you'd like to submit, or if you'd simply like to share your views with us, feel free to contact the Newsletter: #219-1675 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V6J 1V2, (604) 736-4234, vwhc@axionet.com

Vancouver Women's Health Collective

Membership Form

Membership categories:

Volunteer Member
(up to \$25/year)

- * Newsletter Subscription
- * Participation at Steering Committee meetings and AGM
- * Volunteer commitment on at least one committee or project and three hours per year for fundraising.

Associate Member
(\$10-25/year)

- * Newsletter Subscription
- * Participation at Steering Committee meetings and AGM

**Health Practitioner/Therapist/
Business Membership**
(\$35/year)

- * Newsletter Subscription
- * Participation at Steering Committee meetings and AGM
- * One free newsletter listing
- * Invitation to special events

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____
(street) (city/province) (postal code)

Category: _____ Fees Enclosed: _____

Donation: _____ (a charitable tax receipt will be sent to you)

Please return to: Vancouver Women's Health Collective
219-1675 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V6J 1V2

The Wild Winiwits of the Vancouver Women's Health Collective would like to recognize the following women for their commitment to our organization :

Staff

Caryn Duncan - Administrator
 Anna-Lisa Boye - Information Centre Coordinator
 Jennifer Kolarik - Info Centre Cleaner
 Brenda Kent - Community Health Advocate (CHA) Coordinator
 Roberta Sciarretta - CHA Outreach Trainer

Volunteers

Angela Gray	Lynda Dechief
Annastasia Williams	Lynn Wyminga
Anne Merrett-Hiley	Marion Smith
Anne Zavalkoff	Moira Fulton
Brenda Kent	Nicola Stewart
Christine Campbell	Nina Tryggvason
Claar Prinsen	Pam Fichtner
Debra Eilers	Renee Fernandez
Elaine Walkden	Sharon Coates
Erin Elliot	Sharon Lee
Frances Suski	Shea Pertman
Janet Ip	Statia Michaels
Kelli Forster	Tamara Cowan
Kristin Campbell	Tamara Flick-Parker
Lu Hansen	Twyla Lalonde

Wassail (family recipe)

from Tamara F-P

- 1/4 lb. cloves
 - 1/4 lb. cinnamon sticks
 - 2 T. whole allspice
 - 3 quarts water
- Bring to boil & simmer 1 hour.

Strain.

Add:

- 3 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 gallon (about 4L) Burgundy
- 1/5 Port

Heat to boiling point. Just before serving add lemon slices.

This can be heated in two electric crock pots. Or you can heat in a big pot on the stove and then use one crock pot to keep it warm. (Cold wassail isn't very good)



Vancouver Women's Health Collective #219-1675 West 8th Ave Vancouver, BC V6J 1V2

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Upcoming Education Events

The upcoming Education Sessions for January - June 1999 are:

January 9, 1999 FERTILITY AWARENESS

Brenda Kent will talk about Fertility Awareness. She will educate us on how our bodies perform during our cycle and how to gauge when we are the most fertile using natural means.

February 6, 1999 PREGNANCY & CHILDBIRTH

Tamara Flick-Parker will present a session on Pregnancy and Childbirth. This will be a fairly general presentation. She will briefly discuss the issues surrounding childbirth for women in their late 30's and after age 40.

March 6, 1999 MIDWIVES & DOULAS

VWHC Women's Health Collective will present a midwife and a doula. Join us in learning the newest information on midwifery. Discover what doulas do. Find out what the differences are between a doula and a midwife.

April 3, 1999 BREAST HEALTH & BREASTFEEDING

Pam Fichtner, RMT, will talk about general breast health. As well, a trained breastfeeding counsellor (tba) will talk about the pros/cons of breastfeeding and some of the common problems that can arise during the breastfeeding relationship.

May 8, 1999 OSTEOPOROSIS & PHYSIO/MASSAGE THERAPIES

Pam Fichtner, RMT & Kristin Campbell, MCPA will discuss the benefits of Massage Therapy and Physiotherapy for people dealing with osteoporosis.

Movie Nights

Movie nights will be on the third Thursday of the month at 7pm. The new year will begin in January with the New Zealand film "Once Were Warriors."

Menopause Kit

The new Menopause Kit's anticipated completion date is mid-December with workshops getting started by early spring. We are excited to get this together as this is a really hot issue. For those of you who want information now, we encourage you to visit the Information Centre files. We are also grateful to Marion Smith acquiring the NFB film "Is It Hot In Here?" You are welcome to view the film at the Information Centre during their hours of operation.



A Spell for Cooperation

from Brenda

This gem was taken from the book *Goddess in the Office*, by Zsuzsanna E. Budapest (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993.) A founding mother of contemporary women's spirituality, Zsuzsanna comes from a long line of witches, herbalists, and feminists.

Bake cookies using vanilla, nutmeg, clover, and cinnamon. These spices carry the message of COOPERATION if you put your energy and love into it....grind the spices, stir them enthusiastically, and breathe on the batter. Hold your hands over the baked cookies and pronounce the spell....
*Warm hearts, warm seeds,
my friends will help me meet my needs.*

*My world is full of those who give.
I get the help I need to live.*

While you are doing this, visualize everyone around you acting positively towards you. Visualize your needs being met. Share the cookies in the office, at home, on the playground, and anywhere where you need a bit of extra nurturing. Watch the magic take hold...