

Healthy Workplace

Your monthly Anthem wellness newsletter



CT Pipe Trades



May is *Skin Cancer Awareness* Month!

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Approximately 9,500 people are diagnosed with skin cancer every day in the U.S. That's well over 3 million diagnoses every year. Fortunately, skin cancer is one of the most preventable and treatable forms of cancer. The five-year survival rate for early detected melanoma is 99% and over 90% of melanomas are considered preventable. With that being said, one person dies nearly every half-hour from melanoma in the country. These statistics show the importance of awareness, prevention and early diagnosis for skin cancer, and they point to why an entire month, May, is dedicated to skin cancer awareness.



Basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and malignant melanoma are, respectively, the three most common forms of skin cancer. These three different cancers vary based on the cells within the skin, in which the cancer develops; the basal cell, the squamous cell or the melanocyte. The squamous is the most superficial layer, followed by the basal and, finally, the deepest, the melanocyte. Basal cell carcinomas generally don't metastasize. As such, they are the least threatening of the three. They often appear as red bumps. Squamous cell carcinoma, on the other hand, can spread throughout the body. This cancer often appears as a red and/or scaly patch or bump. They are most common on the face, lips, ears and mouth.

Malignant melanomas are the most dangerous of the three and lead to the highest number of mortalities for Americans. These melanomas often develop around existing moles and tend to form irregular shapes with diverse colors. However, they can also appear to be bruise-like with slight underlying pigment changes. Malignant melanomas can even appear as a dark streak under the finger nail.

Skin cancer is a highly preventable disease that is strongly correlated with exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays. Such UV rays are considerably genotoxic. In other words, they interfere with the normal functioning of the genetic material within a cell by causing it to mutate.



This damage is caused both by the absorption of energy and the intermediate hazardous products that are produced via the UV energy. Ultimately, these rays cause DNA damage and errors in transcription. Both UVA (deep penetrating) and UVB (superficial penetrating) cause DNA damage. Ideally, free radical scavengers, like vitamin E, can help to "clean up" and remove these damaged DNA parts. Similarly, glutathione, the cells primary antioxidant, can help to remove dangerous by-products of UV radiation produces within the cell. However, if more damage is caused than can be repaired, the stage is set for cancer growth.

It's easy to protect yourself from UV exposure...



Long-sleeved shirts, pants, and a wide-brimmed hat offer the best protection. If you're wearing a baseball cap or short-sleeved shirt, make sure to put sunscreen on your ears, neck, and arms.



The best way to prevent the dangerous cellular cascade caused by UV radiation is by putting on sunscreen and by wearing protective clothing. The SPF should be at or above 30 (97% of UVB rays blocked) for extended activities and at or above 15 (93% of UVB rays blocked) for regular use. Since UV radiation does not always correlate with heat, it is important to wear sun protection regularly. **It should be a part of normal healthy habits; similar to teeth brushing.** In addition, it is recommended to avoid tanning beds and plan to be close to shaded areas on strong UV ray days.

Finally, it is essential to find a dermatologist and schedule a minimum of one appointment per year. One blistering sunburn in youth more than doubles cancer risk later on in life. Given that cancer can develop over time and be in places that are hard to see, a trip to the dermatologist is truly the best way to ensure skin health.

Sources:
https://www.nfca.org/blog/skin-cancer-awareness-month/?gclid=EA2Q2b0Mts_g1Pv77wVn0m2A811vW4AAYAyAAgledD_8wE
<https://www.facebook.com/natlouncilskincancerprevention/photos/101513463005233>

Instant Pot BBQ Chicken Grain Bowls



Topped with avocado, mango, jalapeño, sliced radishes, and a smattering of cilantro, these bowls are loaded with color and flavor. Feel free to drizzle a little more barbecue sauce on right before serving.

Prep time: 45 min
Cook time: 35 min
Yields: 6-8 servings

Ingredients

2 lb. skinless, boneless chicken thighs

2 garlic cloves, sliced

1 medium onion, sliced

1 tsp. kosher salt

Black pepper, to taste

1 1/4 c. barbecue sauce, plus more for topping

1 c. quinoa

1 avocado, sliced

1 large mango, cut into small cubes

1 jalapeño pepper, thinly sliced (remove seeds for less heat)

4 radishes, thinly sliced

Chopped fresh cilantro, for topping

Directions

1. Combine the chicken, garlic, onion, 1/2 teaspoon salt, a few grinds of pepper and 1/4 cup water in a 6-quart Instant Pot. Pour in the barbecue sauce.
2. Put on and lock the lid, making sure the steam valve is in the sealing position. Set the pot to pressure-cook on high for 15 minutes. When the time is up, let the pressure release naturally for 10 minutes. Carefully turn the steam valve to the venting position and release the remaining pressure. Unlock and remove the lid, being careful of any remaining steam.
3. Transfer the chicken to a large bowl and shred with two forks. Set the Instant Pot to sauté on high and cook the sauce until thickened, about 10 minutes. Add the sauce to the chicken and toss.
4. Meanwhile, bring 2 1/4 cups water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add the quinoa, the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper and return to a boil. Reduce the heat to low; simmer until the quinoa is tender and the water is absorbed, about 20 minutes.
5. Scoop 1/2 cup quinoa into each bowl. Top with the chicken, avocado, mango, jalapeño, radishes and cilantro. Drizzle with more barbecue sauce.

Mangoes – Did You Know?

Mango is a good source of immune-boosting nutrients. One cup of mango provides 10% of your daily vitamin A needs. Vitamin A is essential for a healthy immune system, as it helps fight infections. Meanwhile, not getting enough vitamin A is linked to a greater infection risk.



On top of this, the same amount of mango provides nearly three-quarters of your daily vitamin C needs. This vitamin can help your body produce more disease-fighting white blood cells, help these cells work more effectively and improve your skin's defenses.

Mango also contains folate, vitamin K, vitamin E and several B vitamins, which aid immunity as well.

Wellness Bites for your Quick Wellness Needs!

The 20 Healthiest Fruits on the Planet

Grapefruit

Besides being a good source of vitamins and minerals, grapefruit is known for its ability to aid weight loss and reduce insulin resistance. Also, eating grapefruit has been shown to reduce cholesterol levels and help prevent kidney stones.

Pineapple

One cup of pineapple provides 131% of the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for vitamin C and 76% of the RDI for manganese. Pineapple also contains bromelain, a mixture of enzymes known for its anti-inflammatory properties and ability to digest protein.

Avocado

Most fruits are high in carbs, while avocado is low in carbs and comprised mainly of healthy fats. The majority of the fat in avocado is oleic acid, a monounsaturated fat linked to reduced inflammation and better heart health. In addition to healthy fats, avocados are loaded with potassium which is associated with reduced blood pressure and a lower risk of stroke.

Blueberries

Blueberries have an impressive nutrition profile, being particularly high in fiber, vitamin C, vitamin K and manganese. Blueberries are also exceptionally high in antioxidants. Antioxidants may reduce the risk of chronic conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes and Alzheimer's. Additionally, the antioxidants in blueberries may have a protective effect on your brain as they have been shown to improve memory in older adults.

Apples

Apples are among the most popular fruits, and also happen to be incredibly nutritious. They contain a high amount of fiber, vitamin C, potassium and vitamin K. Studies suggest the antioxidants in apples can promote heart health and reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, cancer and Alzheimer's. The antioxidant activity in apples has been linked with increased bone density in animal and test-tube studies. Another notable health benefit is their pectin content. Pectin is a prebiotic fiber that feeds the good bacteria in your gut and helps improve digestion and metabolic health.

Pomegranate

Not only are Pomegranates nutrient dense, they also contain powerful plant compounds that are responsible for most of their health benefits. The antioxidant levels in pomegranate have been shown to be three times higher than those of green tea and red wine. Studies have also shown that pomegranates have anti-inflammatory effects and may help reduce the risk of cancer.

Mangos

Mangoes are an excellent source of vitamin C. They also contain soluble fiber, which can provide many health benefits. Additionally, mangoes have strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that may help reduce the risk of disease. In animal studies, the plant compounds in mangoes have been shown to protect against diabetes.

Strawberries

Strawberries are highly nutritious. Their vitamin C, manganese, folate and potassium contents are where they really shine. Compared to other fruits, strawberries have a relatively low glycemic index. Similarly to other berries, strawberries have a high antioxidant capacity, which may reduce your risk of chronic disease. Animal and test-tube studies have found that strawberries may also help prevent cancer and tumor formation.

Cranberries

Cranberries have an excellent nutrition profile, being rich in vitamin C, manganese, vitamin E, vitamin K1 and copper. They also contain a significant amount of antioxidants called flavanol polyphenols, which can improve health. What makes cranberries unique from other fruits is that their juices and extracts help prevent urinary tract infections.

Lemons

Lemons are a very healthy citrus fruit known for their high vitamin C content. They may be particularly helpful in promoting heart health due to their potential to lower blood lipids and blood pressure. Based on findings from animal studies, researchers have also proposed that the plant compounds in lemons can help prevent weight gain. Other studies show that the citric acid in lemon juice has the ability to treat kidney stones.

Durian

Durian is nicknamed the "king of fruits." One cup provides 80% of the RDI for vitamin C. It is also rich in manganese, B vitamins, copper, folate and magnesium. Furthermore, durian contains several healthy plant compounds that function as antioxidants.



Watermelon

Watermelon is high in vitamins A and C. It's also rich in some important antioxidants, including lycopene, carotenoids and cucurbitacin E. Some of watermelon's antioxidants have been studied for their anti-cancer effects. Lycopene intake is linked with a reduced risk of cancers of the digestive system, while cucurbitacin E may inhibit tumor growth. Consuming lycopene-rich foods can also promote heart health because of their ability to reduce cholesterol and blood pressure. Of all the fruits, watermelon is one of the most hydrating. It is made up of 92% water, which can help you feel more full.

Olives

Olives are a good source of vitamin E, iron, copper and calcium. They also provide a lot of antioxidants, which may help prevent heart disease and liver damage, as well as have anti-inflammatory effects. Similarly to avocados, olives contain oleic acid, which may provide several benefits for heart health and cancer prevention. Additionally, animal studies have linked some of the plant compounds in olives with a reduced risk of osteoporosis.

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Blackberries

Blackberries provide an impressive amount of vitamin C, vitamin K and manganese. One cup provides a whopping 8 grams of fiber. Also, the antioxidants in blackberries have been shown to reduce inflammation and aging of the arteries. Both effects may protect against chronic illness, such as heart disease and cancer.

Oranges

Oranges are one of the most popular and nutritious fruits in the world. Eating one medium orange will provide a significant amount of vitamin C and potassium. They're also a good source of B vitamins, such as thiamine and folate. The citric acid in oranges may reduce the risk of kidney stones. Oranges are similar to lemons with their impressive amounts of vitamin C and citric acid, which help increase iron absorption and prevent anemia.

Bananas

Bananas are well known for being high in potassium. One unique property of bananas is their carb makeup. The carbs in green, unripe bananas consist largely of resistant starch, which may improve blood sugar control and make you feel full. Bananas also contain pectin, which may improve blood sugar control and digestive health. Moreover, studies have shown that the high carb and mineral content of bananas makes them a great source of fuel before exercise.

Grapes

Grapes are very healthy. Their high antioxidant content is what makes them stand out. The anthocyanins and resveratrol in grapes have both been shown to reduce inflammation. Also, animal studies suggest that the plant compounds in grapes may help protect your heart, eyes, joints and brain.

Guava

Eating just one ounce of guava will give you 107% of the RDI for vitamin C. Guava is also rich in fiber, folate, vitamin A, potassium, copper and manganese. The antioxidants in guava have been shown to protect cells from oxidative damage, indicating that they may help reduce the risk of chronic disease. Guava is another great source of pectin, which benefits digestion and may help prevent colon cancer.

Papaya

Papaya is a very healthy fruit high in vitamin C, vitamin A, potassium and folate. It is also rich in the anti-cancer antioxidant lycopene. Studies also show that the body absorbs lycopene better from papaya than from other lycopene-rich fruits and vegetables.

Cherries

Cherries are rich in nutrients, especially potassium, fiber and vitamin C. They contain antioxidants, including anthocyanins and carotenoids, which reduce inflammation. Another impressive health benefit of cherries is their melatonin content. Melatonin is a hormone that signals your brain when it's time to sleep. It may help treat insomnia and other sleep disorders.

May is National Bike Month

Greetings! Marlise from Maine here. The weather is warming up and kids and adults alike are venturing outside to run, walk, hike and bike. If you've notice more bicycles on the roadways in recent years, you are not alone! Bicycling continues to increase in popularity and is one of the best ways to get exercise, see the sights and reduce your carbon footprint. However, bicyclists face a host of hazards. They often must share the road with vehicles, and injuries can happen even on a designated path. The number of deaths from bicycle incidents increased 29% over an eight-year period, from 793 in 2010 to 1,024 in 2017, according to *Injury Facts*®. **Of the 1,024 bicyclist deaths in 2017, 679 involved motor vehicles.** With about 80 million bicyclists sharing the road with motorized vehicles, it is vital bicyclists take some safety precautions.



- ◇ Check Equipment: always inspect your bike prior to riding
- ◇ Plan to Be Seen: make certain drivers can see you
- ◇ Wear a Helmet
- ◇ Follow the Rules of the Road

National Bike Month, celebrated in communities from coast to coast, is a chance to showcase the many benefits of bicycling.

Bike to Work Week 2021 is May 17-23, 2021; Bike to Work Day takes place on Friday, May 21.

Benefits of Gardening

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, as lockdowns put millions out of work and headlines forecast food shortages, anxious Americans picked up their rakes and spades. In response, record numbers of people began cultivating coronavirus victory gardens. In a matter of weeks, seeds, seedlings, and fruit trees sold out online and in gardening centers. As it turns out, the impulse to garden is actually a great idea — whether or not you're coping with a crisis — because gardening is one of the healthiest hobbies you can develop.



Gardening:

- ◇ Can help your body fight disease
- ◇ Builds strength, promotes sleep and helps you maintain a healthy weight
- ◇ Can help protect your memory as you get older
- ◇ Is a mood booster
- ◇ Calms you after stressful events
- ◇ Is an effective tool if you're recovering from addiction
- ◇ Can give you a sense of empowerment
- ◇ Can help you manage ecoanxiety
- ◇ Can foster feelings of connection to family and community

Whether your patch is large or small, a raised bed, community garden, or window box, getting dirty and eating clean are good for you.