



# EDUCATOR NUTRITION NEWSLETTER

PRODUCE ITEMS OF THE MONTH ARE SWEET POTATOES & PERSIMMONS

JANUARY  
**2018**  
EDITION

## HEALTHY MINDS = HEALTHY BODIES = HEALTHY STUDENTS

At St. Vincent we believe in treating the mind, body and spirit. Therefore, you will find that these newsletters do the same thing...you'll be offered information addressing all three of these aspects. This newsletter strives to make a connection between the classroom, cafeteria, home and community to motivate and support students in making healthy decisions.

Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent is here to help you, your school and your students reach whatever health and wellness goals you have. Please don't hesitate to let us know how we can help. For information or resources, contact Karen Terrell, School Wellness Coordinator at [klterrel@stvincent.org](mailto:klterrel@stvincent.org) or 317.338.2336.

We hope you enjoy the newsletters and that you find them useful for your students and their families (and you, too!). Thank you for reading!

## HEALTHY BODY FOCUS: National Thyroid Awareness Month

*January:* the beginning of a new year, the month everyone decides to go back to the gym or get in shape, the month for changes, the month for new beginnings. January is also Thyroid Awareness Month, when this tiny gland gets some much needed coverage.

*Thyroid 101:* The thyroid is a small gland located in the base of your neck that is part of the endocrine system. It is responsible for various functions including metabolism, regulating body temperature, cognitive function, digestion and much more. In other words, the thyroid affects the entire body and when it is not working properly you will definitely feel the effects.

*Thyroid Problems:* Many people are somewhat familiar with the condition known as hypothyroidism, which is the condition where the thyroid gland is in a sub-optimal state and not producing enough of the thyroid hormones necessary for the body to function. While this condition counts for many people that are suffering from thyroid dysfunction, there are various other conditions, as well. These conditions include hyperthyroidism (thyroid gland in an over-active state), Graves' disease and Hashimoto's disease (autoimmune diseases), goiter (thyroid enlargement), thyroid nodules (growths on the thyroid gland that can be caused by another condition, i.e. Hashimoto's), and thyroid cancer.

*Dysfunction Symptoms:* The symptoms vary depending on the condition, but there are many warning signs that something is not right. There are over 300 symptoms that indicate thyroid dysfunction, the most common ones being:

- Cold hands/feet (hypothyroidism)
- Dry skin (hypothyroidism)
- Unexplained weight gain (hypothyroidism)
- Unexplained weight loss (hyperthyroidism)
- Loose bowels/diarrhea (hyperthyroidism)
- Vision issues (Graves' disease)
- Difficulty swallowing (goiter/thyroid nodules)

The best way for you and your doctor to determine if you have a thyroid issue is through a series of blood tests.



## PRODUCE SELECTION

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### Sweet potato:

- Choose firm, dark, smooth sweet potatoes without wrinkles, bruises, sprouts, or decay.
- Sweet potatoes spoil rapidly. To keep them fresh, store them in a dry, cool (55-60°) place such as a cellar or pantry.
- Brush off any excess dirt before storing your sweet potato, but do not wash them until you are ready to cook them because the moisture from washing will increase their chance of spoiling.

### Persimmons:

- Choose persimmons that are round, plump and brightly colored. Yellow patches indicate that the fruit is not yet ripe.
- Ripen persimmons at room temperature until they are ready to eat.
- Once ripe, you can refrigerate them for up to three days.



## GETTING PHYSICAL

A year or so ago, I purchased a Brain Break Bucket from a web site called [www.TeachersPayTeachers.com](http://www.TeachersPayTeachers.com). The bucket's creator is a woman who calls herself "3rd Grade Thoughts" and the activities that she includes in the bucket are excellent. I'd like to share a few of them with you throughout the year as a way to incorporate brain breaks into your classroom time. These simple, easy activities can be a great way to "wake up" your students' brains.



**Upward dog:** Have students lie on their belly. Keeping their legs straight, lift the chest off the ground, stretching your arms straight. Look forward and breathe. Do this 4-5 times for a great stretching exercise.



**Class Wave:** Start on one side of the room and have students do a standing or sitting wave with their arms. Go around a few times and then reverse it!

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Sweet Potato	
Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 sweetpotato, 5 (130 g)	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 112	Calories from Fat 1
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 72mg	3%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 26g	9%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 5g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vitamin A 369%	Vitamin C 5%
Calcium 4%	Iron 4%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

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Persimmon	
Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 fruit without refuse 25g (25 g)	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 32	Calories from Fat 1
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	0%
Saturated Fat	0%
Trans Fat	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 8g	3%
Dietary Fiber	0%
Sugars	
<b>Protein</b> 0g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 27%
Calcium 1%	Iron 3%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

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## EAT YOUR COLORS!

When eating fruits and vegetables, it's important to remember to encourage children to eat a rainbow of colors.

<b>RED</b>	Help maintain a healthy heart, memory function and urinary tract health	Strawberries, red pears, red grapes, beets and tomatoes
<b>ORANGE YELLOW</b>	Help maintain heart health, healthy vision and healthy immune system	Oranges, tangerines, grapefruit or apricots
<b>TAN WHITE BROWN</b>	Help maintain heart health and cholesterol levels that are already healthy	Squash, garlic, jicama, alfalfa sprouts
<b>GREEN</b>	Help maintain healthy vision and strong bones and teeth	Cabbage, Chinese and savoy cabbages, kale and broccoli
<b>BLUE PURPLE</b>	Help maintain healthy aging, memory function and urinary tract health.	Blueberries, purple and red cabbages, eggplant, dried plums, figs

For more information, visit [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

## HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

### Recommended Daily Amounts Of Fruits & Vegetables\*

Kids, Ages 5-12	2½ - 5 cups per day
Kids, Ages 13-18	3½ - 6½ cups per day
Adults, 19+	3½ - 6½ cups per day

\*If you are active, eat the higher number of cups per day.  
Visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to learn more.

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## HISTORY

Persimmons as we know them today are native to China and today over 2000 varieties can be found, which have been cultivated for centuries. There are some varieties of persimmons that are native to North America. Early settlers were introduced to this variety by the Native Americans, but they found it to be inedible because it was so bitter. They soon learned from the natives that it must be left on the tree well into October so as to ripen to a point where the natural tannins are overshadowed by the higher sugar content. This variety of persimmon was about the size of a grape.

Today the majority of persimmons consumed in the United States are referred to as Japanese persimmons. This variety was introduced to Japan many centuries ago by the Chinese. The persimmon is now the national fruit of Japan and is one of the traditional foods consumed for the Japanese New Year.

In 1855 Commodore Matthew Perry opened trade between Japan and the West. He returned to the United States with persimmon trees that were planted in Washington, D.C. In 1870 the persimmon was introduced to California where it thrived in the ideal growing conditions.

The earliest cultivation records of the sweet potato date to 750 BCE in Peru, although archeological evidence shows cultivation of the sweet potato might have begun around 2500-1850 BCE.

Columbus brought sweet potatoes back to Spain, introducing them to Europeans. Europeans referred to the sweet potato as the potato, which often leads to confusion when searching for old sweet potato recipes. It wasn't until after the 1740's that the term sweet potato began to be used by American colonists to distinguish it from the white (Irish) potato.

Sweet potatoes were cultivated in Virginia in 1648, possibly earlier, and are said to have been taken into New England in 1764. They were grown by the Indians of our South in the 18th century, but we do not know how much earlier and by 1880 George Washington Carver compiled more than a hundred recipes for the vegetable!

## LITERATURE LINKS

Elementary: *Little Sweet Potato* by Amy Beth Bloom (Author) and Noah Z. Jones (Illustrator) "It's not all mulch and sunshine out there." When Little Sweet Potato rolls away from his patch, he is forced to search for a new home. He stumbles upon some very mean plants on his journey and begins to wonder if maybe he is too lumpy and bumpy to belong anywhere. Will Little Sweet Potato ever find a home that's just right for him?

This is a funny and timeless tale about appreciating one's self, lumps and bumps and all, and finding a community that takes all kinds.

Middle: *Under the Persimmon Tree* by Suzanne Fisher Staples

Najmah, a young Afghan girl whose name means "star," suddenly finds herself alone when her father and older brother are conscripted by the Taliban and her mother and newborn brother are killed in an air raid. An American woman, Elaine, whose Islamic name is Nusrat, is also on her own. She waits out the war in Peshawar, Pakistan, teaching refugee children under the persimmon tree in her garden while her Afghan doctor husband runs a clinic in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan. Najmah's father had always assured her that the stars would take care of her, just as Nusrat's husband had promised that they would tell Nusrat where he was and that he was safe. As the two look to the skies for answers, their fates entwine. Najmah, seeking refuge and hoping to find her father and brother, begins the perilous journey through the mountains to cross the border into Pakistan. And Nusrat's persimmon-tree school awaits Najmah's arrival. Together, they both seek their way home.

*Under the Persimmon Tree* is a 2006 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

This newsletter is brought to you by the Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent. Some material in this newsletter is adapted from the California Department of Public Health's Network for a Healthy California - Harvest of the Month program and from the following web sites: [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov) and [www.plants.usda.gov](http://www.plants.usda.gov). For additional information or resources, please contact Karen Terrell, School Wellness Coordinator, Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent at [klterrel@stvincent.org](mailto:klterrel@stvincent.org) or 317.338.2336.