

# MEALS AND MORE



## OBSERVANCES:

- April Fool's Day (April 1)
- National Carrot Day (April 4)
- National Burrito Day (April 6)
- World Health Day (April 7)
- Earth Day (April 22)
- Alcohol Awareness Month
- Stress Awareness Month
- National Brussel Sprout Month
- National Cabbage Month

**APRIL  
2023**

## **CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES?!? INTERESTING NAME. NUTRITIONAL POWERHOUSE.**

What do kale, arugula and Brussels sprouts have in common? Aside from being trendy ingredients, they're all delicious cruciferous vegetables and pack a nutritional punch. Cruciferous veggies are a diverse group that includes broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, bok choy, arugula, Brussels sprouts, collards, watercress and radishes. Fun fact: The name "cruciferous" is an informal classification for members of the mustard family and comes from the Latin cruciferae meaning "cross bearing," because the four petals resemble a cross. Turn the page to read more...

# CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES



While these veggies grow in all different colors, shapes and sizes, they share several nutritional benefits. Most cruciferous vegetables are rich in vitamins and minerals such as folate and vitamin K. Dark green cruciferous veggies also are a source of vitamins A and C and contain phytonutrients — plant-based compounds that may help to lower inflammation and reduce the risk of developing cancer. Cruciferous vegetables also are rich in fiber and low in calories, a combination that will help you feel full and satisfied without overeating.

It doesn't take much to reap the benefits. Adults need at least 2½ cups of vegetables a day. One cup

of raw and cooked veggies, such as broccoli, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts, is equivalent to a 1-cup vegetable serving. Two cups of raw leafy vegetables, such as kale and bok choy, are the equivalent of a 1-cup vegetable serving. Ready to add more cruciferous veggies into your diet? Try these two!

## **Cauliflower**

This versatile veggie is delicious in many ways beyond steaming. Try roasting florets or “steaks” of cauliflower to release its pleasant flavor. When pureed, it's a great substitute to cream sauce. Other creative cauliflower options? Mash into a pizza crust, grate it into a substitute for rice or pickle it for a low-calorie salty, crunchy snack. We offer cauliflower in a variety of our Home-Delivered Meals (HDM) and at our dining sites.

## **Brussels Sprouts**

Brussels sprouts practically beg to be in the oven. For a melt-in-your-mouth side, roast and toss with something sweet, such as dried fruit or maple syrup, as well as something savory — anything from Parmesan cheese to sliced olives. Try our Seasoned Brussel Sprouts in our Chicken and Mashed Potato Bowl HDM meal to celebrate National Brussel Sprout Month!

(adapted from Esther Ellis, MS, RDN, LDN. August 13, 2020)



## **WORLD HEALTH DAY**

On 7 April 2023 - World Health Day - the World Health Organization will observe its 75th anniversary. In 1948, countries of the world came together and founded WHO to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable - so everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health and well-being. WHO's 75th anniversary year is an opportunity to look back at public health successes that have improved quality of life during the last seven decades. It is also an opportunity to motivate action to tackle the health challenges of today - and tomorrow.

# SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

## It's National Stress Awareness Month!

If you're a caregiver, try these tips to manage stress.

### 1. Meditate

Meditation is perfect for caregivers because it's free, can be done anywhere at any time, and is a proven way to reduce stress.

### 2. Breathe deeply

As a caregiver, there are moments where your frustration, anger, or anxiety will spike to overwhelming levels. When that happens, breathing deeply is your best friend. It forces you to pause and calm down so you can better deal with whatever is happening.

### 3. Reach out

Leaning on the people in your support system is an effective way to reduce stress. We all need to vent, hear a friendly voice, or escape the responsibility for a while.

### 4. Exercise

Getting up and moving is a great way to burn off stress and improves overall health. Regular exercise helps ward off conditions that commonly plague caregivers, like depression and heart disease.

### 5. Laugh

As the saying goes, "it's better to laugh than cry." Noticing funny moments in caregiving situations helps lighten the mood and reduce stress for both you and your older adult.

### 6. Listen to music

Music has an amazing effect on the human body. It can even transform seniors with dementia. So it's no surprise that music boosts mood, lowers blood pressure, reduces anxiety, and more.

### 7. Be grateful

This may sound corny, but being grateful does reduce stress. Studies show that practicing gratitude can make you happier, lower stress, protect you from depression, improve sleep, and boost your immune system.

### 8. Accept that you can't control everything

This is an important one for caregivers. Accept that you can only do your best to help your older adult have the best quality of life possible. There's a lot that you simply cannot control.

### 9. Stay positive

Hearing positive, supportive statements in your head is a lot more pleasant and calming than a steady stream of negativity. To lower stress, work on reducing the amount of negative self-talk while increasing positive self-talk.

### 10. Do something fun

Taking regular breaks and getting time for yourself is a key to managing caregiver stress. Even if you can only get away for 5 minutes at a time, use it to do something you enjoy. It could be reading a book or magazine, sewing, gardening, coloring...anything you like!



## NUTRIENT OF THE MONTH: VITAMIN B<sub>12</sub>

Vitamin B-12 (cobalamin) plays an essential role in red blood cell formation, cell metabolism, nerve function and the production of DNA, the molecules inside cells that carry genetic information.

Food sources of vitamin B-12 include poultry, meat, fish and dairy products. Vitamin B-12 is also added to some foods, such as fortified breakfast cereals, and is available as an oral supplement.

People who follow a vegetarian or vegan diet might be prone to deficiency because plant foods don't contain vitamin B-12. Older adults and people with digestive tract conditions that affect absorption of nutrients also are susceptible to vitamin B-12 deficiency.

Left untreated, a vitamin B-12 deficiency can lead to anemia, fatigue, muscle weakness, intestinal problems, nerve damage and mood disturbances.

Most people get enough vitamin B-12 from a balanced diet. However, older adults, vegetarians, vegans and people who have conditions that affect their ability to absorb vitamin B-12 from foods might benefit from the use of oral supplements.

B12 supplements can interact with medicines, including: Chloramphenicol, Proton pump inhibitors, Histamine H2 receptor antagonists, and Metformin. If you are taking any of these medications, talk to your doctor or pharmacist before adding a B12 supplement to your routine.

## RECIPE: Cabbage Burritos

**PREP TIME:**  
30 minutes

**COOK TIME:**  
None

**SERVING SIZE:**  
1 burrito (4 total)

### INGREDIENTS:

8 large green cabbage leaves (from 1 head)  
1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil  
1/2 onion, chopped  
1 lb. ground beef  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tbsp. taco seasoning mix  
Kosher salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
1 (15-oz.) can black beans  
1 1/2 c. chopped cherry tomatoes  
1 c. corn, canned and drained or frozen  
1 c. shredded Monterey Jack  
1/2 c. shredded cheddar

### DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large pot of boiling water, use tongs to dip cabbage leaves in water for 30 seconds to blanch. Place on a paper towel-lined plate to dry.
2. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat olive oil. Add onion and cook until soft, about 5 minutes, then stir in ground beef and garlic. Cook, stirring often, until beef is no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Drain excess fat, then season with taco seasoning mix, salt, and pepper. Stir in black beans, cherry tomatoes, and corn.
3. Lay 2 cabbage leaves side by side, overlapping slightly. Place a heaping spoon of ground beef mixture in the center, then top with cheese. Fold short sides of cabbage leaves in first, then roll into a cylinder — like a burrito! Repeat with remaining beef mixture.

MAIN DISH



### MEET CINDY!

She is one of our fabulous Client Support Specialists who take your calls here at MOWWM. She will make sure those who miss their delivery are not forgotten as she follows up with clients and their emergency contacts. As part of our Wellness Check, the delivery driver must see the client at the time of delivery unless previous arrangements have been made. If you are ever going to miss a delivery, please call our Client Support Specialists and let them know. 616.459.3111.



If you would like to know more about our home-delivered meals, pantry, or dining site programs, please call Meals On Wheels Western Michigan at 616-459-3111 or go to [www.mealsonwheelswesternmichigan.org](http://www.mealsonwheelswesternmichigan.org)

Meals on Wheels Western Michigan is supported by:

