What Is a Locavore?

A movement has sprung up to eat food produced locally, reducing the miles from garden to table.

By eating vegetables grown nearby, for instance, locavores believe they are supporting local farmers and businesses, getting fresher food, and being green by reducing the amount of fuel required to transport food over long distances.

Some critics have argued that locally produced food is not always more eco-friendly because it is sometimes more efficient to grow food and transport it from a more distant location — for example, if it is grown on a larger scale or if the climate is more suitable for farming elsewhere.

LIKE THE LOCAVORE APPROACH?

- Shop at farmers’ markets and request local produce.
  Your supermarket may start buying more locally grown food if enough shoppers request it.

- Join a local CSA (community supported agriculture).
  These programs allow you to purchase a share of the crop at a nearby farm and get a weekly allotment of fresh produce.

HUNGRY FOR MORE?

Fresh from local farmers, frozen or canned, more fruits and vegetables on your plate is a best choice in good nutrition. Test your taste buds and see if you notice any differences.

In This Issue:

- Meds that raise blood pressure
- Food additives 101
- More wellness:
  www.personalbest.com/extras/may12tools.
  See this month’s health awareness quiz.

Fun Fitness Fact

Did you know …

The oldest person to finish a full-length marathon was 100 years old.

For more fun fitness facts, see Page 3.
Live a Healthier, More Active Life

Women are busier than ever these days. They often forgo meeting their own health needs to tend to the needs of others and the demands of the world around them. Bringing special attention to women’s heart health is Dr. Martha Gulati. She is on a mission to help women make their fitness efforts count toward their future heart health and a healthier, more active life.

Food for thought ... “Research shows that exercise capacity, or fitness level, is among the best measures for predicting the presence of coronary artery disease in women,” Gulati says. “By understanding exercise capacity as early as possible, we can work with patients to identify easy things they can do to improve their fitness level.”

For your consideration: Gulati’s book, Saving Women’s Hearts

Introduce Kids to Mother Nature

Did you know that American children spend 50 percent less time outdoors than they did 20 years ago? Spending time in nature gives kids the chance to explore and use their imaginations, discover local plants and animals, and have time for unstructured and adventurous play. Help your children get in touch with their “wild side” by taking them to a nearby green space. See www.discovertheforest.org.

Food Additives 101

People have been enhancing their food for centuries — think salt and spices — and today there are thousands of food additives. Whether we should eat these altered foods is hotly debated.

THE PROS

Only additives “generally recognized as safe” by the U.S. government (FDA) are permitted, and many improve food in some way. Vitamins increase the nutritional quality of foods, and preservatives increase food safety and shelf life — reducing food cost and making a wider variety of food available. Some added ingredients make food look and taste better.

THE CONS

The FDA can never be absolutely certain about safety and has recalled some additives. The American Academy of Pediatrics and other groups are concerned about risks to children. Some people react to substances such as dyes, and people with phenylketonuria (PKU) can have life-threatening responses to foods with phenylalanine (example: aspartame). Manufacturers color food purely for marketing purposes, and “natural flavorings” can be as processed as artificial ones. Additives can mask low-quality food and are even in “fresh” products such as meats. Many food additives used in combination have not been tested for safety. A good approach might be to learn more about additives, then decide which you think are acceptable them.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

www.fda.gov/food/foodingredientspackaging/ucm094211.htm
www.cspinet.org/reports/chemcuisine.htm

A dietitian, your doctor or your health care provider may be able to help too.

Meds That Raise Blood Pressure?

Did you know that some prescription and over-the-counter medications can raise your blood pressure and even interfere with antihypertensive medications? Know more:

**Acetaminophen** can increase your risk of developing high blood pressure when taken daily. Occasional use may be fine. The same is true for nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen, meloxicam, naproxen and some migraine medications.

**Antidepressants** such as venlafaxine, bupropion, desipramine and phenelzine can raise blood pressure.

**Decongestants** (pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine and oxymetazoline) are often contained in multi-symptom cold and allergy medications. If you have blood pressure concerns, it’s best to avoid these.

**Immunosuppressants** can affect the fluid balance in the body, causing blood pressure to rise.

An attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) drug, methylphenidate, can cause your heart to beat faster and irregularly and negatively affect pressure readings.

TAKE THE PRESSURE OFF

Develop a plan with your wellness team. The goal? Keep your blood pressure readings in the safe zone. This may mean regular checks, medication changes, lifestyle changes or using other forms of pain relief.
Fun Fitness Facts

**JOY.** Active play with your kids, grandkids or friends’ kids can burn as many calories as a brisk walk.

**LIMITS.** You may be training too hard if you can’t carry on a conversation while exercising.

**BIGGER MUSCLE GROUPS ARE BETTER.** To burn the most fat, you should focus your strength building on the major muscle groups in the buttocks, thighs and chest.

**WOW!** Raising your activity level can lower your blood pressure by as much as 4 to 9 mm Hg — the same reduction in blood pressure delivered by some antihypertensive medications.
### NEWS AND NOTES

Spring is a great time to re-commit to a healthier lifestyle. Take your next step by considering these programs.

- **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:** You and your household members have up to six in-person counseling visits per issue per year at no cost to you. **Contact:** 1-888-272-7252; horizoncarelink.com (user name: city of seattle; password: city of seattle).
- **WEIGHT MANAGEMENT:** You and your adult dependents on a City medical plan can participate in Weight Watchers and receive special pricing for selected services. **Enroll:** 1-866-442-1232; more information at seattle.gov/personnel/benefits/wellness/physical.asp.
- **TOBACCO CESSATION:** Quit for Life is a free quit tobacco program available to you and covered adult dependents. **Enroll:** 1-866-784-8454; see details at quitnow.net.

### EASY RECIPE

#### Spring Vegetable Stew With Chicken

- **2 tbsp olive oil**
- **4 (4-oz) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut bite-size**
- **1 cup baby carrots, cut bite-size**
- **2 cups leeks, white part only, coarsely chopped**
- **2 tsp minced garlic**
- **1 cup fresh artichoke hearts (6-7), quartered**
- **3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth**

**Instructions:**

1. In a large pot, heat oil over medium temp. Add chicken and cook 10 minutes.
2. Add carrots, leeks and garlic and cook 5 minutes.
3. Add artichoke hearts, broth and thyme; cover and simmer 30 minutes or until carrots are fork tender.
4. Stir in peas and lemon juice and simmer 10 minutes. Season with fresh ground pepper. **Options:** Add 1-2 cups baby spinach leaves when you add peas.

**Makes 4 2-cup servings. Per serving:**

- 316 calories
- 36g protein
- 10.7g fat
- 2g sat fat
- 87mg cholesterol
- 18g carbs
- 5.5g sugar
- 6.2g fiber
- 205mg sodium

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### Living Well With Arthritis

Arthritis is a painful condition that can cause stiffness and complicate even simple tasks. **Managing arthritis pain often begins with lifestyle changes:**

- Keep track of conditions that worsen stiffness or pain. Triggers can vary from cold weather to food allergies.
- Obesity is the leading risk factor for osteoarthritis. Each pound of body weight exerts 3-4 pounds of pressure on your knees. Cut 100 calories per day (e.g., 8 ounces of soda) and burn another 100 (exercise for 20 minutes) to lose 20 pounds a year. Aim for a healthy weight.
- Even a little exercise can make a big difference. Low impact exercise, such as swimming, builds muscles and reduces pressure on joints. The slow, stretching motions of tai chi or yoga can improve flexibility and range of motion.
- Make tasks easier by adding a grab rail to a bathtub or using a bottle-opening device. Splints can also give added support and relief too. A physical therapist can demonstrate how to accomplish tasks or exercise with less pain; a massage may decrease muscle tension. Follow your doctor’s recommendations too.
- Cognitive therapy can reduce pain symptoms, as can meditation or guided imagery.

**Nearly 60 percent of those with arthritis are under 65.**