



July 2007

BBQ Healthy During National Picnic Month

July is national picnic month, and it's the perfect time for outdoor cooking. You can grill almost any food, including fruit! While barbecuing is a generally healthy way to cook -- especially when compared with frying, that's not to say that barbecue can't deteriorate into an artery-clogging, calorie-laden meal. To avoid that, choose the right foods and follow some simple guidelines.

What meat to grill?

For red meat, keep portion sizes moderate: 4 ounces raw. Choose lean cuts that have the word *loin* or *round* in their names. Trim away fat before eating.

Check out the "numbers" for ground meat. Look for the packages that have the greatest percent lean to percent fat ratio. Hamburgers are also fine, if you use a lean cut such as ground round, which is the leanest; followed by sirloin, ground chuck, and finally regular ground meat. Look for ground beef that is 90 to 96 percent fat-free and limit patties to a quarter pound raw, which is 3 ounces cooked.

Chicken's leanness makes it a popular option. Leave the skin on while cooking. This will keep the chicken moist and makes no significant difference in the fat content as long as you remove the skin before eating.

Marinated and grilled fish "steaks" such as halibut or salmon also are a healthy menu idea. You can even grill fish kebobs if you use a firm-fleshed fish.

Don't overdo it

According to the American Institute for Cancer Research, some methods of grilling may actually raise the risk for certain cancers. The high heat used for grilling produce substances called *heterocyclic amines* (HCAs) in red meat, poultry and fish.

Another class of cancer-causing substances, called *polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons* (PAHs), are formed when fat drips onto hot coals or stones. These substances are deposited back onto food via the smoke and flame-ups that blacken grilled meat.

You can take steps to reduce your exposure to these substances.

- Reduce the amount of drippings that will land on the coals by using the leanest meat possible and using tongs instead of forks while grilling. Piercing the meat with a fork allows juices and fat to drip down and cause flame-ups.
- Partially cook poultry and ribs before putting them briefly on the grill.
- Cut away any charred sections of meat before eating.
- Place aluminum foil between the coals and cooking foods to keep the smoke away from the grill.
- Cut the meat into small portions so they don't take as long to cook. Kebabs work well.

Healthy marinades

Fat isn't an essential ingredient in a marinade or barbecue sauce. It's the acid in lemon, lime, pineapple, or vinegar in a marinade that tenderizes meat. Look for low-calorie or low-fat salad dressings or marinades, or make your own using a 3-to-1 ratio of vinegar to oil.

Don't forget the fruits and veggies

Marinate vegetables or use a dry rub. Then, grill them individually or skewer them to make vegetable kebabs. Place them on a grilling tray or directly on the grill. You can also wrap vegetables in foil with a little sauce, broth or vinegar.

Fruits also can be successfully grilled. The heat of the grill caramelizes the sugar in the fruit, intensifying the flavor.

"Bad excuses are worse than none."

- Thomas Fuller

To Get in Shape

Get to the Core with Pilates

Joseph H. Pilates (pronounced puh-LAH-teez) developed Pilates in the 1920s as a way for injured World War I soldiers to recover. The Pilates workout includes about 500 resistance-training exercises that focus on the torso, but you don't need to do them all.

Some can be done on a mat on the floor, while others require special equipment found in a gym. You do the exercises in a specific sequence, flowing from one movement to the next. Typically, beginners start with just a few repetitions of each. As you progress, Pilates focuses on fewer repetitions, done properly, rather than multiple repetitions.

Who can do Pilates?

Don't let its roots in rehabilitation fool you into thinking that Pilates is just for those recovering from injuries. It became popular with dancers because it improves strength and flexibility without adding bulk.

Pilates basics

Pilates is a conditioning program that strengthens the muscles used in everyday actions such as walking, sitting, twisting, bending, and lifting. Pilates exercises build strength in the body's core -- the abdomen, lower back and buttocks.

The primary aim of Pilates is to improve posture by strengthening the stabilizing muscles of the torso. This is because posture has a profound effect on your general physical fitness and well-being.

Because Pilates movements are slow and controlled, similar to yoga in some ways, they can easily be done at home or in class on a mat. The deep breathing part of

the program helps reduce stress and calms the mind and body.

Pilates breathing exercise

This exercise links deep breathing with standing in a neutral position. It activates your core muscles as you learn to control breathing while maintaining good posture.

- Stand with arms relaxed at your sides; ankles, hips and shoulders aligned; shoulders relaxed; and head neck lifting upward. Relax in this position.
- Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose, expanding your rib cage. As you take this slow, deep breath, maintain your spine position with its natural curves. Keeping your shoulders still, move only your rib cage.
- Exhale slowly and deeply through your mouth, drawing the front of your rib cage in and down. Mobilize your abdominal muscles by pulling in the navel, drawing it up toward the rib cage and squeeze your lower abdominal muscles by pulling in the navel, drawing it up toward the rib cage as you keep your shoulders still and relaxed. Think of flattening and lengthening the abdominal wall.

Pilates exercises can be done anywhere, anytime to relieve physical and mental stress."

How do I get started?

If you are interested in strengthening your core muscles using Pilates or other methods, visit or call your FOH Wellness/Fitness Center. To do Pilates on your own, you can purchase videos, DVDs, or books. And, as with any fitness program, talk with your doctor before starting Pilates.

The Mind-Body Connection

Today people are busier than ever before. They are also more committed to staying fit. Like a bitter pill, exercise is penciled into busy schedules, and it's clear that fitness has simply become just one more multitasking challenge.

When it comes to exercise, this pill's "spoonful of sugar" is distraction. People exercise while returning phone calls, catching up on reading, or listening to news or music – oblivious to what their body is doing. By the time the chapter's complete or all calls are made, the exercise task can be crossed off the list.

While it's important to stay fit, going through fitness moves zombie-like is a recipe for injury, and deprives you of

some of the important mental and emotional benefits of exercise. Though not a new concept, mind-body exercise techniques are catching on, all over the country.

Engaging in mind-body exercise means putting down the books, cell phones, and CD players, and instead concentrating on YOU.

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Mind-body isn't the name of any particular exercise, but rather how an exercise is performed. A person doing mind-body exercise never needs to be entertained or distracted. Nor, do they read, watch television, videos, wear headphones, or listen to music while exercising. They never train in a zoned-out, trance-like mental state.

The goal of mind-body exercise is to unify the mind and body mostly by immersing oneself in the subtle sensations of the body. Mind-body exercise encourages an internal awareness. This is done by concentrating on subtle bodily sensations and by emphasizing controlled movements and breathing. Some types of yoga, tai chi, and Pilates can be considered mind-body activities. But you can take a mind-body approach to any exercise by simply focusing on the muscles being used. In fact, mentally concentrating on working muscles can increase the benefits of exercise.

For example, if performing an arm curl, focus on what the muscle *feels* like as you lift the weight during the concentric phase, and really squeeze at the top of the exercise.

It may enhance focus if you watch the target muscle – as long as it doesn't interfere with form. Then concentrate

on controlling the weight and squeeze all the way through the eccentric phase of the exercise (remember, concentric contraction is when the muscle is shortening as you lift a weight, and eccentric phase is the lengthening phase when you lower the weight down again.).

During the exercise, stay aware of your posture, focus on the position of your shoulders, chest, and rib cage. Also focus on supporting your torso with strong abdominals. Finally, be sure to continue to breathe through the entire exercise to provide essential oxygen to the cells of the body.

Maintaining strong mental concentration is important during mind-body exercise. It allows you to become better aware of the position of your body and posture not only during exercise, but at other times as well. It also clears your mind and frees you from the busy world you live in thereby reducing stress.

Visit your FOH Wellness/Fitness center for more information about mind-body exercise.

Those Wildly Popular Herbal Remedies

Used to be, an herb was the oregano or basil that you added to your favorite tomato sauce. These days, you might just as likely use an herb to help ward off a cold, or help ease a bout of the blues.

In fact, there are dozens of herbs flooding the market, promising to keep you healthy or cure your ills. How many of them really work? With 5,000 herbs in use around the world and more than 20,000 combinations available in the United States, a few do work, but others are worthless. In fact, in a study published in the April 2004 *American Journal of Medicine*, it was reported that of the top 10 most commonly used herbs, only four were likely to provide any benefit. More than a few can be dangerous.

Herbs are a hot topic in alternative and complementary medicine, as more and more patients explore herbal remedies. Consumers spend nearly \$300 million a year for the popular herb echinacea to prevent and treat colds. That's despite a 2005 randomized, placebo-controlled study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* showing conclusively that echinacea provides no benefit either for prevention or treatment of colds.

One drawback to herbal medications is the lack of oversight. Manufacturers of medicinal herbs aren't required to show that the herbs work, that they are safe, or that what is on the label is actually in the bottle. Herbal products aren't regulated for quality. Fortunately, some herbal distributors have started using the same kind of quality controls that the pharmaceutical industry has been using.

Because of the lack of controls in a burgeoning industry, the American Medical Association (AMA) has urged Congress to allow the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to begin regulating herbs. As part of the regulatory process, the AMA wants the FDA to be able to gather cases of adverse reactions to herbs or herbal products.

To learn more about this subject, read about Alternative Medicine Products and their Regulation by the Food and Drug Administration at <http://www.fda.gov/cber/gdlns/altmed.htm>.