

# STAYING Healthy

## 'Super foods' make super snacks

Let kids help decide what's best for munching

BY JACQUI LOVE MARSHALL

**G**rowing up in Miami, my after-school snacks were often something juicy plucked from a backyard tree — a mango, banana, guava or such. To get more formal, my mother — who was rarely there when I arrived home from school, usually working — gave me clear instructions about what was allowed before dinner and what I could safely make on my own.



My favorites were Saltine crackers with a piece of torn bologna on top, Ovaltine and milk in my favorite Howdy Doody glass or Kool-Aid popsicles made-ahead together. But that was long before nutritionists deemed most of these things as not very nutritious. Back then, they managed to provide that extra spurt of energy (read: sugar) to fuel riding my bike, jumping hopscotch or playing jacks.

My own children, raised as vegetarians, be-moaned many of the healthy (and not always flavorful) snacks I made them. However, their favorite after-school snack was "Ants on a Log," not just because it tasted so good but because they got to make it themselves. Even now, the snack is popular among children and grandchildren for those very reasons. And, by any measure, it is as nutritious as a snack can be.

Maybe your New Year's resolution is to fill your refrigerator with foods that will satisfy your kids' needs for energy-boosters during that super-busy time between school and dinner while satisfying your desire for them to eat healthy. This year, consider the list of "super foods" that pack a nutritional wallop and provide essential elements in healthy diets to create their after-school snacks. "Super foods" are nutritionally dense; that is, they contain more nutrients per calorie than other foods. Also, they have been proven to contain vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that prevent disease.

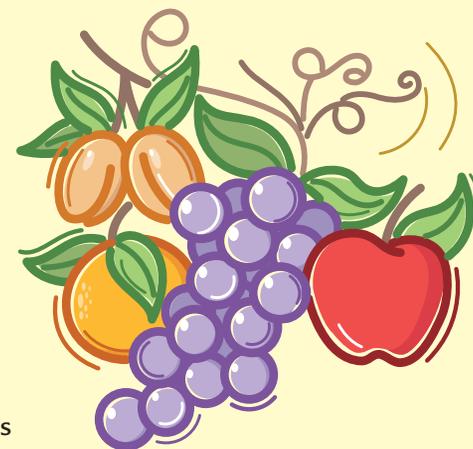
For example, vitamin-C-filled fruits like oranges, avocado's brain-building essential fatty acids, the anti-oxidants of blueberries, sour cream's probiotic cultures, nuts and seeds for their "good" MUFAs (monounsaturated fatty acids), etc. A diet incorporating a variety of "super foods" will help your children have more energy, maintain their weight, fight disease and live healthier.

Individual super foods have unique health benefits so read more about them if you want to target certain areas. However, they all have one thing in common: Every super food is going to be an unprocessed food. Go over a list of super foods (see below) with your child to select his/her favorites. Then go find snack recipes using those nutritious foods, maybe some of which your children can make themselves. That's what I call a Win-Win! Go, Snack Team!

—Jacqui Love Marshall lives in San Ramon with her pug, Nina Simone, and volumes of cookbooks and recipes.

### SUPER FOODS

- Acai berry
- Alliums (garlic, leeks, onions, etc.)
- Apples
- Apricots
- Avocado
- Barley
- Beans & lentils
- Berries
- Blueberries
- Broccoli, cabbage, bok choy
- Buckwheat, seed & grain
- Cinnamon
- Citrus
- Dark chocolate
- Eggs
- Figs
- Grapes
- Green grasses
- Herbs, e.g., basil, mint
- Honey
- Hot peppers
- Mushrooms
- Nuts & seeds; nut butters
- Oats
- Olives, olive oil
- Pomegranate
- Pumpkin
- Red wine
- Salmon
- Spinach
- Sprouts
- Sweet potatoes



### RECIPES

#### Ants on a Log (serves 1-2)

- 2 stalks celery, medium length
- 1 Tbsp peanut butter
- 2 Tbsp raisins, seedless

Wash celery, then fill the center of the celery sticks with peanut butter; place raisins over peanut butter. Note: Be sure children who eat this snack do not have allergic reactions to peanuts!

#### Easy Dip for Veggies (makes 1 cup)

- 1 cup whole milk ricotta cheese
- 1/3 cup plain nonfat yogurt
- 2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Blend ricotta, yogurt and lemon juice in a food processor or blender until as smooth as possible; season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and chill until ready to serve. Serve with raw vegetables, e.g., asparagus spears, carrot, cucumber and celery sticks, cherry tomatoes, etc.

#### Turkey Apple Roll (makes 1 wrap)

- 1 taco-size tortilla
- 2 Tbsp low-fat whipped cream cheese
- 2-1/2 oz. turkey breast
- 3-4 leaves, baby spinach
- 1/2 tart apple, cut into matchstick pieces

Spread cream cheese over tortilla; evenly lay turkey on tortilla. Add spinach leaves, then apple pieces evenly. Roll

tortilla up from one end. Serve as roll or cut into bite-size pieces lengthwise.

#### Smoothie (serves 2)

- 2 cups orange juice, no pulp
- 1 large banana, frozen
- 3 large kiwi, peeled and quartered
- 1 tsp honey
- ice cubes (as needed)

Puree the juices and fruit in the blender for 2 minutes. Slowly add honey while blender is whirling (or it will sink to the bottom). Add ice cubes (if desired) for a slushier mixture and try other fruit combinations. Note: The mixture can also be made as a frozen treat.

#### Lumpy Guacamole (makes 3-4 cups)

- 2 large, ripe avocados
- 16 oz. low fat sour cream
- 3 medium green onions, snipped into tiny bits
- 1-1/2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1-2 pints cherry or grape tomatoes
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh cilantro, optional

With a butter knife, cut the avocados in half, remove the pit and extract the fruit from the skin. Place the fruit in a medium mixing bowl and mash avocado with the back of a fork, until it is somewhat smooth. Add sour cream to the avocado mush and mix.

Rinse the green onions; snip them into tiny bits with scissors and mix again. Add the small tomatoes and gently fold them into the avocado mixture.

Add lemon juice, cilantro (if desired), sea salt and black pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate for 1-2 hours. Serve with baby carrots, celery sticks, more cherry tomatoes or healthy chips. Note: The mixture can also be used as a sandwich spread or as a topping on other foods, e.g., baked potato, burgers, salad, etc.

#### Sunflower Mix

- 2 cups raw sunflower seeds
- 1 cup pine nuts
- 1 cup raw pumpkin seeds
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup sweetened, dried cranberries

Measure the ingredients into a paper bag, fold over the top of the bag, and shake to mix. Store the mixture in an airtight container.

#### Treasure chest of snacks

Let your child choose his/her favorites from this list of finger foods. Pack little piles of "coins" and "nuggets" into a rectangular plastic container to maintain an after-school treasure chest of snacks:

**Coins:** String cheese, cut crosswise into rounds; cucumber slices; green/yellow zucchini slices; sliced radishes; carrot rounds; hot dogs or sausage (turkey, chicken or beef), cooked, cooled and cut into rounds; pepperoni; sliced dried bananas; dried apricots; sliced kiwi; oyster crackers; small, round pretzels and corn tortilla chips; round ravioli, cooked and cooled

**Nuggets:** Garbanzo beans, peas, blueberries, grapes, etc.



**Dr. Teresa Shen**

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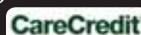
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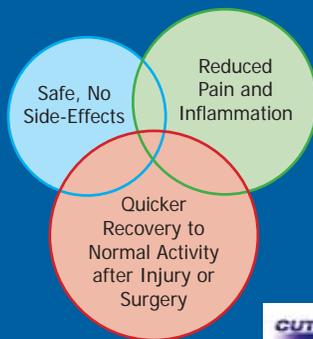


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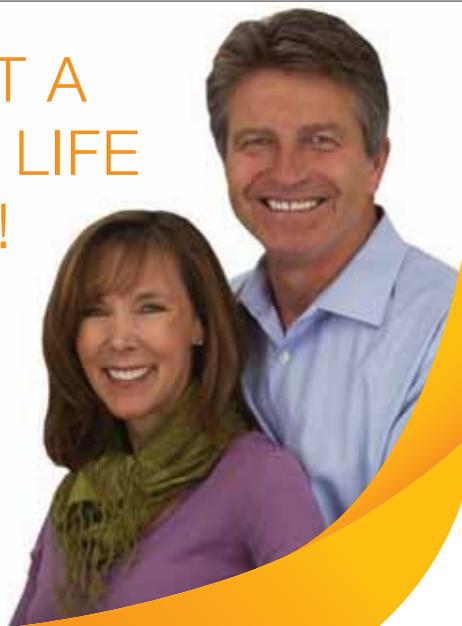
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## 'Ragin Cajun' Mardi Gras to help fund Sandra J. Wing organization

Group provides therapy for cancer patients undergoing treatment

**By JEB BING**

Some may have trouble connecting the Sandra J. Wing Healing Therapies Foundation and "Ragin Cajun 2011," but it actually makes sense.

"Ragin Cajun" is the San Francisco East Bay's Mardi Gras event on Friday, Feb. 11, to benefit Wing's foundation. With a "feel-good" music, dancing and buffet dinner party, contributors can help the foundation's team of volunteers make the scores of patients they serve feel better, too, as they receive therapy during cancer treatments.

The foundation provides cancer patients with financial assistance for complementary healing services during the course of their chemo or radiation therapy. Complementary and integrative healing therapies include: acupuncture, acupressure, therapeutic massage, deep breathing meditation and visualization.

"These healing therapies can provide relief for neuropathy, anxiety, stress, aches, fatigue, nausea and pain," said Sandra J. Wing, a Pleasanton resident and dual cancer survivor who founded and still leads the foundation.

From her cancer diagnosis through surgery and during chemo treatment, Wing said she found great benefit, calmness and pain relief by accessing complementary healing

therapies such as those now offered by her foundation. Although not covered by insurance, she was able to have the healing treatments of acupressure massage and guided meditation at UCSF's Osher Center in San Francisco. Through the foundation she later established, she is making those services available to Tri-Valley cancer residents.

"At the age of 47, I was diagnosed with two cancers: uterine and ovarian," Wing recalled. "With great fortune, the uterine cancer is what brought attention to the ovarian cancer, and both were found at the early stage of 1b and 1a, respectively."

Her treatment period was accompanied with many of the difficulties, pain, stresses and worries which most, if not all, cancer patients endure.

What surprised Wing the most was how her body reacted to each chemo session.

"I was surprised at how I felt defeated and immobile, unable to perform the simplest of tasks," she said. "I was surprised at how my body felt battered and beaten and achy throughout. I was surprised at how the tips of my fingers and toes were impacted by neuropathy."

Even at her weakest points, however, Wing found that she responded to different forms of healing therapies that she was able to obtain. These included healing touches such as acupressure and massage, acupuncture, meditation and deep breathing focus exercises.

"These healing therapies were of immense  
See **CANCER** on Page 6



**Sandra J. Wing**

## Wellness: caring for more than just the body

Good health is all about balance in our lives

**By GLENN WOHLTMANN**

Pick up a pen and draw a triangle. Along one side, write the word physical; on the other two sides, write mental and spiritual.

What you've just drawn is a wellness triangle, and according to Dr. Neil Okamura of the San Ramon Regional Medical Center, all three sides are equally important.

"All three of those things have to be in balance for you to have wellness or health," Okamura explained, drawing on weight loss as a New Year's resolution for his example.

"Weight is only a small portion of health, because it is only a part of physical," he explained. "Everything on the physical side is measurable. The mental part is things that include your understanding, your emotional stress, your understanding of diet and exercise."

Spiritual or social health makes up the third leg of the triangle, "the thing you can't measure," Okamura continued. That includes one's relationship with nature, friends and the community.

"They're all kind of interconnected," but, he added, "I'd say stress is the biggest factor."

That fits with findings from the Mayo Clinic, which indicates that things like gratitude, optimism and devoting time to family and friends are key stress reducers, and even laughter can cut stress and help balance all three sides of the wellness triangle.

When it comes to weight, Okamura said sometimes people can actually gain weight and get healthier.

"I've seen so many patients who come in and are so stressed because of their weight," he said. Many are tired, or starving or just upset that they can't lose the pounds. "People just focus on weight loss."

So, if a person is overweight and the other sides of the triangle are in balance, he said he's less concerned than he would be with another person who wants a fast fix for some extra pounds, especially given studies that show a person is likely to gain those pounds back and even add more weight over the span of a few years.

Okamura said the wellness triangle can be applied to other situations, like quitting smoking or beginning an exercise program.

"You can almost put anything in there because we as humans get so focused on one aspect in general," he said.

For Okamura, getting people to balance that wellness triangle means getting them to look at their habits, what he called the "single biggest detriment to wellness."

"There can be good habits and bad, but we mostly succumb to bad habits, things we do unconsciously that have a negative impact," he said. "That's just not things like smoking or drinking — you can look at any habit."

He said one of his biggest challenges as a doctor is getting people to "understand on a conscious level, to understand what they're doing."

Similarly, Okamura said if a patient smokes because she or he truly enjoys it, he's less  
See **WELLNESS** on Page 6



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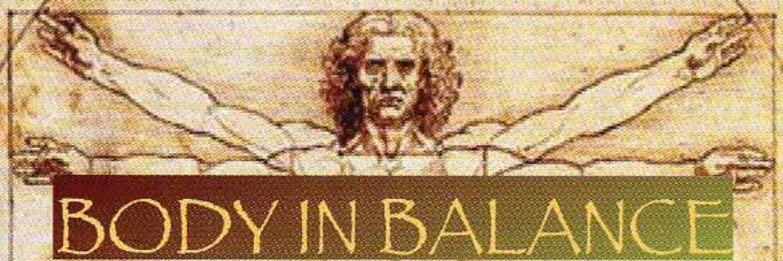
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**CANCER**

Continued from Page 4

help to me not only in calming me and in alleviating nervousness and anxiety, but also in my overall well being."

The results of the therapies were impressive. Immediately after surgery, Wing said, she did not need pain medication for several hours after focusing on breathing and visualization techniques. As a result of acupuncture sessions to reduce the neuropathy, she was able to complete the full chemo treatment and regain her health.

"Today, at the age of 51, I know that I am fortunate to be alive," she said. "I believe that I went through these cancers and treatments so that I would be able to help others seeking healing and complementary treatments, which

is why the foundation has been established." The foundation currently has centers in Pleasanton, San Ramon, Livermore and seven other locations in the East Bay and on the Peninsula.

In addition to music, dinner and dancing (and, yes, beads), the Mardi Gras-style Ragin Cajun also will feature a live auction as part of the fundraising event. Jessica Aguirre, the evening anchor for NBC Bay Area News, will emcee the Ragin Cajun party.

The event will be held at the Palm Event Center, 1184 Vineyard Ave., in Pleasanton from 6:30 p.m. until 11 p.m. Tickets are \$75 for person. For more information, contact the Sandra J. Wing Foundation on its website at [www.healingtherapiesfoundation.org/ragin-cajun-2011](http://www.healingtherapiesfoundation.org/ragin-cajun-2011) or call (866) 862-7270. ■

**WELLNESS**

Continued from Page 4

concerned than he would be if the patient is stuck in a habit or using smoking as stress relief.

ValleyCare offers classes in new mom wellness, yoga, Tai Chi Chuan, nutrition programs and exercise classes at its LifeStyleRx facility at 1119 E. Stanley Blvd. in Livermore, according to spokeswoman Madonna D'Angelo, who said in an email that wellness programs are offered once a month.

"Some of the education seminars we've presented include: Having A Baby, Osteoporosis, Advance Directives, Diabetes, Breast Cancer, Colon Cancer, Snoring and Sleep Apnea, Teen Eating Disorders, Hip and Knee Pain, Cervical Cancer, and Prostate Cancer," D'Angelo said. Those seminars are usually presented by a ValleyCare doctor and are

typically held evenings in ValleyCare's medical plaza at 5725 W. Las Positas, Pleasanton.

San Ramon Regional offers tips for everything from stress to nutrition and even suggestions for exercise on its website.

The medical center has been offering educational programs and wellness services for more than 10 years, said Marketing Manager Sandra Ryan, who organizes them.

Although she admits it might seem counterintuitive for a medical center to help people stay out of the hospital, Ryan says it comes down to being responsible for one's own health as opposed to the traditional model of getting sick and making a doctor responsible. She said that's especially important as the Baby Boomers get older.

"There's going to be a lot of us out there; if we don't take responsibility for our own health now, there may not be a lot of resources in the future," Ryan said. ■

*As seen on Good Morning America, The Dr. Oz Show and in The New York Times.*

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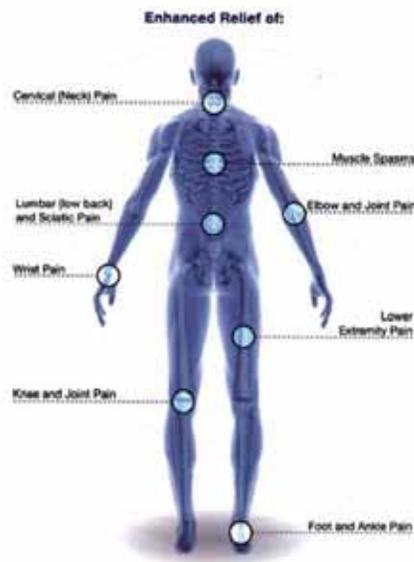


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- Maternity/Pediatric Services
- Weight Loss Surgery Program
- Spine Program
- Diabetes Education
- Community Education & Support Groups
- Cardiac & Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- Joint Replacement Program
- Health Library
- Legends — Inpatient Senior Mental Health Services
- Physical & Sports Medicine
- Occupational Health Services
- LifeStyleRx® — State-of-the-Art Fitness Center



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