

NutraLiving

The online newsletter dedicated to health, wellness and living your best life – *naturally*.

Fall 2011
Volume 1, Issue 1

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"Organic" and "natural" aren't just food buzzwords anymore

The cosmetics industry is notorious for making the most of recent advances in science and technology in an effort to develop cutting-edge products. The latest skincare and anti-aging potions boast sophisticated delivery systems and novel ingredients that alter the biology and chemistry of the skin in ways we never thought possible.

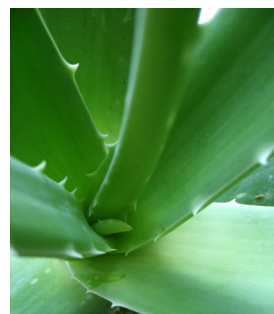
With more highly advanced skincare products available than ever before, one might expect the market to continue to shift toward increasingly futuristic applications. But the fact is, today's consumer is opting for simple, natural product formulations in favour of those containing unpronounceable chemicals. In other words, there is a clear desire to go back to basics.

This trend toward cleaner, more simplistic products has already taken hold in the food and beverage industry. In response to pressure from customers and healthcare authorities, food

manufacturers are shortening the ingredient lists of existing products, or creating new product lines altogether, by phasing out preservatives, fillers and additives.

Cosmetic giants and small corporations alike appear to be following suit. Case in point: in the past several months there has been a noticeable increase in personal care products bearing words like "organic," "natural" and "green" on their product labels. In fact, market demand for products containing nature-sourced ingredients including herbs and botanicals is expected to grow substantially in the near future. Although such eco-friendly and perhaps health-conscious buzzwords are now widespread throughout the food industry, they are a relatively new concept when it comes to mainstream personal care products.

While the cosmetics industry will no doubt continue to create



innovative and effective products based on sound science, the key to pleasing the new educated shopper is to ensure that these natural alternatives are just as safe and effective as conventional synthetic ingredients. More clinical research is needed on this front, but until then we can rest assured that our purchasing decisions clearly have an impact on the types of products that are put on the market.

Source: *CosmeticsDesign.com*
USA

Plant sterols and you: The truth behind the latest food health claim

If you've spent some time strolling through Canadian grocery store aisles lately, you might have noticed the sudden explosion of pre-packaged foods like spreads, salad dressings and yogurts bearing the claim, "Plant

sterols help reduce/lower cholesterol."

Also referred to as phytosterols, plant sterols are naturally-occurring compounds found in fruits, vegetables, nuts and vegetable oils.

More recently, manufacturers are adding plant sterols to foods. Studies have shown that the consumption of plant sterols can inhibit the absorption of cholesterol into the bloodstream, thereby helping to reduce the

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59%

Percentage of children's food products that bear a health claim and are high in saturated fat, sodium and/or sugar.

Source: *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behaviour*

(Plant sterols, continued from page 1)

risk of heart disease.

While this claim sounds appealing, some consumers are at a loss when it comes to understanding it. This might be due to its recent appearance on the food scene in Canada as well as the fact that many people are simply not as familiar with plant sterols as they are with, for ex-

ample, dietary fibre or *trans* fats. Worse, some might wonder whether the plant sterols claim is more of a clever marketing ploy than a legitimate health statement backed by scientific evidence.

The good news is that this disease risk reduction claim has in fact been approved by Health Canada after extensive review of the existing scientific evidence. The approval of the claim pro-

vides companies with the opportunity to place the claim on food products, provided that the food satisfies certain criteria set out by Health Canada. However, foods naturally rich in plant sterols, such as fresh produce, cannot bear the claim because they have no product packaging to speak of. The take-home message? Although eating more heart-healthy plant sterols is a good idea, it is always important

to read the Nutrition Facts table to ensure you are making healthy food choices.

Sources: Health Canada; Journal of Cardiovascular Pharmacology and Therapeutics

“Just because a natural health product has been approved by Health Canada doesn’t mean it is safe for everyone.”

Ask Jenny: Natural Health Products

Jennifer Molnar, M.Sc., a nutritional scientist at NDI, answers all your burning questions about the not-so-straightforward world of natural health products (a.k.a. dietary supplements).

Q: I take a multivitamin daily and will occasionally take an herbal supplement when I feel a cold coming on. How do I know the supplements I am taking are safe? Janice D., Waterloo, ON

A: If you are buying your supplements here in Canada, you will be pleased to know that in Canada, all natural health products (that is, vitamins, minerals, herbs, probiotics and so on) must be approved by Health Canada before they can be le-

gally sold. This is good news for consumers because it means that the federal government has reviewed and approved the safety, efficacy and quality of the products you are buying. But despite these efforts, some illegal products can still seep through the regulatory cracks and make it onto store shelves. How can you tell if your product has been approved? Look for the Natural Product Number (designated ‘NPN’ followed by an 8-digit number) on the label. It’s important to remember that just because a natural health product has been approved doesn’t mean it is safe for everyone. Always read the label carefully and consult your health care practitioner if you have any concerns.

Q: I’ve been hearing a lot about

vitamin D deficiency lately. Do I really need a supplement, or can I get enough vitamin D from the sun? Tim B., Ashburn, ON

A: Vitamin D is an essential dietary nutrient crucial for bone health. Recent studies have also shown that adequate vitamin D intake may reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as cancer.

You can get vitamin D from three sources: foods, supplements and skin exposure to sunlight. According to Health Canada, adults need at least 15 µg (or 600 IU) of vitamin D per day to meet their nutritional needs. While some foods, like milk, are fortified with D, only a few foods contain the vitamin naturally. This makes it difficult for most people to meet their daily D requirements through diet alone. As for sunlight? If you live north of 42

degrees latitude, the earth’s tilt makes it virtually impossible to get enough UVB rays—the type of light needed to make vitamin D in your skin—even with prolonged sun exposure. The best option for those living in northern locales is a vitamin D supplement. In Canada, look for approved natural health products containing vitamin D₂ or D₃, both of which are used by the body.

Sources: Health Canada; New England Journal of Medicine

101 INGREDIENT

Stevia (ste·via)

What is it? A calorie-free dietary sweetener made from the leaves of a tropical plant.

What does it do? Studies suggest that stevia does not cause the usual post-meal spike in blood sugar that other sweeteners, like table sugar, do. This could be promising for diabetics and those at risk for diabetes.

Is it safe? While stevia is available for sale in other jurisdictions as both a tabletop and added sweetener, its long-term safety has yet to be established. In Canada, stevia is currently permitted in natural health products (as a medicinal or non-medicinal ingredient), but not in foods.

Sources: Appetite; Health Canada

Feature Recipe: *Turkey Salad Sandwiches with Cranberries and Walnuts & Curried Pumpkin Soup*

This ultimate autumn sandwich is the perfect way to use up leftover Thanksgiving turkey. Round out the meal with a hot bowl of curried pumpkin soup that will have your family begging for more.

For the sandwiches:

Ingredients

- 2 cups leftover cooked turkey, shredded
- 2 ribs celery, chopped
- 2 green onions, chopped
- ¼ cup dried cranberries, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup walnuts, roughly chopped
- ¼ tsp dried sage
- ¼ tsp dried thyme
- ½ cup low fat tangy mayonnaise spread
- 3 romaine lettuce leaves, torn in half
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 12 slices whole grain or rye bread

Directions

In a large bowl combine the first 10 ingredients, mixing well. Top 6 slices of bread with the lettuce and then the turkey salad mixture. Top with remaining bread to build the sandwiches. Makes 6 sandwiches.

For the soup:

Ingredients

- 1 750-mL can pure pumpkin purée
- 2 tbsp canola oil



- 1 medium onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp curry powder
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp coriander
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 4-5 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat and add the onion, cooking until softened and lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, curry powder, cumin and coriander and heat for 1 minute to re-

lease the flavour from the spices. Add the pumpkin to the pot and then whisk in the chicken stock. Stir in the cinnamon and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Using a hand-held immersion blender, if available, purée the soup in the pot and continue simmering for about 10 more minutes to heat thoroughly.

Divide soup among 6 bowls and serve with the turkey sandwiches. Garnish with plain yogurt and fresh cilantro, if desired.

Serves 6.

In Season Now: *Apples*



It's officially fall in Southern Ontario and along with chilly nights, shorter days and fiery autumn leaves comes harvest season: the best time of year to find fresh, locally-produced fruits and vegetables ripe for the picking. In addition to quintessential fall staples like pumpkins, corn and cranberries, Ontario apples are widely available at local farmer's markets, pick-your-own orchards and grocery stores right now.

High in fibre and a good source of vitamin C, the humble apple really does keep the doctor away.

Studies show that apples are high in flavonols and flavones. Just be sure to eat the skin as this part of the apple boasts the highest concentration of these nutrients.

Apples make a great snack when eaten whole but are also delicious tossed into a mixed greens salad or turkey stuffing. Or, make baked apples the star dessert at your next dinner party. Simply core unpeeled apples, stuff with brown sugar, butter and cinnamon and bake at 350°F for about 15 minutes. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream or a scoop of vanilla ice cream on the side.

Source: Nutrition and Cancer

Plus...15 foods you didn't know contained antioxidants

- Artichokes
- Black beans
- Cloves
- Cinnamon
- Curry powder
- Hazelnuts
- Oregano
- Pecans
- Pinto beans
- Red beans
- Red cabbage
- Russet potatoes
- Thyme
- Turmeric
- Walnuts

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