

MatureFocus

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CELEBRATING LIFE & LIVING



Live longer better - the latest nutritional science behind aging well

By JoAnn Manson, MD, MPH, DrPH

The quest to slow the clock on aging is almost as old as time itself. And thanks to advances in medicine, Americans are living longer than ever, with the average

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Crock Pot Salsa Ranch Chicken Pasta

5-6 frozen chicken breasts
1 oz can cream of chicken soup undiluted
1 cup salsa
1 tsp minced garlic
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup Hidden Valley® Ranch dressing
1 lb box rotini pasta

Place frozen chicken breasts into the bottom of a 6-quart (or larger) slow cooker.

In a medium bowl, mix together cream of chicken soup, salsa and minced garlic.

Pour this mixture over frozen chicken breasts.

Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

About 30 minutes or so before this is finished cooking, begin preparing the rotini pasta according to package directions.

Once chicken is cooked, remove chicken breasts and shred them or cut into chunks.

Whisk in sour cream and Hidden Valley® Ranch dressing into cream of chicken/salsa mixture in the slow cooker.

Add chicken back into the slow cooker and stir in prepared rotini pasta. Stir well.

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life expectancy on the rise. However, living longer does not necessarily mean living better. Today, researchers are working to understand the biology of aging and the role of diet in aging well. The goal is prolonging healthy life versus simply prolonging life. We want to maintain and even improve physical function, cognitive status and quality of life, as well as reduce the risk of chronic disease as we age.

Longer lives are resulting in an increase in the incidence of certain diseases – including heart disease, diabetes and dementia. It is for this reason that the scientific community seeks to understand how to maintain health throughout the aging process. Exciting new studies show diet and nutrition may indeed promote healthy aging and reduce risk of age-related disease.

The current understanding of diet and health is mostly limited to nutrients that are essential to life – including macronutrients, vitamins, and minerals. However, there is still more to learn about these essential nutrients, such as the role of multivitamins in health promotion and disease prevention.

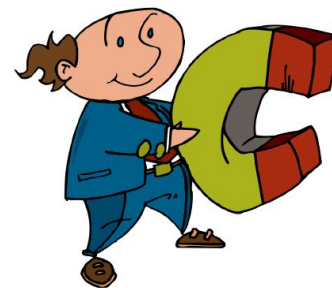
An emerging area of nutrition research is focused on bioactives, naturally occurring compounds in certain foods that influence various processes in the body. While not essential for human life, many bioactives like lycopene, lutein, flavanols and isoflavones are shown to have a potential role in maintaining health and preventing or delaying the onset of disease.

Flavanols are among the most studied bioactive and research suggests that flavanols may be beneficial to health, particularly for the cardiovascular system. Foods rich in flavanols include tea, grapes, apples, certain berries and cacao. And cocoa flavanols,

bioactives from the raw cocoa bean, are among the most promising nutritional interventions studied today.

Exciting new studies show diet and nutrition may indeed promote healthy aging and reduce risk of age-related disease.

Decades of research point to the potential role of cocoa flavanols in human health. For instance, numerous studies show that consuming cocoa flavanols improves cardiovascular function in at-risk and healthy adults. Further, an emerging body of research suggests that cocoa flavanols may also support



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cognitive function. It is the culmination of these research findings and others that has prompted a new research project dubbed COSMOS (COcoa Supplement and Multivitamin Outcomes Study). This is the largest study of its kind in the world. An unprecedented group of 18,000 men and women nationwide will volunteer to help researchers evaluate the role of cocoa flavanols in reducing the risk of heart attack, stroke and death from cardiovascular disease and whether a daily multivitamin may lower the risk of cancer. Ancillary studies will measure the impact of cocoa flavanols on age related

memory decline. Volunteer study participants are currently being recruited.

Promising new research findings support the notion that we are what we eat. Using nutrition to enhance healthy aging is a feasible lifestyle change that each of us should consider, whether taking a supplement or changing dietary patterns. And we know that prevention of disease is always better than treatment after the fact.

For more information about participating in COSMOS visit cosmo-trial.org.

Dr. Manson is professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical

School and chief of the Division of Preventive Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Dr. Manson received her AB from Harvard University, her MD from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, and both an MPH and a DrPH from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. She is board certified in internal medicine and the subspecialty of endocrinology and metabolism. Her major research interests include preventive medicine, randomized trials, and the epidemiology of chronic diseases, particularly regarding risk factors for cardiovascular disease in women.



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At Ridgecrest's Circle Drive

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