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Smart Choices for **SENIORS**

September
A Newsletter from the EFNEP/SCNEP Programs of Virginia Cooperative Extension

September brings in the harvest season. Leaves will start to turn different colors and soon fall off the trees. Bright orange pumpkins not only decorate front lawns during the fall, they also contain essential vitamins and nutrients. Beyond pumpkin pie, pumpkins and squash can be enjoyed in main dishes, vegetable side dishes, in stir-fries, soups, breads, and much more!



Virginia Cooperative Extension

Knowledge for the Commonwealth



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MyPyramid.gov
STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

Healthy Eating

Fall vegetables like squash and pumpkins are very low in fat and calories, and high in potassium. They are a good source of vitamin C and iron, and add vitamin E and calcium to your diet. The fall harvest brings in great produce like acorn squash, butternut squash, and sweet potatoes! All are great sources of antioxidants which help strengthen the immune system. Remember that vitamin A, which is found in bright orange vegetables like pumpkin, is great for your eyes!



Bring the family to the table this fall.

Winter squash:

- Examples are Acorn and Hubbard Squash. They are dark yellow in color and, when cut into pieces, can be substituted in sweet potato recipes.

To store your squash:

- Squash is easy to grow if you have a garden; if your harvest is more than you can use at the time, you can store your uncut squash on thick pads of newspapers in a cool, dry, well-ventilated location. Use within three to six months.
- Cut pieces of winter squash should be tightly wrapped and stored in the refrigerator. Use within three to five days.

To prepare your squash:

- Wash the outside of the squash before cooking or slicing.
- Squash can be cooked whole or cut into pieces for cooking.
- To cut in half, grasp the squash firmly and use a sharp knife to slice through to the center. Then flip and cut the other side until the squash falls open. Remove and discard the seeds. Do not peel before cooking.

To cook your squash:

- Bake: To bake a whole (1 to 1 1/2 pound) winter squash, pierce the rind with a fork and bake in a 350-degree oven for 45 minutes. Test for doneness by piercing with a fork.
- Boil/Steam: Boil or steam quarters or rings for 25 minutes or until tender.
- Microwave: To microwave, place halves or quarters cut side down in a shallow dish; add 1/4 cup water. Cover tightly and microwave on HIGH 6 minutes per pound.

Enjoy your squash in many meals:

- All varieties are great for puréeing, roasting, and baking.
- Boil or mash winter squash just as you would potatoes. Or add peeled squash cubes to your favorite soups, stews, beans, casseroles, and mixed vegetables.
- You can dress any cooked winter squash with butter and herbs, maple syrup and nuts, marinara sauce, or stewed fruit.

For additional ideas please visit: <http://whatscookingamerica.net/squash.htm>

September Word Puzzle

Can you Squash this puzzle?

P H E K A B F T D A I P L Z A M D X W A
N F S G X R M M G U V A U F C H Q I Q N
S T N A D I X O I T N A E M F R N I C I
R T W M U Y X N T U A C T T P T T U Z M
F Z L G W Q O X N M C R U Z E K E D P A
J X Q I Q M S B I N A R Z R V Y I S R T
R Y G K A P D N E L H S S Y E J B N H I
D P H N B T H T R D A Q A B Z O Q B A V
T I N H P L G S Z O U P D L U G F C K A
M I G E T I F J M A C N R Z Q E O B N L
C E C X B E U Y S R L A C H K J F L R M
F N I C T Z Y H A R V E S T K W Z I P I
L M Q B B O U T Y H S X W M T D N X L H
J J H O L X S D I Q L N W I W W A L Q X
I G H C Q C V R R Y I E J P A N G G N C
S S H O B N S V W J L D Y L Q H R C G O
Q H N O R H M Z O F C D K J N H J O I E

ACORN SQUASH

ANTIOXIDANTS

AUTUMN

BAKE

CINNAMON

HARVEST

PUMPKIN

VITAMIN A

WALK

WINTER SQUASH

Food Safety

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap before and after handling food.
- Wash for 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday"), rinse well, and dry with a clean towel.
- Prepare foods only for yourself, not others, if you are ill with diarrhea.
- Bandage cuts and burns on hands properly before handling food. Use clean bandages and gloves.
- Wash dish towels and cloths in the hot cycle of your washing machine. Wash them often.

Source: www.fightbac.org

Staying Fit

Step outside and take in a breath of fresh air. Instead of getting a ride or taking the bus, briskly walk to get where you are going. This small amount of physical activity can result in better health. It will keep your muscles strong and flexible. Try to do some physical activity every day so that you keep your muscle tone and won't lose your independence!

Physical activity also can help you manage health problems you might already have, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or elevated cholesterol and prevent them from getting worse. Physical activity can improve your ability to function well and remain independent in spite of health problems. Few factors contribute as much to successful aging as being physically active.

Source: www.ahrq.gov



Recipe

Cream of Pumpkin Soup with Cinnamon Croutons

Ingredients:

- Cinnamon Croutons
- 3 tablespoons margarine, softened
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 4 slices whole-wheat bread

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Combine margarine, brown sugar, and cinnamon.
3. Spread margarine mixture evenly over one side of each bread slice.
4. Place bread buttered side up on a baking sheet.
5. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until bread is crisp and topping is bubbly.
6. Cut each slice of bread into 8 small triangles or squares.

Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 2 (14.5-ounce) cans chicken broth
- 1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin puree
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup of 2% milk

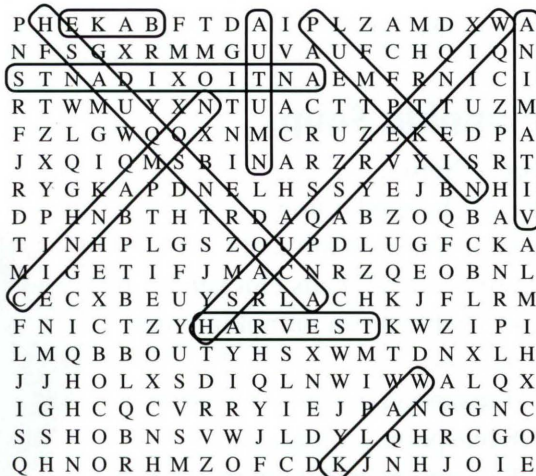
Directions:

1. Sauté onion in oil in a medium saucepan until tender.
2. Add 1 can chicken broth; stir well.
3. Bring to a boil; cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Stir by hand or blend in a food processor until smooth.
5. Add remaining can of broth, pumpkin, salt, ground cinnamon, ground ginger, and ground pepper; stir well.
6. Bring to a boil, cover, reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
7. Stir in milk and heat through. Do not boil.
8. Ladle into individual soup bowls.
9. Top each serving with Cinnamon Croutons.

Source: www.allrecipes.com



OFFICIAL BUSINESS



Answers

**For more information on food, nutrition,
and achieving a healthy weight, contact:**

Or call this toll-free number: 1-888-814-7627

If you have access to the Internet, go to these sites:

Healthy Futures Series:

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/healthyfutures>

MyPyramid Food Guide:

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/index.html>

Food Stamps in Virginia:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/foodstamp.html>

www.ext.vt.edu 2007 Publication 348-579

Produced by Communications and Marketing, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Virginia Tech
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VT/638/0707/5M/272412/348579

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**This newsletter was funded by
USDA's Food Stamp Program.**

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