BRINGING THE KITCHEN TO THE CLINIC

NYMC CULINARY MEDICINE INTEREST GROUP
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The Culinary Medicine Interest Group focuses on the importance of integrating nutrition and culinary skills within medicine. Our mission is to increase the number of future physicians who have an understanding, appreciation, and skill set in food preparation, clinical and community nutrition, and lifestyle management. We also aim to supplement the medical curriculum to provide students with a better idea of how to incorporate nutrition - that is culturally competent and consistent with real-world social constraints - into future patient care.
Vitamin A plays an important role in vision, bone growth, immunity, reproduction, cell division, and with helping to maintain the integrity of surface linings in the respiratory tract and mucous membranes.

There are two categories of vitamin A, dependent on if its source is animal vs plant-based.

**Animal-Sourced Vitamin A**: clinically referred to as preformed vitamin A
* Animal sources of vitamin A are absorbed in the body as retinol, where it can then be made into retinal and retinoic acid (as well as other active forms).

**Sources**: liver, whole milk, and certain fortified food products.

**Plant-Sourced Vitamin A**: provide provitamin A in the form of carotenoids
* Plant sources of vitamin A can be made into retinol in the body, and then converted into other active forms.
* Common provitamin A carotenoids (give plants distinct color) are α-carotene, β-carotene (which is more efficiently made into retinol), and β-cryptoxanthin.
* The DARKER the color, the GREATER the carotenoid content!

**Sources**: carrots, spinach, kale, papaya, mango, red peppers, pumpkin.
A 2018 study published in *Nutrients* looked at the impact of vitamin A intake on outcomes of glaucoma. A systematic review of 36 studies found that increased vitamin A intake via dietary changes was protective against glaucoma, meaning that increased dietary vitamin A led to a lesser prevalence of glaucoma. However, the study also found that increased blood concentration of vitamin A had no correlation with positive effects, indicating that supplements and additives had no effect on health. The study cites that vitamin A’s role in preserving vision is in the production of rhodopsin, a phototransduction protein found in rod cells of the retina.

Vitamin A also serves as an antioxidant, which works against reactive oxygen species to prevent radical chemical reactions. Reactive oxygen species in the body are associated with a number of pathologies: in the case of the eye they are associated with reactions that increase the pressure of the vitreous humor, damaging retinal cells involved in vision.

We are all on our computers a lot more than expected due to the circumstances, and we know that close exposure to screens for extended periods of time can be very damaging to our eyes. Take advantage of preventative measures, and try to incorporate some more vitamin A into your diet to help with preserving the quality of your vision for a long time!

If you’re interested in learning more about the systematic review of vitamins and their impact on glaucoma, here is the PubMed link to the article discussed: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29547516/

Welcome to the Chef’s Corner! My name is Gillian and I’m an M1, but my last adventure before medical school was culinary school. Cooking is a lot like medicine: it’s both an art and a science, it’s hands-on and creative, and it’s healing for both the chef and everyone they feed!

In this column, I hope to teach you that you don’t need fancy tools, mastery of techniques with French names, expensive ingredients, or endless time to eat deliciously and well throughout medical school and beyond. All you really need is some heat, some ingenuity, and a little faith in yourself.

When we are eating our best, we are setting ourselves up to perform our best, both in our personal and professional lives.

Take some time to cook a meal for yourself, share it (safely!) with a roommate or friend, and then return to your studies, fueled for success.

To that end, we will also be using this space to highlight YOUR kitchen adventures!

Over the next month, whip up your favorite fall recipes, snap a picture, and submit your entries to culinarymednymc@gmail.com. The winner will be featured in our next newsletter and will receive a copy of my top secret ultimate chocolate chip cookie recipe!

One of my favorite fall recipes is this Thai-inspired squash soup: it’s simple, filling, and tastes like a hug in a bowl. You can set the squash in the oven to roast and get some good studying in, and then 40 minutes and a little blending later, dinner is ready! Serve over jasmine or basmati rice to bulk it up. Adapt the recipe to the ingredients and spices you have on hand or can access easily. I used butternut and acorn squash, but one large butternut or a couple of acorn squashes, or even canned pumpkin will work!

Send in your pictures or any questions and let us know what you thought!
1 small Butternut Squash
1 Acorn Squash
½ yellow onion
6 cloves garlic
4 knobs whole fresh ginger
1 tsp turmeric
½ tsp ground coriander
½ tsp cinnamon
32 oz (1 box) broth
(chicken or veggie will work!
1 can coconut milk
Salt and pepper to taste
Olive oil for drizzling
GARNISH
Fresh cilantro, mint, lime juice, soy sauce, chili oil - the combinations are endless!

1. Preheat the oven to 400. Halve the squashes and scoop out the seeds (you can roast these with some olive oil, salt and pepper for a study snack!) and set on a baking sheet skin side down.

2. Place the garlic under the flat of your knife and press down against the knife with the heel of your hand – this will smash the garlic so it flavors the squash while cooking and makes for quick and easy peeling! Break up the ginger knobs (you don’t even need to peel!) and roughly chop the onion.

3. Fill the squash with the ginger, garlic, and onion, drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast for 45 minutes or until the squash is golden brown.

4. Remove squash from the oven and place in a large soup pot with the roasted ginger, garlic, and onion (the skin is edible and will retain a nice caramel flavor from cooking so they don’t even need to be peeled!)

5. Pour the broth over the squash, add dry spices and blend with an immersion blender (a regular blender or food processor will work too, but you’ll have to break the squash up a little before blending).

6. Bring to a gentle simmer over low-medium heat and stir in coconut milk. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking.

7. To serve, top with drizzles of soy sauce and chili oil, a squeeze of fresh lime, and some roughly chopped cilantro or mint.
COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Try shopping local for your recipe ingredients! Switch up your grocery run routine and support local markets.

TaSH Farmer’s Market

**Location:** Patriots Park, Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591
(8 minute drive from NYMC campus)
**Hours:** Every Saturday from 8:30am to 1:30pm
**Parking:** Free Parking across the street at John Paulding School
**What you will find:** Fresh produce, meat, dairy items, bread, baked goods, pantry items, coffee, wine
Visit [https://tashfarmersmarket.org/](https://tashfarmersmarket.org/) for more details!

Pleasantville Farmer’s Market

**Location:** 10 Memorial Plaza, Pleasantville, NY 10570
(10 minute drive from NYMC campus)
**Hours:** Every Saturday from 8:30am to 1:30pm
**Parking:** Free Street Parking or free lots within 400 m of Market
**What you will find:** Fresh produce, seafood, meat, dairy items, bread, baked goods, pantry items, coffee, wine
Visit [https://www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org/](https://www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org/) for more details!

**What’s In Season?**

**Vegetables:** pumpkin, potatoes, spinach, squash, string beans, shell beans, broccoli, brussel sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, collard greens

**Fruits:** apples, pears, grapes, raspberries, and watermelon

Environmental Impact is reduced

Buying produce from your local market is good for the planet. Compared to importing produce from far places, bringing fresh produce to your local market requires way less energy, time, and packaging.

Local economic stimulus

When you purchase local produce, more money will be kept within the community because locally owned business owners will often purchase items from other local businesses. As a result, by purchasing your produce from local vendors you are able to indirectly help other local businesses.

Local business owners invest in community

Local business owners often live in the community in which they sell their items. As a result, they are more likely to give back to that community as they are more invested in the welfare and future of the place in which they live.

Check out: [https://thelocalgood.ca/top-10-reasons-to-shop-local/](https://thelocalgood.ca/top-10-reasons-to-shop-local/)