J&M® halal certified meals use only wholesome ingredients and have NO MSG, NO SOY, and NO ARTIFICIAL FLAVORS OR COLORS. Each meal is fully cooked and is conveniently packaged in either 10 oz. (283 g) microwaveable serving dishes or 8 oz. (227 g) travel and camping pouches. Reheat to eat in minutes.

**Lamb & Lentil Stew:** Tender lamb joins a medley of tomatoes, lentils, onions, chickpeas, zucchini and red and green sweet peppers. Aromatic herbs and spices invite all to taste and enjoy this truly delicious meal.

**Lamb & Barley Stew:** Tender lamb, combined with barley, eggplant, red and green sweet peppers, zucchini and onions, create a true culinary delight! A scrumptious meal with a variety of textures, it is deliciously seasoned with herbs and spices of the Middle East.

**My Kind of Chicken®:** A favorite combination of chunks of light and dark chicken meat with brown rice, peas and carrots in a mild sauce.

**Chicken Mediterranean:** A hearty chicken meal with the flavors of the Mediterranean region. It has chunks of light and dark chicken meat, tomatoes, potatoes, chickpeas, and black olives in a tangy sauce.

**Chicken & Noodles:** A winning combination with chunks of light and dark chicken meat, homestyle Kluski noodles, peas and carrots in a lightly seasoned sauce.

**Chicken & Black Beans:** A scrumptious meal with chunks of light and dark chicken meat, black & kidney beans, tomatoes, potatoes, sweet peppers and corn. Simple spicing brings out its full flavor!

**BEEF STEW:** A satisfying and delicious stew! It has chunks of lean beef, with potatoes, sweet peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, zucchini, chickpeas and carrots in a flavorful sauce.

**Old World Stew:** Chunks of lean beef, with brown rice, tomatoes, zucchini and pinto beans. The sauce is seasoned with the aromatic flavors of the Middle East.

**Pasta with Garden Vegetables:** This delicious and robust meal has rotini pasta with peppers, mushrooms, zucchini and tomatoes. It is perfectly flavored with traditional Italian seasonings.

**Vegetarian Stew:** A meal fit for vegetarian and hearty eater alike! With macaroni, vegetables, potatoes, barley, lentils, peanuts and seasonings, this meal has great taste and a variety of textures.

**Cheese Tortellini:** Cheese-filled tortellini are simply delicious in a well-seasoned tomato sauce, with the added protein and texture of pinto beans.

**Florentine Lasagna:** A meal influenced by the tastes of Florence. Savor the combination of small lasagna noodles in a tomato sauce with Ricotta and Parmesan cheeses, spinach and pinto bean pieces which add texture and protein.
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Assalaamu alaikum,

We hope everyone enjoyed a rewarding Ramadan and joyous Eid celebration. If we didn’t get enough exercise during the month, or even if we did, we will want to go back to a regular exercise routine. “Exercising Your Heart Muscle” offers pointers on how to make sure we keep our heart active.

With increased activity, we need additional nourishment and we want to be sure to avoid food poisoning. “Abdominal Turbulence” discusses the common causes of food poisoning and some ways to avoid it.

At the same time, we don’t want to overeat. “Obesity” explores the causes and offers suggestions for keeping our weight under control.

Shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables, we often see the organic section offering similar looking products at higher prices. Are they worth it? “Why Organics?” provides some insight into the benefits or myths about eating organic products.

A food mentioned in the Quran, “Ginger” explores the benefits of this root and the healing power ascribed to it by ancient civilizations.

More and more, plastic is used to package and display food products. Though we cannot deny the viability of plastic in food packaging, we also cannot overlook the impact on the environment. “Managing Our Plastic Addiction” explores the history of plastic use and considers ways of reducing our dependence on plastic.

Finally, be sure to try out the recipes and share your comments with us via email, Facebook, or Twitter.

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Roger Othman editor
From the Publisher’s Desk

Assalaamu alaikum,

The use of plastic in the food industry is so prevalent, it is almost impossible to avoid it. Be it plastic wrap, plastic coated paper, plastic bags, plastic bottles, or plastic utensils, plastic is everywhere. It is convenient, inexpensive, and serves as a moisture and gas barrier, which helps maintain the freshness of food products. So what’s the big deal?

Well, the food industry isn’t the only place where plastic is used. Counting plastic piping, synthetic fibers, packing peanuts, etc., over 8.3 billion tons have been produced since 1950, and half of that was produced in just the last twelve years. It is forecast that the weight of plastic in our oceans will be greater than the weight of fish in the oceans by 2050! Most of us will still be around then.

While plastic used in construction may have a useful life of ten or more years, plastic used in the food industry is disposed of in less than a year. According to a study in Science Advances, though some plastic is recycled or incinerated, over 75% of discarded plastic ends up in landfills.

So what’s the big deal? Plastic in the oceans is mistaken for food by many sea creatures and consumption of it results in the deaths of thousands of marine creatures. Others get entangled resulting in injury or death. Plastic is not biodegradable and takes centuries to decompose in a landfill. And production continues to increase every year.

Most of us may not remember the days when we went to a butcher for meat and the meat was wrapped in that white ‘butcher’s paper’ rather than plastic wrap; soda was sold in glass bottles rather than plastic bottles; and water came from a tap rather than a plastic bottle.

There is no doubt the use of plastic has brought convenience, time-saving, and other benefits. But all that must be weighed against our responsibility as stewards of our planet. We need to seriously consider our lifestyle choices and make better decisions for the long-term preservation of our ecosystem.

Sincerely,

Muhammad Munir Chaudry president

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Managing Our Plastic Addiction

By Asma Jarad
The invention of synthetic plastic in 1907 by Belgian-born American immigrant, Leo Hendrik Baekeland, gradually and completely changed life for people around the world. In the search for a substitute to shellac—a natural electrical insulator—Baekeland invented Bakelite. Because it provides endless possibilities with its unique ability to be molded into virtually anything, Bakelite was marketed as “the material of a thousand uses.” Over time, plastic evolved even further and replaced our reliance on natural materials such as metal, wood, stone, and animal tusks, becoming the material of infinite uses. Indeed, the development of plastic has proven invaluable to people and the environment. However, as with all good things, there is always a price to pay. Unfortunately, plastic products show up in places we don’t want them to; piling up in landfills, blocking our waterways, and polluting our oceans. We are endowed by our Creator for good, so how can we utilize plastic in the countless beneficial ways it is offered without harming our health and contaminating our environment?

Plastic Everywhere
In the 1960s, plastic began gaining popularity due to its exceptionally versatile characteristics. Our lives today are saturated with plastic products; from the medical field, tech devices, furniture, toys, car and plane parts, to food containers and drinking vessels; reliance on plastic is everywhere. In addition to being precisely moldable, plastic is light yet durable, provides a practical alternative to glass and ceramics, is cheap to produce, and sterile enough to be used in medical procedures and devices. It is indeed difficult to imagine a day without plastics because they make our lives easier, healthier, and safer. For example, safety helmets people use for riding a motorcycle or bike are nearly 100% plastic. Plastics also furnish our lifestyles; whether it’s the cellphone in our hands, the clean water delivered to our faucets, the television mounted on our walls, or the structural foundations of our homes, innumerable lifestyle possibilities would not be available if not for plastic.

...plastic is light yet durable, provides a practical alternative to glass and ceramics, is cheap to produce, and sterile enough to be used in medical procedures and devices. It is indeed difficult to imagine a day without plastics because they make our lives easier, healthier, and safer.
As practical human beings, we know that there is no such thing as an all-around good thing. Everything has its downfalls and when it comes to plastics, there is no exception. With increased reliance on plastic as an alternative to natural resources, we gradually learn the negative result of the proliferation of plastics in our lives. As we become increasingly aware of taking care of the environment and reducing our waste, we also cannot ignore the collecting plastic debris, piece by piece occupying vast miles of ocean space, clogging our waterways, and piling up in landfills. The troubling effect of plastic waste certainly cannot be disregarded. Since the chemical structure of most plastics renders them resistant to natural processes of degradation, plastic pollution has become a leading environmental plague. According to Rick LeBlanc, an expert in the area of sustainable packaging, “Normally, plastic items can take up to 1,000 years to decompose in landfills. But plastic bags we use in our everyday life take 10-1,000 years to decompose, while plastic bottles can take 450 years or more.”

There are solutions to this epidemic which include what I learned in grade school as the 3 Rs: reuse, recycle, and reduce. According to Laura Parker, a National Geographic staff writer who specializes in covering climate change and marine environments, “A whopping 91% of plastic isn’t recycled. Billions of tons of plastic have been made over the past decades, and much of it is becoming trash and litter.” When we reuse and recycle rather than tossing away, we reduce the need to create more plastic products, thus helping to stave off what many experts fear will be a time in the not so distant future where the ocean will be filled with more plastic waste than fish. Roland Geyer from the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, specializes in industrial ecology and found that “The rapid acceleration of plastic manufacturing, which so far has doubled roughly every 15 years, has outpaced nearly every other man-made material.” Unlike other man-made materials such as steel, nylon, and glass, the lifespan of plastic products in our lives average under a year.

Tips for consuming less plastic as described by Stephanie R. Kinnon, a Vancouver-based freelance writer, include:

- Make an effort to purchase products with minimal plastic packaging.
- Use cloth bags for grocery shopping.
- Reuse plastic containers within your home. For example, plastic grocery bags can be reused for additional trips to the grocery store or as lunch bags, gym bags, and garbage can liners. Yesterday’s yogurt container can become tomorrow’s lunch pail. Old margarine containers can become storage vessels for an assortment of household items.
- Familiarize yourself with plastic recycling in your community.
Plastics on Our Health

In addition to the negative impact we inflict on the environment with our over-consumption, lack of recycling, and reliance on plastics, there is also a documented adverse effect on our personal health. For example, plastic containers are made with additives such as bisphenol-A (BPA), an industrial chemical that some experts claim is toxic because it binds to estrogen receptors and influences bodily processes such as cell repair, fetal development, growth, energy, reproduction, and fertility. When certain plastic containers are made, BPA is added to aid in product resiliency. BPA is meant to remain sealed within the product, however, it commonly seeps into the food or beverages the container is holding. Given this information, BPA has been banned or restricted on several fronts, however the common replacements, bisphenol-S or bisphenol-F are similar to BPA in structure and toxic effect. To minimize BPA exposure, Aline Petre MS, RD, recommends avoiding packaged foods, drinking from glass bottles, being selective with toys, not microwaving plastic, and only buying powdered infant formula.

Whether we like it or not, plastics are here to stay. Despite the negativity surrounding them, plastics are critical to our modern lives. Without plastics, we would not have much of the technology we enjoy and depend on such as cell phones, computers, TVs, and lifesaving medical devices. Plastics’ versatility has raised our standard of living and helped shift reliance from natural materials in a safer, lighter, cheaper, reliable, and durable manner. It is incumbent upon each one of us to do our part in becoming plastic savvy to preserve our environment and protect our health. We must reduce our waste by choosing reusable and recyclable plastics to keep them out of landfills as well as out of the water we share with other living creatures. When we are done with our plastic products, we should take responsibility for delivering them to reputable recycling centers where they are converted into other useful products. The benefits of recycling are far reaching as they include reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators, conserving natural resources, preventing pollution by reducing the need to collect new raw materials, and saving energy.

As Muslims who seek to follow in the footsteps of our ultimate altruistic role model, Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), we should heed his teachings when he advised us to hold ourselves accountable for our actions and to avoid going into excess as reported by Abu Huraira, “Verily Allah likes three things for you and He disapproves three things for you. He is pleased with you that you worship Him and associate nor anything with Him, that you hold fast the rope of Allah, and be not scattered; and He disapproves for you irrelevant talk, persistent questioning and the wasting of wealth.”—(Sahih Muslim, Book 30, Hadith 12. Wealth comes in many forms, including a healthy environment. In the Quran, God commands us to avoid wasting resources and to be mindful of our guardianship role. He says, “But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.” (Quran 28:77).

ASMA JARAD is a Chicago-based freelance writer and editor published across multiple forums.
Abdominal Turbulence

By Kelly Crosby
We usually think of eating as one of the most joyful, pleasurable activities of life. What’s better than sharing a tasty meal with friends and family? Unfortunately, everyone will experience food poisoning at least once in their lifetime; and it’s certainly no fun. Suddenly, a home cooked meal or a pleasant experience dining out takes an awful turn. Overall queasiness is accompanied with cramping, vomiting, headaches, and fatigue. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), each year, one in six Americans gets food poisoning from consuming contaminated food.

But what exactly is food poisoning? Food poisoning is the common name for what scientists call foodborne illness or foodborne disease. The most common sources for food poisoning are bacterial, viral, or parasitic agents.

Some well-known bacterial strains are Campylobacter jejuni (C. jejuni), Salmonella, and Escherichia Coli (E. Coli.). Campylobacter infection, or campylobacteriosis, is an infectious disease caused by campylobacter bacteria. According to the CDC, it is one of the most common causes of bacterial diarrheal illness in the United States, affecting more than 1.3 million people every year. Potential sources for campylobacteriosis are raw and undercooked poultry, unpasteurized milk, and contaminated water. Salmonella is linked to inadequately cooked eggs and chicken. Recently, salmonella outbreaks have occurred in contaminated raw tuna, pre-cut melons, and raw turkey. E. Coli is a bacterium that lives inside the intestines of all healthy humans and most E. Coli strains are harmless. But if you consume raw vegetables or undercooked ground beef, there is a chance of exposing yourself to E. Coli O157:H7, a particularly harmful strain that can cause severe abdominal cramps, bloody diarrhea, and vomiting.

Food poisoning by viral infection accounts for almost a third of food poisoning cases in developed countries. In the United States, more than 50% of food poisoning cases are viral and noroviruses are the most common foodborne illness. A norovirus, sometimes called “stomach flu,” is a primary cause of gastroenteritis. Foodborne viral infections usually have an incubation period of one to three days and share many symptoms of bacterial infections, including diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain. Other forms of viral infections are rotavirus and Hepatitis E. Likewise, there are infectious diseases, spread by bacteria, viruses, or parasites, that can be passed between humans and animals. One very famous example is the Ebola virus. These diseases that cause food poisoning are usually from contaminated sources of food or water. But, direct or indirect contact with an infected animal or insect can also be a source.

Parasites are organisms that derive nourishment from or at the expense of a human or animal host. Consuming raw or undercooked beef or pork can lead to taeniasis, the parasitic infection caused by tapeworms. While most infected patients may not experience any symptoms, tapeworms can cause digestive issues and may even lead to seizures and muscle damage.

Food poisoning can take place at any part of the food production process and can affect any kind of food. This means cross contamination is possible from when the food leaves the farm, to the manufacturing plant, to the cooking and preparation, to the dinner table. Dr. Christopher R. Braden, MD, Deputy Director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID) for the CDC, speaks of his work in detecting and preventing potential outbreaks. “One of my most memorable outbreak investigations started with investigators in Oregon and Wisconsin calling me to describe an unusual number of E. coli infections among children. We worked hard for the next two days to connect the DNA fingerprints of E. coli from those children with information about the foods that they ate prior to becoming ill. We identified spinach as the culprit which led to an international recall of fresh bag spinach from fields where wild pigs contaminated the spinach in the fields.”

Most cases of food poisoning are usually due to poor handling and preparation of food and improper food storage. The CDC estimates that each year 48 million people get sick in the United States from a foodborne illness, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die. Some populations are more vulnerable to food poisoning than others. Pregnant women are at risk due to their bodies’ changes in metabolism and circulation. Foodborne pathogens can also affect the baby. Pregnant women are advised not to eat raw foods, unpasteurized milk and juices, and undercooked eggs and meats as these can be potential sources for Listeria or Salmonella.

People with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, liver disease, or AIDS, and those receiving chemotherapy or radiation therapy for cancer are also at risk because of their weakened immune systems. For example, people on
Most cases of food poisoning are usually due to poor handling and preparation of food and improper food storage.

dialysis are fifty times more likely to get a Listeria infection. Children younger than five years old have developing immune systems that put them at risk. Also, adults who are sixty-five and older are at risk because their immune systems do not recognize harmful germs as they once did. Nearly half of people aged sixty-five and older who have a lab-confirmed foodborne illness from Salmonella, Campylobacter, Listeria, or E. coli are hospitalized.

All of this sounds scary but there is good news. The good news is that most bouts of food poisoning are mild. Healthy adults can heal within a week. However, those suffering with severe symptoms, such as blood in the stools, high fever, frequent vomiting and diarrhea that lasts for three days, should see their doctor. Having food poisoning is awful, but thankfully, for most people, it is not fatal. There are ways to help your body recover including being thoughtful about your food choices. It will take some time for your appetite to return. If you feel nauseous while eating, stop eating until it passes. The stomach needs time to resettle so that may mean not eating or drinking for a few hours. Getting rest also helps with recovery as the body is weakened and dehydrated due to fluid loss.

Yaqutullah Ibraheem Muhammad MS, RDN, LD, a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends the following, “Keep the following tips in mind to help aid your best recovery. Be sure to replace lost fluids, not just water but also electrolytes lost through diarrhea and vomiting. Drink water. Try soups and broths, coconut water, 100% fruit juices, herbal teas and electrolyte tablets that dissolve in water. Your appetite will be less than stellar but when you can, be sure to include small light meals and snacks that consist of bland foods including crackers, rice, bananas, applesauce, whole wheat toast, and rice. Bananas are also a good source of potassium and help to replace lost nutrients. These foods will help build your strength but will not upset your stomach like high fat and spicy foods will. Remember to avoid food items that will upset your stomach including dairy products, fatty and spicy foods.
Food poisoning can take place at any part of the food production process and can affect any kind of food. This means cross contamination is possible from when the food leaves the farm, to the manufacturing plant, to the cooking and preparation, to the dinner table.

as well as high fiber foods.” Drink plenty of fluids, especially drinks with electrolytes. Electrolytes are minerals, such as sodium and potassium, which help maintain bodily functions.

There are also things we can do to minimize exposure by implementing food safety practices. Dr. Mian N. Riaz, Ph.D, CFS, professor in the Food Diversity Innovation program at Texas A&M University advises that we, “Make sure your food is properly cooked. Keep raw meat separately from cooked meat. Wash hands and work areas. Keep food below 41°F in fridge and watch use by or expiration dates on the food.” Always refrigerate perishable food within two hours—one hour when the temperature is above 90°F.

Bleach and water are always a good go-to cleaning product, as the mixture cleans and sanitizes most surfaces. You can make your own cleaning solution, or you can go to the grocery store and choose your favorite cleaning product that contains added bleach. While hand sanitizers are good, according to the CDC, hand sanitizers must be used correctly in order to be effective. That means using the proper amount (read the instruction label), and rubbing it all over the surfaces of both hands until your hands are dry. Do not wipe your hands or wash them after applying. The best practice is to wash your hands frequently with soap and water before and after eating. Clean hands and a little knowledge about food safety can go a long way to protect you and your loved ones.

KELLY CROSBY is an artist and freelance writer in Atlanta, GA.
And they will be given to drink a cup [of wine] whose mixture is of ginger (Quran 76:17).

Aromatic, pungent, and spicy, ginger is well-known as an important kitchen spice with a distinct flavor. It has been revered for thousands of years to treat ailments. It’s a staple in many cuisines of the world, particularly in East, South, and Southeast Asia.

Ginger is closely related to turmeric, cardamom, and galangal. It was first grown in Southeast Asia, but it quickly spread around the world due to its ease of cultivation. In India and China, it was used traditionally to treat a variety of ailments. By the first century, traders had taken ginger all the way to the Mediterranean regions. Surprisingly, it was commonly used in European cuisine until the mid-sixteenth century, as well. Back then, spices were expensive, and only the wealthy could afford them. European imperialism, however, made spices plentiful and cheap, and the wealthy sought other status symbols: that food should taste like itself. The shift began in France in the mid-1600s and proliferated all over the West. The rise of Protestantism also shifted the medical philosophy from humors, which used spices like ginger to give “heat,” to fermentation and digestion, which promoted fresh vegetables and greens since they ferment easily.

Did the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him [PBUH]) eat ginger? There’s no authentic hadith
Sheikh Rachid Belbachir says “any healthy diet or food ingredient that contributes to a healthy lifestyle will fall under the sunnah of taking care of the body and ginger is known to be a cure for many diseases.”

Ginger has many health benefits—many were surprising for me to discover! It may contain anti-cancer properties: gingerols and shogaols, two potent chemicals in ginger, can be cytotoxic to cancer cells. You can use ginger to treat morning sickness, motion sickness, joint pain, and infertility, as well as to relieve GI irritation, lower blood sugar, reduce menstrual pain, lower cholesterol, and stimulate digestion via stimulating saliva and bile production. It can help reduce pain, nausea, and inflammation, as it is related to turmeric. In men it has
even been shown to increase testosterone levels and sperm viability, though more human studies are needed.

Ginger is quite versatile. You can eat it in chews, capsules, ginger snaps, raw root, and curries. It combines well with many other seasonings and is found in many spice mixes. It’s also used in tonics, soaps, and creams. “It is used as part of nearly all Indian cuisine, even in masala chai, usually in its fresh form, and ground into chutneys or spice mixes,” says Dr. Tulasi Srinivas with Emerson University.

I recommend the whole-food approach, leaning towards fresh ginger. The easiest way to peel ginger is with a spoon: just face the spoon upside down and scrape off the skin. Dr. Srinivas, however, recommends eating the skin, since “its pungent skin holds a lot of its curative properties.”

Ginger has got a zing to it and if you’re not used to it, it can be a little spicy, so it’s great to try to include it in different recipes. Making ginger tea or sprinkling some ginger powder into foods is an easy start. Ginger tea is quite easy to make at home; just slice some raw ginger and put it in a cup with some honey, then add boiling water and let it steep for several minutes. You can even eat the pieces afterward if you’re up for it!

How much ginger should you eat? That depends on your use. Just one to one and a half grams in capsules or three teaspoons can prevent nausea. Doctors recommend consuming a maximum of three to four grams per day from all sources and one gram for pregnant women. To treat bursitis, you can eat about six teaspoons of ginger daily. To treat motion sickness, it is advised to eat it for one to two days prior to a trip where motion sickness could be an issue and continuing on the trip. Though ginger is quite safe to eat, as usual, before starting any supplement, run it by your doctor to make sure you’re in the clear.

With prepared products, check the ingredients: many products use ginger flavoring, which perhaps tastes great, but the health benefits are absent. Some IFANCA halal certified products containing ginger can be found on their website (www.ifanca.org/Pages/Certified-Products.aspx). These include Saffron Road™ Chicken Pad Thai and Chicken Tikka Masala.

Ginger can be grown indoors. You’ll want to use a shallow, wide pot, because the root grows horizontally. Ginger thrives in loose, well-draining soil. Compost works well. Soak the ginger root in warm water overnight to prepare it for planting, then place the ginger root with the eye bud pointing up and cover it with one to two inches more soil. Water it lightly. If your harvest is a little too big and your companions are maxed out on food gifts, don’t worry; ginger can be frozen and preserved for six months.

Armed with knowledge of its various health benefits, consider adding ginger into your diet. Consider drinking ginger tea before lunchtime, making curries with ginger, adding ginger to soups and stir-fries, or some other creative health-promoting use that comes to mind. Just make sure you start with the right intention. Salud (health)!

GREG CARR is a Registered Dietitian and Nutritionist and NASM certified personal trainer. You can find him at ZaytunNutrition.com.
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Cheesecake Stuffed Strawberries
By: Minar Shehadah

Servings: 4–6

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound strawberries, washed and cored
- 1 8-oz package of Organic Valley Cream Cheese
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice
- desired toppings (crushed graham cracker or mini chocolate chips), optional

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash the strawberries and remove the stems.
2. Gently core the center of the strawberries using a small spoon or corer.
3. Pat the strawberries dry with a paper towel and place them hollow side up and set aside.
4. Place the cream cheese, powdered sugar, vanilla extract, and lemon juice in a small mixing bowl. Using a hand mixer, combine the ingredients until smooth, but thick. Do not overmix as you do not want a runny mixture.
5. Transfer the cheesecake filling to a piping bag with a tip. Carefully pipe the filling into the strawberries.
6. Top each filled strawberry with desired toppings and serve.
Ramadan Smoothie
By: Kifah Muhammad

Servings: 1

INGREDIENTS

½ avocado
3 dates
1 tablespoon honey
½ inch piece fresh ginger, peeled
1 ½ cups milk
5 mint leaves
½ cup ice

DIRECTIONS

1. Place ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend till smooth.
3. Pour into your favorite glass and enjoy!
Detox Ginger-Turmeric Tea
By: Asma Jarad

Servings: 5

INGREDIENTS

5 cups water
1-inch ginger root, sliced or grated
½ teaspoon turmeric
pinch of black pepper
1 cinnamon stick or ½ teaspoon cinnamon powder
1 teaspoon anise seeds or ½ teaspoon anise powder
honey and lemon juice to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Bring water, ginger, turmeric, pepper, cinnamon, and anise to a boil in a tea kettle.
2. Simmer for 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Turn off heat and steep for 5 minutes.
4. Add honey and lemon juice to taste.

Serve hot or cold.
Cilantro and Lentil Soup
By: Maryam Funmilayo

Servings: 6

**INGREDIENTS**

3 medium carrots
2 medium red onions
3 large cloves garlic
4 cups fresh cilantro
1 tablespoon olive oil or flaxseed oil
1 teaspoon ground paprika
1 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
2 cups mushroom broth
1 cup dried yellow lentils
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
½ cup lemon juice

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Rinse, peel, and dice carrots and onions. Peel and mince garlic.
2. Rinse thoroughly and chop fresh cilantro.
3. In a medium-sized pot, add oil. Heat over medium-high heat. Add the carrots and onions until they are slightly cooked for about 10 minutes.
4. Add garlic, paprika, and cayenne pepper to pot. Stir and cook for 1 minute.
5. Add the mushroom broth to pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes.
6. In a colander, rinse the yellow lentils with cold water. Then add to pot and simmer for 30 minutes.
7. Add black pepper and lemon juice and stir.
8. Serve immediately and enjoy.
Why Organics?

By Summaya Ali, MS, RD
Organics have become an integral part of our food system. As a young child, I knew organics to be the fruits and vegetables in that one corner of the grocery store which did not seem to receive much attention. Today, grocery aisles are filled with organic products. It is not surprising that 82% of U.S. households purchased some type of organic products in 2018. According to the Organic Trade Association, organic sales were over $3 billion in 1997. In 2017, they soared to an astounding $45 billion. Most of these purchases were from retail chain stores with about 7% from farmer’s markets. So how is this industry regulated and what is driving its popularity? As a consumer, I wanted the full scoop.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the government agency responsible for creating and implementing laws related to farming and food. The USDA has defined criteria for organic certification of raw and processed foods and individual ingredients. According to the USDA, organic products have been “produced through approved methods that integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.” In short, that means products must be made without the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, antibiotics or growth hormones, genetic engineering, irradiation, artificial ingredients, or additives. Livestock must be fed organic feed.
In order to receive organic certification, farmers and food handlers must submit an Organic Farm Plan or Organic Handling Plan to a USDA accredited agency outlining their farming methods. These agencies conduct site inspections to confirm the responsible practices outlined in the plan. The USDA has a rigorous process for organizations seeking to become accredited agencies. Organizations must submit applications along with descriptions of their standard operating procedures. After the applications are reviewed, a pre-decisional audit and interview are conducted to make sure the certifiers can successfully carry out the given responsibilities. After accreditation is granted, regular audits are conducted at different intervals to ensure continued compliance with certification requirements. There are currently eighty accredited agencies; forty-eight are in the United States and thirty-two are in other countries. Before products can be imported into the United States, they must be certified by international USDA accredited agencies.

The USDA identifies four categories of products that may have organic certification: crops (that will be harvested for food, animal feed, or used as soil nutrients), livestock, processed products, and wild crops such as wild mushrooms. A wild crop is a plant that is harvested without being watered, fed, or agriculturally managed. Wild caught seafood cannot be organic certified since it is not possible to control their feed and there are currently no regulations for organic certification of farm raised seafood.

The USDA has specific guidelines for labeling of organic products. The accredited agencies review and approve all product labels. The product will display the USDA organic seal and the name of the certifying agency. The ingredients listed in the nutrition panel should have an asterisk to denote their organic status. There is a National List of Allowed Substances which outlines non-organic ingredients which may be used in certain organic products.

There are three main types of labels for organic foods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>USDA Seal Displayed?</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 100% Organic               | All ingredients and processing agents are organic certified             | Yes                   | • Organic milk  
• Meat and poultry  
• Raw produce  
• Raw grains  
• Nuts and seeds |
| Organic                    | All agricultural ingredients are organic certified                     | Yes                   | • Processed foods  
• Juice  
• Frozen foods  
• Some yogurts  
• Baked goods |
| Made with organic ingredients | Contains 70% organic ingredients  
The remaining 30% must come from the list of allowed substances | No                    | Organic ingredients will be identified in the ingredient panel |
Consumers usually choose organics for two reasons: health benefits or disease and pesticide avoidance. As a dietitian, I am asked about the necessity of organics and what they can do for us. My response is that it is a personal choice—it must take into account where and how often you shop, your budget, how you handle and store food at home, and most importantly what your overall diet looks like. Here are the most common “organic” discussions I have with consumers:

1. **Organic produce has higher nutrient value.**
   All fruits and vegetables are nutrient powerhouses—they contain vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants (these protect us from cell damage and the effects of aging). Organic plants are grown without the use of synthetic pesticides so they make higher levels of antioxidant compounds to protect themselves against insects. These high levels of antioxidants are beneficial for us too. Also, organic produce tends to be smaller because synthetic fertilizers are not used to speed up their growth. The nutrients are more densely packed. However, it is important to remember that the characteristics of conventional and organic produce can vary by day. Two organic tomatoes may look identical but can be very different in terms of their nutrient profile. The growing conditions, the particular season, and when the produce was harvested—all make a difference.

2. **You want to avoid pesticides.**
   There is still debate on the level of pesticide exposure that can cause adverse effects. Populations at higher risk include young children, pregnant women, older adults, and those with weak immune systems. Organic farming may use natural pesticide sprays which are sourced from flowers or natural oils. While they still leave some residue, research has shown that pesticide levels are lower compared to non-organic produce. Washing produce well, practicing good personal hygiene around food, and cooking the vegetables are easy ways to remove most residues.

3. **Why does organic produce spoil so quickly?**
   Organic produce may not last as long as non-organic produce because chemical preservatives are not used. Good food storage practices can help prolong the life of organic produce. Most fruits should be allowed to ripen at room temperature away from direct sunlight. Apples tend to last longer in the fridge. Most vegetables (except tomatoes and potatoes) can be stored in the fridge. If you are using plastic bags to store produce, poke a few small holes in them to allow the release of moisture. Add paper towels to your salad bag to help absorb excess moisture.

4. **Organic milk has omega-3’s.**
   The omega-3 content of milk is based on the cow’s feed. Conventional milk comes from cows that consume grains, like corn. Organic milk is produced from grass-fed cows and contains higher levels of omega-3’s. The recommended amount of omega-3’s is 0.5 - 1.0 gram per day. One cup of organic milk contains 0.18 grams. Although the overall amount in milk is very small, it is still a plus.

5. **How are organic eggs different?**
   Organic eggs come from free range hens that have access to the outdoors. Similar to milk, the benefits of organic eggs come from the hen’s diet. Hens given organic feed will produce eggs with higher omega-3’s. Antibiotics are not used in these hens. According to the U.S. Poultry and Egg Association, if conventional hens ever receive antibiotics for illness, the antibiotics must be FDA approved and given at acceptable levels. The FDA regulates products to make sure the antibiotic residues do not appear in the egg.

Although organic products cost more than non-organic products, they are richer in antioxidants and omega-3’s; avoid the use of synthetic chemicals and fertilizers; and are regulated. With higher nutritional values, more environmentally friendly farming, and adherence to certification standards, it is easy to see why organics are gaining popularity with consumers.

**SUMMARY ALI** holds a Master’s degree in Nutrition from the University of Illinois and is a Registered Dietitian. She is excited to begin her career in Dietetics.
Fat. Overweight. Obese. If you dust off your biology and chemistry books, you will see that the term “fat” (in this case human fat) is actually adipose tissue (loose connective tissue) comprised of mainly adipose “fat” cells that store energy, as well as some blood vessels, macrophages, etc. To save time, let’s just say it is a group of carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen atoms in various permutations. Overweight is defined as an excess amount of total body weight that includes all tissues including fat, bone, and muscle and also includes water. Obesity is referred to as significant excess of body fat that does not include other tissues.

Now that we have clarified these points, let’s focus on obesity. How is obesity measured? The most common way obesity is measured is by determining BMI (Body Mass Index). A person’s BMI is a mathematical formula that divides their weight by the square of their height. BMI = weight (kg) / height (meters) squared. For us non-metric Americans, it is calculated as BMI = 703 multiplied by weight (pounds) divided by height (inches) squared. According to the National Institutes of Health, the following ranges are used to determine one’s weight category:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Mass Index (BMI)</th>
<th>Weight Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 18.5</td>
<td>Underweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.5 – 24.9</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.0 – 29.9</td>
<td>Overweight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.0 – 34.9</td>
<td>Obese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.0 – 39.9</td>
<td>Seriously Obese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40</td>
<td>Morbidly Obese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In case you were wondering, the answer is yes, the United States made the top twenty list for most obese countries in the world. Here are some statistics on obesity that are listed on the website of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regarding obesity in the United States:

- Approximately 1 in 4 people are obese
- More females are obese than males
- Hispanic American and African American communities show the most prevalence for obesity whereas Asian Americans show the least
- Middle aged adults show more prevalence for obesity than younger adults, however, the gap is narrowing
- Children and teens show more prevalence for obesity than toddlers
- College educated adults are less obese than non-college educated adults
- Higher income brackets showed less obesity than lower income brackets

Let’s take a closer look at some of these statistics. Age plays a role in obesity because as we age, our metabolism slows down. It takes being more “active” activity to maintain or lose weight. With the advent of technology and a more “desk-centric” lifestyle, adults need to be more conscious of consuming less and moving more. Obesity is making its way into younger children. We can thank a more sedentary, technologically advanced lifestyle for this trend as well. Socioeconomic backgrounds make a difference in obesity levels. College educated adults tend to have more information on health as well as a propensity to earn higher incomes. Higher income levels have the luxury of spending more on healthier foods and exercise. We can tie this in with the fact that a higher percentage of people in the Hispanic and African American communities have less educational opportunities and resources, therefore impacting their health.

There are many causes for obesity. Dr. Ehtesham J. Ghani, a bariatric physician and founder of ThinFastMD, explains that there are five major categories that affect weight gain. These categories are genetics, physiological disorders, medications, environment, and psychological factors. Each of these categories can be broken down further to showcase all the known factors of obesity.

Hereditary and genetics affect obesity. Families can inherit obesity. This can be through genetic material as well as the fact that eating habits and lifestyle usually are learned from a very young age.

There are many physiological factors that increase the risk of obesity. Neurological damage, especially in the hypothalamus which regulates appetite, can cause weight gain. Hypothyroidism, which is common amongst individuals from south Asia, slows down metabolism. Hormonal imbalance affects weight. The hormones leptin and ghrelin affect appetite. Leptin curbs the appetite whereas ghrelin stimulates it. Of course we have that wonderful physiological aspect of aging as well which is a major factor of our metabolic rates slowing down.

Medications are used for healing illnesses; however some may have negative side effects when it comes to weight. “Steroid medications are common culprits for increasing the fluid amount and deposition of fat in our bodies while antidepressants and other mood altering medications can increase sluggishness and appetite” says Dr. Ghani.

Environmental factors can range from what we experience to what we feel to where we live and so on. Some of these factors are the ease and accessibility of unhealthy foods. Drive thru eating is becoming more and more prevalent. We can get everything from a grande mocha latte with extra whipped cream, a burger with everything under the sun on it, and a chocolate sundae, all without leaving our cars. But wait….now we don’t have to leave our home recliner either, thanks to the food delivery apps. Those are some of the environmental factors we can easily control. However, factors such as air quality, radiation, and pesticides may be a bit more challenging, (but not impossible) to control. Geography can affect eating habits. Some cities are more health conscious than others because of culture, weather, or overall lifestyle.

Overweight is defined as an excess amount of total body weight that includes all tissues including fat, bone, and muscle and also includes water. Obesity is referred to as significant excess of body fat that does not include other tissues.

Psychological factors can affect your risk for obesity. Stress, depression, anger, boredom, happiness, etc. can cause people to eat more, especially high caloric, sugar laden foods. We spoke about hormones earlier, but hormones can be affected by stress. Chronic stress can
elevate the cortisol hormone levels in the body. This can lead to an increase in weight, especially in the middle region. High cortisol levels also weaken muscles, which in turn can make you lethargic and less active.

Some Symptoms of Obesity:

- Cardiovascular disease (hypertension, cardiac arrests, congestive heart failure, stroke, etc.)
- Type 2 diabetes
- Sleep apnea
- Abnormal skin conditions
- Asthma
- Pulmonary dysfunction
- Gallstones
- Cancer
- Gynecological disorders
- Male hormonal dysfunction
- Urinary stress incontinence
- Hyperuricemia (gout)
- Osteoarthritis
- Psychological disorders (anorexia, bulimia, depression, low self-esteem, drug use, etc.)

Let’s take a look at a few of the non-obvious symptoms. Sleep apnea is the interruption of normal breathing cycles and can be potentially life threatening with severe obesity. Obesity can cause abnormal skin conditions such as acanthosis nigricans which is darkened, thickened skin in folds and especially on elbows and the back of the neck. An increased risk of developing asthma can occur with a higher BMI. Other respiratory dysfunctions can occur as well, including dyspnea (shortness of breath), decreased oxygen concentrations in arterial blood, and a decrease in tidal volume (inability to take deep, long breaths). There is a higher risk of gallstone formation because of the cholesterol levels in bile. This risk also increases when people gain and lose weight repeatedly (“yo-yo dieting”). Women need to be mindful of certain gynecological conditions such as polycystic ovarian syndrome, endometrial cancer, infertility, elevated androgens (such as testosterone), and hair loss. Men need to be careful of conditions that affect hormone levels, shifts in testosterone, and an increased risk of colon cancer (along with other cancers). Obesity adds extra pressure on the kidneys, which can increase the risk of hyperuricemia (gout) in which uric acid is not adequately removed from the body. Of course we can diagnose that obesity can cause musculo-skeletal conditions such as hernias, plantar fasciitis in the feet, and overall pressure on the muscles and bones, which can cause pain and damage.

Ok, great. Reading all this has stressed us out! Now what do we do? Well, first we relax (remember...cortisol). Then we make a conscious decision and pact with ourselves to change our behavior and attitude regarding weight loss. Nutrition is key. We need to make healthy changes. To avoid the clutter of all the trendy diets, talk to your physician, get a complete physical and blood work screening to make sure there are no underlying conditions, and then devise a program that works for you. Diets are not “one size fits all”. Learn how to correctly read food labels and the breakdown of nutrients. Understand the difference between carbohydrates, proteins, and fats and know the perils of excess sugar. Remember that nutrition is primary and exercise is secondary. Also, stop streaming TV shows, stop watching video forwards from friends and family of animals juggling, and get moving. We need to live life outside of screens.

What if there is a medical emergency for a more immediate and intensive solution? There are many risks and side effects involved in these treatments. Here are some options that need to be discussed and monitored by your doctor and medical professionals:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment/Procedure</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutritional supplements, protein drinks</td>
<td>Substituting all or some meals with supplements that are low in calories and carbohydrates and high in protein.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastric band (via laparoscopy)</td>
<td>A small, adjustable band is wrapped around a part of the stomach to make it smaller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastric sleeve</td>
<td>A surgery in which a large part of the stomach is removed, leaving a smaller “sleeve”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastric bypass</td>
<td>A surgery to separate the stomach into two portions; a smaller and a larger one. The small intestine is rearranged to connect to both. This is the most risky of the weight loss surgeries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medications</td>
<td>Medications can be used to suppress appetite and/or to increase bowel movements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Islam has given us the tools to live a mindful, “middle path” life for all aspects of our well-being. We should refer to the Quran and Sunnah on living our healthiest life of moderation, including it is incorporating prophetic foods, eating in moderation, and not being idle.

Intermittent fasting is the latest trend in weight loss. It requires a person to “fast” (you may have water at times) between 10-16 hours. Why not make the intention and really fast to gain rewards in health and spirituality? Our Prophet (Peace be Upon Him) used to fast outside of the month of Ramadan as well. If we follow the Sunnah, we have opportunities to fast several days during the year, including on Mondays and Thursdays and on the 13th, 14th, and 15th day of each lunar month.

Islam has given us the tools to live a mindful, “middle path” life for all aspects of our well-being. We should refer to the Quran and Sunnah on living our healthiest life of moderation; including it is incorporating prophetic foods, eating in moderation, and not being idle. As stated in the Quran, “O children of Adam, take your adornment at every masjid, and eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess.” (Quran 7:31) The main goal is to make concrete healthy changes that last a lifetime!

HUSNA T. GHANI has an MSEd and an MBA. She has taught health and science for years. When she’s not working, she reads, writes, sketches, and tries to save the world (or something like that).
EXERCISING YOUR HEART MUSCLE

By Ali Othman, CPT
Hopping onto a treadmill and walking in place on the fast-track to nowhere can make even the most seasoned man or woman gasp for breath and cringe out of boredom. Cardiovascular exercise holds its own significance in terms of weight loss; but there are so many hidden benefits lying beneath this multi-layered surface. A strong heart provides the entire body with a more ample supply of oxygen-rich blood without having to beat as often; thus reducing the risk of high blood pressure, heart failure, and heart attacks. During cardiovascular exercise your heart beat rises into the desired beats per minute range, and your rate of breathing is forced to increase in order to supply your muscles with the right concentration of oxygen. Regular bouts of this type of exercise will increase the lung capacity and the efficiency of your body’s oxygen consumption. For an activity to be considered cardiovascular exercise, you must raise your heart rate into your target zone, and remain in that zone for at least ten minutes. If you have wanted to start an exercise routine but have lacked the motivation required to get started, you are far from alone. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics, the “Percent of adults aged eighteen and over who met the Physical Activity Guidelines for both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity is 23.5%” (www.cdc.gov).

The first step to improving your heart health is finding an activity which you enjoy; this is important for maintaining your desire to continue your routine. The positive side here is that the activity you choose is less important than the routine. Perhaps you enjoy being outdoors; then biking, hiking, running, cycling, or walking are potential choices. If you prefer to do your activity in a gym, then your options are almost endless. You can chose one of many pieces of equipment designed for repetitive movements, take a variety of group exercise classes, utilize the principle of High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) where you alternate between short periods of extremely intense activity followed by recovery periods of lower intensity, or partake anything else that will make your heart pump and shift your sweat glands into overdrive.

The target heart rate zone which you are aiming for when trying to improve your aerobic fitness is roughly 65 – 75% of your maximum heart rate. Maximum heart rate for healthy individuals is calculated by subtracting your age from 220. For example, a healthy thirty year old will take 220 minus 30 for a maximum heart rate of 190 beats per minute. This individual would want to increase his or her heart rate to between 125-145 beats per minute to maximize the aerobic benefit of a workout. It is important to note that this calculation is not applicable to those who are overweight, on heart or blood pressure medication, or may have other conditions which affect normal heart activity. Once you find your activity of choice, the goal is to spend at least 150 minutes a week in your target heart rate zone (American Heart Association). This can easily fit into any schedule with thirty minute intervals of training, five days a week. Keep in mind that these thirty minutes are time spent in your target heart zone, not total exercise time; so you will want to plan your exercise routine accordingly. The first five or ten minutes of exercise should always be a warm-up, with a steady increase in intensity. The human body can be compared to a car in this situation. When your car is parked outside on a cold afternoon, it takes several minutes for the engine to warm up and work as expected. The older the car and the longer it has been parked in the cold, the longer the warm-up. Similarly, when your body is at rest, your muscles are cold and your joints are stiff. A short warm-up is essential to create an environment conducive to efficient movement, fluid joint mobility, and proper blood flow throughout your body. If it takes ten minutes to hit your target heart rate, follow that with thirty minutes of exercise in your target heart rate zone, and about five minutes of cool-down movements; so ideally you would budget forty-five minutes for your cardio routine.

For an activity to be considered cardiovascular exercise, you must raise your heart rate into your target zone, and remain in that zone for at least ten minutes... Perhaps you enjoy being outdoors; then biking, hiking, running, cycling, or walking are potential choices. If you prefer to do your activity in a gym, then your options are almost endless.

The heart functions to pump blood through your vessels to all of your organs and muscles. During exercise, your muscles work harder and consume more oxygen than while sedentary causing your heart to beat faster in order increase the supply of oxygen-rich blood to these muscles. Like the other muscles in your body, the heart can be conditioned to perform its function more effectively; but unlike your skeletal muscle, the heart will not increase in size from conditioning. Instead the heart will increase in the efficiency with which it pumps and circulates your blood. A conditioned heart can pump more blood with each beat, allowing it to beat less frequently and regulate the blood pressure more proficiently than its non-conditioned counterpart. The result is a lower level of
strain on your heart and less stress on your arterial walls. Translated, this means a lower possibility of heart disease, and a safer, more regulated blood pressure.

Cardiovascular exercise is not only regarded as safe, it has been proven to reduce the risk of cardiovascular mortality. “There is a direct relation between physical inactivity and cardiovascular mortality, and physical inactivity is an independent risk factor for the development of coronary artery disease. The greatest potential for reduced mortality is in the sedentary who become moderately active.” (ahajournals.org). As with any physical activity there are certain risk factors which need to be assessed before the onset of an exercise program. If you currently have heart disease or heart-related illness, are a cigarette smoker, have diabetes, are obese, have high cholesterol, have high blood pressure, are on blood pressure medication, or have lived a mostly sedentary lifestyle then your risk of a cardiac event is elevated during exercise. Do not take this as a reason to throw in the towel and forgo exercise all-together because suffering from any of these conditions means you are in the category of those who would most benefit from a safe, medically prescribed and professionally supervised cardiovascular exercise routine. Instead, consult with your physician to learn the risks and your limitations; and learn to monitor the warning signs or symptoms of a cardiac event.

If you are intending to start a program for the first time, or get back into an exercise routine after a long absence then there are a few important points to consider. Start with a small and realistic goal, perhaps fifteen minutes of brisk walking each day for the first week. This is something that almost anybody can work into their schedule and regardless of physical fitness level can be a manageable goal. Once you manage to complete this objective you set another which is a little more difficult to achieve, yet still realistic and attainable. Done properly, cardiovascular exercise produces noticeable results more quickly than resistance training. The key to cardiovascular exercise is consistency; goals can be more easily reached if exercise is calculated and consistent. Take a scientific approach and manage your routine on your own or with

A conditioned heart can pump more blood with each beat, allowing it to beat less frequently and regulate the blood pressure more proficiently than its non-conditioned counterpart. The result is a lower level of strain on your heart and less stress on your arterial walls.
the help of a health professional. Track your progress and look back at your results. Cardiovascular exercise can be measured in terms of time spent in your target heart rate zone, and the intensity of your exercise. Over the course of your program you should work towards increases in both of these measurements.

Summer will soon be upon us; and with summer come longer days, beautiful weather, and outdoor activities. After work, grab your family and go for a brisk walk instead of parking yourself on the couch. Pick up a Frisbee or a soccer ball and head to the park to fill your lungs with fresh air. It is amazing how great a short session of cardiovascular exercise can make you feel. After a few weeks of proper training, you may notice that you can more easily walk up a flight of stairs, or can carry your child for longer periods without becoming winded. A positive side effect here is the burning of calories, loss of fat, and increase in metabolism. What you may not notice is what is happening inside your body, and these are the changes that can really increase your quality of life.

Exercise increases the amount of blood pumped to the brain, releases endorphins which help to enhance your mood, and has even been shown to improve cognitive brain function. Planning just thirty minutes a day of heart-pumping activity can go a long way to bettering your overall wellness, especially if you can plan your activities to include your loved ones. As always, be sure you have been cleared for exercise by your physician, then find a fun way to kick off your potentially life-changing routine.

**ALI OTHMAN** has been an NSCA certified personal trainer for the past 13 years with specialization in weight loss, functional training, muscular hypertrophy, and human nutrition. He also works in the Technical Department at IFANCA and manages IFANCA business activities in South Korea.

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## HALAL-CERTIFIED PRODUCT LOCATOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Product Type</th>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Available At</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Abbott</td>
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<td>Abbott Nutrition</td>
<td>Supermarkets and drugstores throughout the United States and Canada</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Infant/Baby Food</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Products</td>
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<td>Amara</td>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td>Baqi Inc.</td>
<td>Visit their website: <a href="http://www.amaracosmetics.com">www.amaracosmetics.com</a></td>
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<td>Bard Valley</td>
<td>Food Products</td>
<td>Bard Valley Natural Delights</td>
<td>Kroger, Publix, Meijer, Walmart, Whole Foods, and various markets throughout the United States</td>
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<td>Cheese</td>
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<td>Supermarkets throughout the United States</td>
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<td>Select markets, restaurants, and bakeries throughout Canada</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Visit their website for a complete list of locations: <a href="http://www.carolescheesecake.com">www.carolescheesecake.com</a></td>
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<td>Bakery Items</td>
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<td>Snack Food</td>
<td>Enjoy Life Natural Brands</td>
<td>Supermarkets, convenience stores, drugstores</td>
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<td>Fruitfull®</td>
<td>Food Products</td>
<td>Happy &amp; Healthy Products Inc.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Godiva</td>
<td>Candy / Chocolate</td>
<td>Godiva Chocolatier</td>
<td>Company stores, department stores, supermarkets, gift shops, and drugstores throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Bonbon</td>
<td>Candy / Chocolate</td>
<td>Asti Holdings Ltd.</td>
<td>Visit their website: <a href="http://www.goldenbonbon.com">www.goldenbonbon.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hahn’s® Green</td>
<td>Dairy Products</td>
<td>Franklin Foods Inc.</td>
<td>Supermarkets, discount stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Farms™</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lombardi’s®</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>J&amp;M Food Products</td>
<td>Food Products</td>
<td>J&amp;M Food Products</td>
<td>Visit their website: <a href="http://www.halalcertified.com">www.halalcertified.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>Product Type</td>
<td>Company Name</td>
<td>Available At</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kontos</td>
<td>Bakery Items, Bread</td>
<td>Kontos Foods, Inc.</td>
<td>Ethnic (Arab, Indo/Pak) stores and fruit &amp; vegetable markets throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Yogurt*</td>
<td>Dairy Products</td>
<td>Johanna Foods, Inc.</td>
<td>Supermarkets, fruit/vegetable markets, discount stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love &amp; Quiches</td>
<td>Brownies and Cakes</td>
<td>Love and Quiches Desserts</td>
<td>Visit their website for outlets: <a href="http://www.loveandquiches.com">www.loveandquiches.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maya</td>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td>Maya Cosmetics</td>
<td>Visit their website <a href="https://www.maya-cosmetics.com/">https://www.maya-cosmetics.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mead Johnson</td>
<td>Infant/Baby Food Products</td>
<td>Mead Johnson Nutritionals</td>
<td>Department stores, supermarkets, and drugstores throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melaleuca</td>
<td>Personal Care Products</td>
<td>Melaleuca, Inc.</td>
<td>Visit their website for distributors: <a href="http://www.melaleuca.com">www.melaleuca.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Own Meals</td>
<td>Food Products</td>
<td>My Own Meals</td>
<td>Visit their website: <a href="http://www.myownmeals.com">www.myownmeals.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natavi™</td>
<td>Nutritional Supplement</td>
<td>Krona Therapeutics Inc.</td>
<td>Visit their website <a href="https://www.natavihealth.com/">https://www.natavihealth.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Food Products</td>
<td>National Foods Limited</td>
<td>Ethnic (Indo/Pak) stores throughout the United States and Canada</td>
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<td>Nestle</td>
<td>Food Products, Beverages / Beverage Concentrates</td>
<td>Nestle Pakistan Ltd.</td>
<td>Ethnic (Indo/Pak) stores throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand</td>
<td>Product Type</td>
<td>Company Name</td>
<td>Available At</td>
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<td>Nultrilite</td>
<td>Nutritional Supplements</td>
<td>Access Business Group, LLC</td>
<td>Visit their website for distributors: <a href="http://www.nutrilite.com">www.nutrilite.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Olympia</td>
<td>Gyros, Flat Bread</td>
<td>Olympia Food Industries, Inc.</td>
<td>Ethnic (Arab, Indo/Pak) stores and restaurants throughout the United States and Canada</td>
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<td>OneCoffee</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>Canterbury Coffee</td>
<td>Supermarkets throughout Canada</td>
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<td>Organic Valley</td>
<td>Dairy Products</td>
<td>Cropp Cooperative/ Organic Valley</td>
<td>Supermarkets throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POM Wonderful</td>
<td>Beverages / Beverage</td>
<td>POM Wonderful, LLC</td>
<td>Supermarkets throughout the United States</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concentrates</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Tea</td>
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<td>Fruits Processed</td>
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<td>Saffron Road</td>
<td>Food Products</td>
<td>American Halal Co., Inc.</td>
<td>Target, Whole Foods, Kroger, Publix, HEB, and various markets throughout the United States</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snack Food</td>
<td></td>
<td>Visit their website to locate a store near you: <a href="http://www.saffronroadfood.com">www.saffronroadfood.com</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Appetizers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunrider</td>
<td>Personal Care Products</td>
<td>Sunrider International</td>
<td>Visit their website for distributors: <a href="http://www.sunrider.com">www.sunrider.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food Products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nutritional Supplements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom’s of Maine</td>
<td>Personal Care Products</td>
<td>Toms of Maine, Inc.</td>
<td>Department stores, supermarkets, and drugstores throughout the United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turtles® Flipz®</td>
<td>Candy / Chocolate</td>
<td>DeMet’s Candy Company</td>
<td>Supermarkets, drugstores, discount stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonderful</td>
<td>Pistachios and Almonds</td>
<td>Paramount Farms</td>
<td>Supermarkets and drugstores throughout the United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WE MAKE SURE THE FOOD YOU SERVE IS HALAL.

ISLAMIC FOOD AND NUTRITION COUNCIL OF AMERICA:
In matters of halal, we take the doubt out of doubtful.

The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America, IFANCA, is working with the world's food producers to ensure what you eat is halal and healthy.

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www.youtube.com/ifanca4halal  halal@ifanca.org  www.ifanca.org

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