



## WELCOME TO YOUR HEALTH NEWSLETTER

Pierce Group Benefits' recently started a Health and Wellness newsletter written specifically for you, our valued client and loyal partner. We hope you enjoy and find value in the following material and urge you to share this newsletter with employees.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF VITAMIN D

We've all heard it from our mothers before: "Make sure you drink all of your milk and take your vitamins!" Whether we'd like to admit it or not, our mothers were right. Those vitamins and glasses of milk, among many other things, are excellent sources of Vitamin D. And unfortunately, many of us are short on Vitamin D, which has many more benefits than you make think.

### What is Vitamin D and What does it do?

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin that is naturally present in some foods and added to others, produced by our skin when exposed to direct sunlight, and available as dietary supplements. While vitamin D has historically been known to play a role in helping the body absorb calcium, maintaining bone density, preventing osteoporosis, and curing rickets, recent research suggests the vitamin can do much more than that.

Vitamin D may also help protect against chronic diseases such as:

- Cancer (colon, breast and prostate)
- Type 1 diabetes
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Multiple sclerosis
- Autoimmune diseases

### Where Can I Get Vitamin D and How Much Should I Have?

Sources of Vitamin D:

- Sun exposure (exposure to arms and legs for short periods of time)
- Foods (cod liver oil, salmon, tuna fish, mushrooms, milk, orange juice, yogurt)
- Dietary Supplements

\*Recommended Intakes of Vitamin D by Age (in International Units (IU)):

- 0-12 Months – 200IU
- 1-13 Years – 200IU
- 14-18 Years – 200IU
- 19-50 Years – 200IU
- 51-70 Years – 400IU
- 71+ Years – 600IU

\*Recommendations from 1997. Recent studies document the effectiveness of higher levels.

### Who is at Risk for Vitamin D Deficiency?

Vitamin D deficiency is usually a result of a poor diet, limited sun exposure, impaired kidney conversion of vitamin D to its active form, or impaired absorption of vitamin D from the digestive tract. As you can see, obtaining sufficient vitamin D can be difficult for anyone without

the help of a dietary supplement. However, the following groups are at a higher risk of vitamin D inadequacy:

- Breastfed infants
- Older adults
- People with limited sun exposure
- People with dark skin
- People with fat malabsorption
- People who are obese or who have undergone gastric bypass surgery

### In Conclusion

We can thank our mothers for making us all drink our milk and take our vitamins! But even with your mother's advice, chances are you are still not getting enough vitamin D for good health. So boost your vitamin D with safe sun exposure, vitamin D-rich foods, and dietary supplements.

\*Information in article gathered from the Office of Dietary Supplements, the American Dietetic Association, and WebMD.

## SPOOKTACULAR HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS!

It's that time of year again! It is the season to dress up your little ghouls and goblins and send them off to fill their bellies with chocolaty sweet goodies. As a parent, keep in mind that safety comes first.

- People, especially strangers, are not going to be aware of your child's allergies so please remember to double check the candy for anything that may cause an allergic reaction. Peanuts are a common item in most chocolate bars and a very common allergy among kids.
- Always check each piece of candy for signs of tampering. Remind your children not to eat any treats until they bring them home to be examined by you. This way you can check for any problem candy and you get the pick of the best candy!
- If your child is trick or treating at night, make sure they are supervised by a responsible adult and carry a flashlight. Stay in areas that are familiar. Do not make this a night to go places that you have never been before.
- Remind your children never to go near the car or house of a stranger, even if they offer candy. Explain to them the dangers are no different than any other day.
- One last thing to consider: if you are new to the neighborhood or unfamiliar with your neighbors, check your local sex offender website. All states provide this information free of charge. A simple search can be conducted with just your zip code or street name. Let your children know to stay away from these houses and areas.



## THIS OR THAT?

With today's busy and demanding schedules, eating right may not always be the easiest thing to do. But next time you reach for those cookies or french fries, think twice before you take a bite. There are many healthy substitutions for the foods you love that will leave you just as satisfied!

- Hot Dogs – Extra lean hamburger
- Cheese – 2% milk or light cheese
- Bacon – Turkey bacon
- Meat pizza – Vegetarian pizza with salad
- French fries – Homemade fries, baked chips
- Fruit punch or drinks – 100% juice or fresh fruit
- Mayonnaise – Avocado or olive spread
- Ice cream – Frozen yogurt
- Cookies – Granola bar
- White bread – Whole wheat bread
- Coffee with sugar and cream – Coffee with sugar substitute and 2% milk
- Soda, iced tea, lemonade – 100% juice, seltzer water, milk or water

## FITTEST FAST FOODS!

	Calories	Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)
Arby's Regular Roast Beef Sandwich	320	14	5
Burger King BK Veggie, no mayo	340	8	1
Whopper Jr., no mayo	290	13	5
Tendergrill Salad w/fat free dressing	300	9	3.5
Chick-Fil-A Spicy Chicken Wrap, no dressing	385	6	3
Fazoli's small pasta with marinara sauce	450	2.5	0
Jack in the Box Chicken Fajita Pita w/salsa	290	9	4
KFC Honey BBQ or Tender Roast Sandwich, no sauce	300	4.5	1.5
McDonald's Grilled Snack Wrap w/dressing	270	10	4
Fruit 'n Yogurt Parfait w/granola	160	2	1
Asian Salad w/sesame ginger dressing	540	20	1.5
Subway 6" Turkey, Ham or Roast Beef Sub, dry, no cheese	290	5	2
Taco Bell Bean Burrito	370	10	3.5
Ranchero Chicken Soft Taco "Fresco Style"	170	5	1.5
Wendy's Plain Baked Potato	270	0	0
Large Bowl Chili, no cheese	330	9	3.5
Ultimate Chicken Grill Sandwich	370	8	1.5

## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

We'd love to hear from you!

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