



Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc. Health & Wellness Newsletter

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Dietary Directors' Annual Conference: Two Days of Learning, Leadership, and Connection

In late July, 17 Dietary Directors from across California gathered in Sacramento for our two-day Dietary Directors' Annual Conference—the largest turnout yet. The conference provided an opportunity for education, collaboration, professional development, and, of course, plenty of food and fun.

The first day began with a warm welcome from Pam Norris, who led the group in a mindfulness activity to help everyone settle in and prepare for two days of learning and connection.



From there, the Dietary Directors explored different leadership styles and completed a quiz to identify their individual leadership styles. The activity sparked thoughtful discussion about how different approaches to leadership can influence communication, teamwork, and workplace culture.

During an open forum, the group discussed a variety of important dietary training topics, including food safety, knife skills, and Food Handler Cards. The conversation provided

an opportunity for Directors to share ideas, experiences, and best practices from their respective campuses.

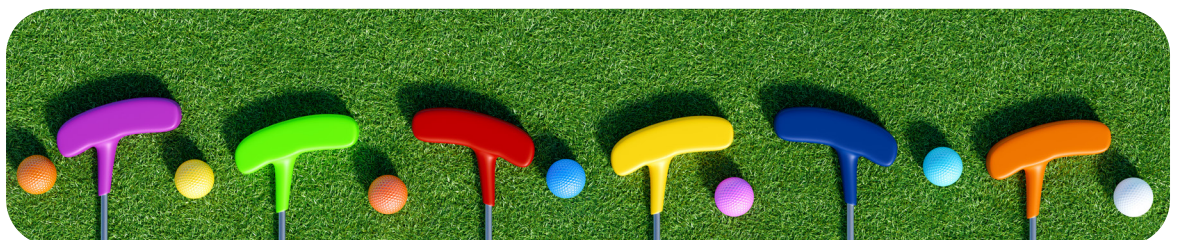
Representatives from US Foods also joined the conference and demonstrated several heart-healthy products. They introduced the group to helpful US Foods tools, including Trendview 360, which allows Directors to track and monitor spending, and MOXe, the US Foods ordering app.

The first day concluded with a dynamic presentation and demonstration by Karmen Kortie of Simply Thick, who provided an overview of the International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI). The presentation was especially timely as the IDDSI framework has recently been adopted across our SNF campuses. Karmen's demonstration helped bring the standards to life and provided practical information that Directors can apply in their daily work.

For the event that night, the Dietary Directors gathered at Topsy Putt, a local Sacramento venue, for an evening of tacos, beverages, and some friendly competition. The group enjoyed a few rounds of miniature golf, giving everyone a chance to relax, connect, and get to know one another outside of the workplace.

The second day opened with a welcome from Patty Blum, who shared that Dietary Directors are among the longest-tenured leadership teams at Crestwood. She invited the group to reflect on an important question: What is it about Crestwood that keeps you here?

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Dietary Directors' Conference (continued)

The Directors shared many thoughtful and touching responses, which Patty compiled into a list that served as a meaningful reminder of the purpose behind the work we do. She then led the group in another mindfulness activity to begin the day with intention and focus.



Next, Alec Atkin joined the group to lead a Six Sigma activity called Six Thinking Hats. This creative approach to problem-solving encouraged participants to examine an issue from multiple perspectives and work collaboratively toward a solution. The activity helped the group develop a plan for moving forward with a proposal for all Dietary staff to obtain Food Handler Cards.

Susan Huynh, RD, from our Idylwood campus, then joined the conference virtually to share her experience implementing IDDSI at her campus. Her presentation offered practical insight into the implementation process.

The Directors also reviewed tools and strategies for

survey preparedness and compiled a list of issues and observations that had surfaced during recent state surveys. This collaborative discussion allowed the group to identify common themes and share strategies for strengthening compliance and readiness across campuses.

The conference wrapped up with a lively food trivia contest, with the winning team taking home colorful kitchen mitts—and, of course, bragging rights!

A special thank you goes to our Home Office team—Sam Tatro Isbell, Brandi Davis, and Logan Thomas—for doing an outstanding job organizing the conference. Their thoughtful planning ensured that everything ran seamlessly while creating opportunities for meaningful education, collaboration, and team building.

This year's conference had the best turnout yet, and we hope even more Dietary Directors will join us next year for two days filled with education, connection, fun, and networking.

I always leave the Dietary Directors' Conference with a renewed sense of purpose and appreciation for the work we do. Our Dietary Directors are an amazing and diverse group of people, united by two things: their love of food and their dedication to their campuses and the people we serve. It was a privilege to spend two days learning, laughing, sharing ideas, and celebrating this incredible team.



A Rainbow of Nutrients

Many of us have heard the phrase “eat the rainbow” as an easy reminder to enjoy a variety of fruits and vegetables. But there is science behind this common adage. The vibrant colors we see in plant foods come from naturally occurring compounds called plant pigments. These pigments help plants capture light, protect themselves from environmental stress, and attract pollinators. When we consume them, many of these compounds may also support our health through antioxidant and other biological activities.

Regularly eating a variety of plant foods is associated with a lower risk of chronic diseases, including heart disease and certain types of cancer. Let’s explore some of the pigments that give plants their beautiful colors and the potential health benefits they offer.

Green: Chlorophyll

Chlorophyll gives leafy green vegetables their characteristic color. Spinach, kale, broccoli, parsley, and other green vegetables contain chlorophyll, which has antioxidant properties. Green vegetables are also rich in a variety of other phytochemicals that may help protect cells and support the body’s natural defenses against potentially harmful compounds.

Yellow, Orange, and Red: Carotenoids

Carotenoids are responsible for many of the yellow, orange, and red hues found in foods such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and tomatoes. Beta-carotene, one type of carotenoid, can be converted by the body into vitamin A. Vitamin A plays an essential role in maintaining healthy vision, skin, and immune function.

Red: Lycopene

One red pigment in particular, lycopene, is a powerful antioxidant that may help prevent several types of cancers, especially prostate cancer, and promote heart health. Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, as are watermelons, pink grapefruit, and strawberries. Lycopene is best absorbed when eaten with a little fat, so adding a healthy fat like olive oil to your tomatoes, or combining your strawberries with gut-healthy yogurt is a good way to boost absorption.

Blue, Red, and Purple: Anthocyanins

Anthocyanins are pigments that produce many of the blue, red, and purple colors found in plant foods. They are abundant in foods such as blueberries, blackberries, grapes, plums, and purple cabbage. Anthocyanins have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and are being studied for their potential role in supporting cardiovascular and cellular health.

White and Brown: Protective Plant Compounds

White and brown plant foods, including onions, cauliflower, garlic, leeks, radishes, and mushrooms, contain a variety of beneficial phytochemicals. Allicin, found in garlic, has been studied for its potential protective effects. Quercetin, found in foods such as onions, has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, while kaempferol, found in several plant foods, is being studied for its potential role in supporting brain and overall health.

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A Rainbow of Nutrients (continued)

More Than Just Pretty Colors

The health benefits of plant foods extend far beyond the pigments they contain. Fruits and vegetables are also excellent sources of vitamins, minerals, fiber, water, and a wide variety of other phytochemicals. These compounds work together to support overall health and well-being.

One simple way to increase the variety of nutrients in

your diet is to choose foods of different colors throughout the day. The more diverse the colors on your plate, the greater the variety of plant compounds you are likely to consume.

So, the next time you pick up a deep purple eggplant, a bright green head of broccoli, or a vibrant red tomato, appreciate more than just their beautiful colors. You're also adding a rainbow of nutrients and beneficial plant compounds to your plate.

Fun Food Facts: Is it a Fruit or a Vegetable?

The answer to that question depends on whether you're asking a chef or a botanist.

We often think of fruits as sweet and vegetables as savory, but that's based on their culinary uses, not their botanical classification. Botanically speaking, a fruit is the part of a flowering plant that develops from the flower and contains seeds. Vegetables, on the other hand, are edible plant parts such as roots, stems, leaves, and flowers.

That means some foods we commonly call vegetables are technically fruits.

Botanically speaking, these "vegetables" are actually fruits:

Tomatoes: Fruits because they develop from a flower and contain seeds.

Cucumbers: Fruits, even though we usually serve them in salads and savory dishes.

Peppers: Bell peppers and chili peppers are botanically fruits.

Eggplant: Another savory favorite that is botanically a fruit.

Avocados: Fruits, and technically a type of berry!

In the Culinary World, chefs tend to classify foods based on flavor, texture, and how they are used in meals. Fruits are generally sweet or tart and commonly appear in desserts, snacks, or breakfast dishes. Vegetables tend to be more savory and are frequently used in soups, salads, side dishes, and entrées.

So while a tomato may be a fruit to a botanist, a chef will treat it as a vegetable.



Many of the foods we call vegetables *really are* vegetables from a botanical perspective:

Carrots: Carrots are the root of the carrot plant.

Potatoes: Technically, potatoes are underground stems called tubers.

Lettuce: We eat the leaves of the lettuce plant.

Celery: Celery stalks are the stems of the plant.

Onions: Onions are the bulb of the onion plant.

Broccoli: Immature flowering structures make up broccoli as we know it.

The word vegetable doesn't have a strict botanical definition, and in everyday cooking, it generally refers to edible plant parts that are prepared in savory dishes. So a botanist might say, "That's a fruit!" while a chef says, "Put it in the salad!"

What to Eat After a Stomach Bug?

The cyclospora outbreak a few months ago made thousands of people ill with gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhea, vomiting, cramping, bloating, and fatigue. Many people were hospitalized, some unfortunately died, and many others recovered at home. After a bug like this, many people look for guidance on what they should be eating to help their bodies recover without bringing on another bout of symptoms. For many years, the standard recommendation was the BRAT diet. The name is an acronym for bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast. This diet was originally created in the 1920s for children experiencing diarrhea, with the intention that bland, easy-to-digest food would reduce bowel movements and fluid loss. It was also comprised of foods that were commonly available and inexpensive at the time. However, the efficacy of this diet has not been supported by research and the diet is no longer exclusively recommended by most major health organizations. And while the diet is not likely to be harmful to stick to for a day or so after a stomach bug, it may not provide the nutrients the body really needs to begin to heal and recover.

Experts say the first thing to focus on when experiencing symptoms of stomach flu is to stay hydrated. Water, lightly sweetened tea, or electrolyte drinks like coconut water are all good options. Once food can be tolerated, it is important to start consuming foods that are more nutrient-dense than the BRAT diet. For example, protein is needed to help rebuild cells and fiber is necessary to

feed the gut microbes that need to be replenished after the flu. Foods like chicken breast, eggs, bone broth, potatoes, and oatmeal are nutrient-dense and still gentle on the stomach.



Once symptoms have passed, it is a good idea to include fermented foods, like yogurt, kombucha, and pickled vegetables like pickles and kimchi, to replenish healthy gut bacteria.

In terms of what to avoid, steering clear of sugar-rich foods is a good idea—sugar can promote the growth of bad bacteria and make symptoms persist. Dairy, fried foods, spicy foods, and coffee or other caffeinated beverages may further irritate the stomach and exacerbate symptoms.

And, if symptoms persist more than a few days, a trip to urgent care may be in order, especially for children or older adults.

Are you passionate about...

Health & Wellness, Cooking, Gardening,
Fitness, Dancing, Cultural Diversity,
Health Education or Journalism?

Become a Wellness
Ambassador for your
campus!

Contact Margaret Clayton,
Director of Nutrition & Wellness,
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Spirituality Corner: The Fibonacci Spiral

by Erin Lubniewski, Occupational Therapist at Crestwood Treatment Center Fremont

Have you ever looked at the scales of a pinecone or the repeating number of petals on a flower and marveled at how seemingly perfectly they grew? You're not imagining things; there are precise patterns in nature all around us. Mathematicians have studied this phenomenon and realized the patterns are not random; they have something in common. They have described these patterns as Fibonacci spirals, based off the Fibonacci sequence.

Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci (c. 1170 – c. 1240-50) is the namesake of this phenomenon. In the Fibonacci sequence each number is the sum of the two numbers before it. For example: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, ... where $0+1=1$, $1+1=2$, $1+2=3$, and so forth. When the numbers are connected by arcs, they form a spiral shape as the sequence expands, referred to as the Fibonacci spiral. You can see this spiral pattern in nature in human DNA, honeybee lineage, shells, the unfolding of a fern, branches, hurricanes, and giant galaxies. Not only that, through mathematics humans have created visually interesting engineered works such as The United Nations building, the Great Pyramid, and the Parthenon of Greece; in great works of art from artists like Monet, Van Gogh, and da Vinci; and in compositions from musicians such as Mozart and Beethoven. The designs make use of balance and harmony, creating a sense of awe and inspiration.

Noticing and contemplating these patterns can lead us to wonder if there is something out there bigger than ourselves, a higher power, whether that be nature or deity. Some may see the order and precision in these patterns as evidence that life is not random chance but organized by a higher intelligence. Additionally, it can symbolize the interconnectedness of all living things. It can evoke the infinite nature of all things as the pattern has no end.



Some people view the Fibonacci spiral symbolically as a representation of human growth and expansion as life progresses – that life is a never-ending journey of self-discovery, each curve of the spiral representing a new stage.

You can incorporate the contemplation of the Fibonacci spiral as part of your spiritual practice.

- Notice when you encounter spirals in your daily life and take a moment to observe and consider them.
- Examine the intricate and purposeful design of its shape and contours.
- Contemplate the awe and wonder that accompanies these beautiful, natural forms.
- Find appreciation for the delicate order and balance of life and of the universe.
- Consider the interconnectedness of all living things.
- Meditate on the intricate patterns of your life's journey. Reflect on how you have grown and progressed in your own life.
- Look for opportunities to seek greater balance in your life.
- Explore opportunities for further growth and self-realization.
- Acknowledge the harmonious order present in nature and within yourself.

Recipe: Apple Sauce

It is apple picking season, and the weather is turning cool. Apple sauce might not be eaten regularly by most adults, but a warm bowl of applesauce with a pat of butter and a sprinkle of cinnamon can appeal to everyone's palate.

Apples are on the "Dirty Dozen" list, meaning that they retain pesticides despite washing, so it's wise to buy organic when you can. Organic applesauce can be pricey, though, so when fall comes and apple picking is an option, you can make your own. Farmer's markets are often overflowing with apples this time of year, and apples for applesauce don't need to be pretty—you can buy up the bruised or damaged ones, because you are cutting them up anyway.

Applesauce is great on its own as a snack, but also makes a nice accompaniment to pork or roast chicken. It also is used as a condiment on latkes, which are savory potato pancakes. And you can always add a dollop to yogurt, oatmeal, or spoon some over waffles. Applesauce is also a good replacement for butter or oil in baked goods.

Applesauce also has all the health benefits of apples, such as fiber, vitamin C, and antioxidants.

The only ingredient absolutely necessary for applesauce is apples, but to make the sauce a little sweeter, sugar, brown sugar, or maple syrup are nice additions. Spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, and cardamom are also great in applesauce. This basic recipe is for a small amount of apples, but can be easily multiplied depending on your apple harvest!

Ingredients

8 apples, peeled and cored

¼ cup brown sugar (optional)

1 tsp cinnamon (optional)

Water

Directions: Core and peel the apples, removing any bruised or brown spots. Cut the apples into chunks and put them in a pot with just enough water to cover the bottom of the pot. Cover the pot and heat over medium heat on the stovetop, stirring occasionally. After about 20 to 30 minutes, the apples should be softened enough to mash. Mash gently until the desired consistency is reached. Serve warm with a pat of butter and a drizzle of maple syrup, or cold as a refreshing snack.



"Food for the body is not enough. There must be food for the soul."

~ Dorothy Day

Any Health and Wellness News Questions?

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