



## Close And Clear In The New Year

*Serving vessels make the difference with fruit consumption*



If eating more fruits and vegetables is part of your New Year's resolution than this is *THE* article for you. New research published in *Environment and Behavior* shows that proximity and visibility both play a large role in the amount of fruits and vegetables eaten.

Researchers experimented with 96 college students by placing apple slices and carrots in either clear or opaque bowls at tables

both close to participants and about two meters away. Food was "served" in front of participants and they were all encouraged to help themselves. After a few minutes, it was observed that both fruits and vegetables were consumed in greater quantities when they were left close to participants. However, when they were served up in clear bowls, only the apples enjoyed greater consumption. Researchers hypothesize that apples are sweeter and maybe more appealing to eat than veggies.

The moral of the story here is if you want to eat fruits and veggies, you need to think ahead and make sure they are available to eat when hunger strikes! The best way to fill half your plate with fruits and veggies is to fill half your cart with them at the grocery store too!

Here are some of our favorite dietitian inspired tips:

- Clean and slice some of your produce when you get home from the store and put in CLEAR sealed containers to encourage consumption. Clean and slice celery and carrots for afternoon snacks and slice apples and pears and sprinkle with cinnamon for a light dessert.
- Start early! If you focus on getting 1-2 servings at breakfast you'll be well on your way to finish the day strong. Try a [veggie frittata](#), [smoked salmon salad](#) or mashing [banana into your oatmeal](#).
- Keep dried fruit in your car's glove box for days when hunger pains hit during rush hour traffic. A sure way to hold you over until dinner!

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## Don't Skip the Dressing

*Fats help to absorb more nutrients from vegetables*



January is infamous for diets and new workout practices, resolving to drink more water, drink less alcohol and to eat right! If you're determined to jump on the bandwagon, I'm sure a salad will be on the menu in the near future. Just be sure to keep the dressing! Although salad dressings tend to get a bad rap, new research published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* sheds new light on why eating a salad with added fat is beneficial.

The study included 12 women who consumed salads dressed with different amounts of soybean oil, which is a common ingredient found in most salad dressings. Researchers found that oil improved absorption of several micronutrients including beta carotene, lutein, lycopene and Vitamins E, K, and A. Investigators also observed that as more oil was used, more nutrients were absorbed. Maximum absorption was observed with about two tablespoons of oil, the largest amount studied, which also happens to be the U.S. dietary recommendation for daily fat intake.

So if you cringe at the idea of eating a dry salad, this is good news! Consider the sodium and sugar content of prepared salad dressings and try to make your own dressing at home, it's so easy! Remember, serving size still matters.

We highly recommend the [Roasted Corn, Black Bean and Avocado Salad](#), [Cup Salads With Parmesan Straws](#), or [Romaine, Fennel and Apple Salad](#) if you feel like your salad game needs a shake up!

Refresher:

- Beta Carotene** – a form of pre-vitamin A that is converted into vitamin A in the body. Vitamin A is needed to help maintain a healthy immune system and eyesight
- Lutein** – form of pre-vitamin A that also prevents damage to the eye from UV light
- Lycopene** – high intakes of which are linked to a reduction in prostate cancer risk in men
- Vitamin E** – antioxidant vitamin which also protects the body from the damage caused by free radicals
- Vitamin K** – essential for normal blood clotting
- Vitamin A** – important for healthy vision and maintaining healthy immune function

## Sugar Substitute Secret

*Sweet taste vs calories cause heightened metabolic response*



We've reported several articles over the years on the topic of artificial sweeteners. Though they offer a sweet alternative with zero calories, they've been linked to abdominal obesity, increased appetite and now researchers at Yale University have uncovered another piece of the sugar substitute story.

Published in *Current Biology*, new research exposes that sweetness level, not calories, in beverages helps to determine how calories are metabolized and signaled to the brain. Investigators tested 5 identically sweet beverages of varying calorie levels with 15 participants. Beverages were sweetened with the

sugar substitute sucralose (equivalent to sweetness in 75 calorie beverage) and carbohydrates were in the form of tasteless maltodextrin in amounts of 0, 37, 75, 112 and 150 calories.

Research participants consumed the beverages several times and their responses were measured via brain scans. Contrary to what they expected, researchers found that the 75 calorie beverage generated a stronger brain response than the 150 calorie drink. This suggests that not all of the calories in the 150-calorie beverage were metabolized the same way. It's thought that calories, not taste, regulate metabolic signals and how calories are broken down into energy. After a series of follow up experiments and analyses, researchers unraveled that the body's metabolic response, or the amount of energy that the body expends to process calories, works as expected when calories match sweetness or taste. However, when there is a mismatch in calories and sweetness the response is not as strong. Lead researcher Dana Smalls describes the mismatch as though the system threw up its hands and didn't know what to do, the brain didn't register that calories had been consumed.

Common examples of mismatches in today's food environment are yogurt with low calorie sweeteners or a high calorie meal like a cheeseburger paired with a diet cola. Outstanding questions include—what happens to the excess calories? How and where are they stored? Is a high calorie meal coupled with artificial sweetener problematic? Only future research will tell. As for now, Smalls suggests that artificial sweeteners and food combinations are an important element to keep in mind when digesting research on this topic.

For beverages that pack flavor and nutrition, these are worth a sip:

- [Pine Berry Spice Punch](#)
- [Kokomo Quencher](#)
- [Super Veggie Juice](#)

## Plant Forward in the New Year

*Plant based diets associated with lower risk of obesity*



Plant based, plant forward, vegan, vegetable centered – whatever you call it, diets that bring vegetables to the center of the plate have been labeled as some of the hottest food trends for 2018. Finally, a trend that may help cut the risk of obesity, which has been on a steady rise.

New research presented at the 2017 European Congress on Obesity in Porto, Portugal found that people who ate a high pro-vegetarian diet slashed obesity risk by almost half when compared to the least pro-vegetarians.

The study, conducted by the University of Navarra, examined the association between varying degrees of plant based diets with incidences of obesity in over 16,000 non obese people over 10 years. Participants were responsible for self-reporting food records while researchers translated them using a pro-vegetarian diet index and placed them on a pro-vegetarian scale from 1-5. Over time, 584 people became obese. Those who were most vegetarian (group 5) were 43% less likely to become obese, while the least vegetarian (group 1) only reduced their risk by 6%.

Now pro vegetarian does not mean that you need to ditch animal protein all together. It could mean that you start slowly with one bean based dish each week. If you're feeding a family—Mexican dishes are often a crowd pleaser and an easy way to disguise legumes in a palatable way. You may like our [Chipotle Cheddar White Bean Nachos](#). You could also just choose a meal occasion like lunch, since it's often eaten on the go or at the office, to try experimenting with a plant forward meal. It's easier to swap your sandwich for a salad or veggie burger when you're eating on your own than when you may need to share your meal with multiple people! Anyway you serve it up, veggies are a good way to protect yourself against cardiovascular disease, diabetes and now we have some hard evidence to show how good they are for your waistline—although we probably could have guessed that!

## Two On Two Off

*Two week breaks between dieting may improve weight loss*



Do you feel like you are perpetually dieting without success? The truth is limiting calories for weeks at a time may actually hinder your weight loss momentum, new research from the University of Tasmania has revealed.

The study, published in the *International Journal of Obesity* focused on the body's "famine" reaction with 51 men with obesity in a randomized controlled trial. The famine reaction is described as a survival mechanism which helps humans to survive when food supply is inconsistent. Previous research discovered that continuous dieting makes losing weight more difficult over time, while this study's goal was to look at ways to lessen the survival response and improve weight loss over time.

The men were divided into two groups and were committed to a 16—week diet plan of continuous dieting or intermittent dieting where they maintained a lower calorie diet for two weeks, followed by a two—week break. During the break, they ate sufficient calories to maintain weight, while calories were cut by 1/3 when each group was in the calorie or energy restriction phase. All main meals and snacks were prepared for participants and meal intake was self-reported through the use of a food diary. They were also encouraged to determine how to use discretionary calories—which has been shown to improve compliance in other long term diets. If they had asked us, we would have recommended the [Pineapple and Greens Smoothie!](#)

Weight loss in the intermittent group was 47% greater than in the continuous diet group at the end of the study—fat loss was also greater in this group. While this is great news especially as we enter diet season, it's not to be confused with the infamous "cheat day" where it's common to diet for 6 days and then freely eat anything and everything on the 7th and repeat. Investigators were clear that the "cheat day" method was useless and feel that the 2 -week cycle that was used in this study was critical to the success of the method.

# Namaste Your Way to Positive Mental Health

*Yoga found to lessen symptoms of depression and stress*



“Namaste” has crept its way into common vernacular, but have you ever thought about what it means? It is a traditional gesture of respect made by bringing palms together before the face or chest while bowing. It’s a common way to both start and finish a yoga class. Those who practice tout benefits including improved mood and flexibility. It has even been suggested as a treatment for scoliosis. Now, studies presented at the 125th Annual American Psychological Association Convention share that the practice of yoga appears to lessen the symptoms of depression, suggesting that it should be considered as a complementary therapy.

One study, out of the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center, focused on the antidepressant effects related to yoga. Twenty three male veterans engaged in yoga twice a week for eight weeks. Upon completion, participants rated the classes as enjoyable at a 9.4 on a scale from 1-10, and more importantly they all experienced significantly lower symptoms of depression.

Another out of Alliant University observed 52 women, aged 25-35 while they practiced Bikram yoga twice a week for eight weeks. Half of recruited participants were told the classes were full and they’d have to wait for another series to start. They were used as the control group. They were all tested for depression at the beginning as well as throughout the study. Significantly reduced symptoms of depression were found with yoga as compared to the control group. Other studies presented also showed similar results with other improved measures such as optimism, physical and mental functioning.

Two additional studies were presented regarding depression. One observed 12 patients with depression who participated in nine weeks of yoga. Depression, anxiety, rumination and worry were measured before, at 12 weeks, and then 4 months after the yoga routine ended. All scores decreased throughout the program, though rumination and worry decreased most significantly at follow up four months later. The other study involved mildly depressed college students and researchers compared yoga with a simple 15 minute relaxation technique. Interestingly both were effective at reducing symptoms immediately afterwards, though yoga proved to minimize stress, anxiety and depression 2 months afterwards while relaxation did not.

These studies show us more evidence that yoga can help protect your mental health, especially during times that may cause stress, like the holidays. So Namaste!

*From all of us here at the  
Dole Nutrition Institute,  
Happy New Year!*



# FEATURED RECIPE

## Blueberry Banana Pie Oatmeal

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups DOLE® Blueberries
- ¼ cup cold water
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1-½ cups hot cooked oatmeal
- 2 DOLE Bananas, sliced



**Makes:** 4 Servings

**Total Time:** 15 Minutes

### Directions:

- STIR** together blueberries, water, syrup and vanilla in medium saucepan. Sprinkle cornstarch over blueberry mixture and mix well. Heat to boiling, reduce heat and simmer 3 to 5 minutes or until thickened.
- SPOON** hot oatmeal into 4 bowls. Top with sliced bananas and pour warm blueberries over oatmeal.
- SPRINKLE** with your favorite choice of toppings: sliced DOLE Bananas, sliced almonds, seedless raisins, shredded coconut, chia seeds.

**Note:** For kid variation, stir some blueberry mixture into the oatmeal, reserving some to make a face; framed by banana slices.

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