

WELCOA'S  
**spark16**  
 IGNITE YOUR BEST YOU.

FEATURING  
 16 GREAT WAYS TO...  
**HEALTHY  
 GROCERY  
 SHOPPING**  
 Pages 4-5

A MONTHLY HEALTHLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF AMERICA

**BLAST**  
 SOME BELLY FAT

Believe it or not, following a few simple habits can help you reduce your overall weight.

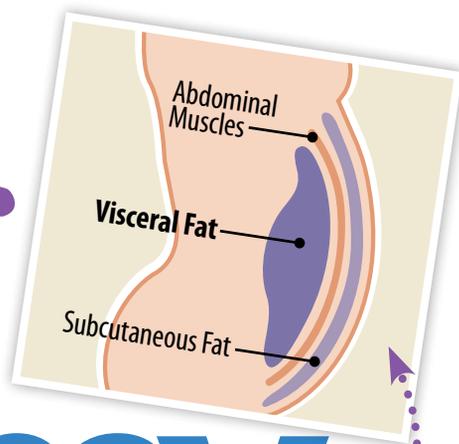
**Don't skip breakfast.** Skipping your morning meal is an easy way to earn a round waistline. Not only will you likely overeat at lunch, but when you skip breakfast (and any other meal for that matter), your body responds by raising cortisol levels, which can lead to fat storage, especially in the abdomen.

**Eliminate or greatly reduce sweets.** Sugar—the kind you find in sodas, cookies, cakes, etc., causes your blood sugar levels to spike and crash, and when this happens excessively and over time, it will get stored as fat in your belly.

**Get 7 to 8 hours of sleep.** Multiple studies have proven that too little or poor quality sleep leads to weight gain, junk food cravings and increased risk of heart disease and diabetes.

**Take 60 seconds to breathe deeply.** Chronic stress can cause levels of the stress hormone cortisol to rise. Increased cortisol levels have been linked to increased belly fat. Taking 60 seconds to breathe deeply every day can help you relax and can help you keep cortisol levels balanced.

The Truth  
 In Your  
**Tummy**



**Why Belly Fat Is More Than Skin Deep**

When it comes to body fat and health, "where" you weigh is as important, if not more so, than "what" you weigh.

**What We Know About Belly Fat**

Over the past decade we have learned that the fat that gets deposited within the abdominal area (known as visceral fat) behaves in a completely different manner than the subcutaneous fat that gets deposited under the skin in our arms, legs and buttocks.

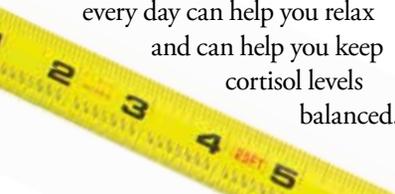
Although subcutaneous fat is still not ideal, the visceral fat in your mid-section can lead to more dangerous health

consequences. How so? In simple terms, excessive amounts of visceral fat produce hormones and other substances that can have a negative impact on your body, like raising blood pressure and cholesterol levels and impairing your body's ability to use insulin. Even more alarming, all of this can increase the risk of serious health problems, including:

- › Cardiovascular disease
- › Stroke
- › Type 2 diabetes
- › Breast cancer
- › Colorectal cancer
- › Cognitive decline
- › Premature death

Even small amounts of belly fat can create metabolic havoc and harm your body. In fact, it appears that "skinny" individuals (those with normal body mass indexes/BMIs) who have bulging bellies are at a greater risk of heart attack deaths than those who have a BMI in the obese range. The one good thing about belly fat is that it is typically the easiest fat to lose.

**MORE HEALTH  
 TIPS INSIDE**



## This Month's Recipe:

# Cold Cereal

## With Fruit

Cold cereals are probably the easiest and quickest way to get in a serving or more of whole grains at breakfast time and a proven means to start your day on a healthy note. Studies show that people who include whole grain cereals in their breakfasts take in more essential nutrients, have an easier time managing their weight and get less heart disease and type 2 diabetes. You can take your morning bowl of cereal from good to stellar by sprucing it up with fruit for some healthy sweetness, wheat germ or flax for a nutrient turbo charge, nuts for some heart healthy fat, and skim milk or soy milk to kick up the protein and calcium.

### INGREDIENTS:

1 serving (a single serving is generally  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup—check the label) of any of the following healthy cereals:

- Post® Grape Nuts
- Kashi® Heart-to-Heart
- Post® Great Grains
- Kashi® Autumn Wheat
- Kellogg's® Wheat Chex
- Kashi® Go Lean Crisp
- Kellogg's® Bran Flakes
- Quaker® Oat Squares

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup or more diced fruit of choice or berries (frozen or fresh)

1 Tbsp toasted wheat germ or ground flax seeds

1 oz (1 small handful) nuts of choice, chopped

Skim, 1% milk or plain soy milk as desired

### INSTRUCTIONS:

Pour dry cereal into a mug or bowl. Top with the remaining ingredients and dig in!



**Dr. Ann**  
Ann Kulze, M.D.

With formal training in nutrition and medicine, plus hands-on experience as a mother of four and family physician, Dr. Ann is a unique nutrition expert for the real world.

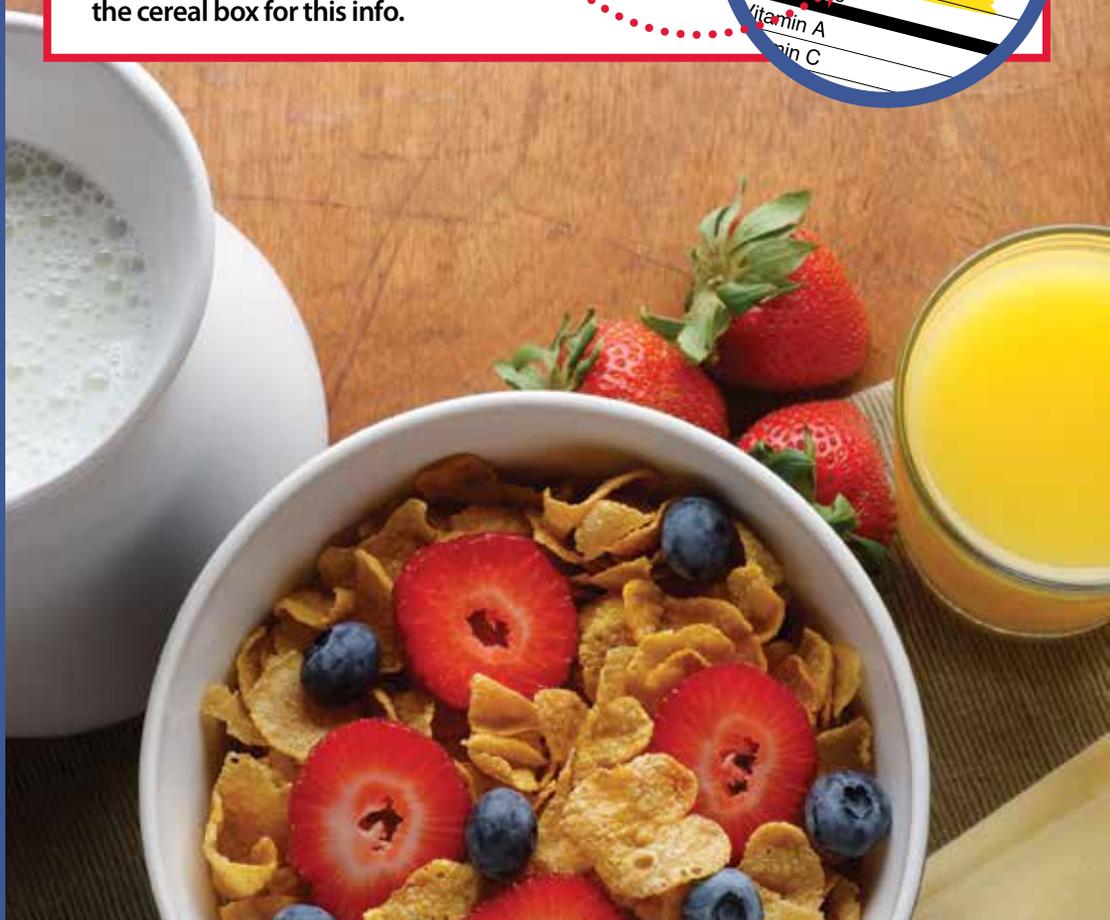
The whole food ingredients found in Dr. Ann's recipes are the right foods for health and vitality. Nutritional excellence naturally follows.

For more, visit [DrAnnWellness.com](http://DrAnnWellness.com).



### QUICK TIP

Be sure to select a cereal that provides at least five grams of fiber and no more than 10 grams of sugar per serving. See the nutrition facts area on the cereal box for this info.



# Eat *More* Whole Grains

Believe it or not, whole grains are rapidly approaching fruits and vegetables as one of nature's most life preserving foods.

## What Exactly Are Whole Grains?

Whole grains are unrefined grains that haven't had their bran and germ removed by milling. Whole grains include brown rice and oats, or ingredients in products, such as buckwheat in pancakes or whole wheat in bread.

## Why Do We Need Whole Grains?

Whole grains are excellent sources of fiber and other important nutrients, such as selenium, potassium and magnesium. Additionally, some recent studies provide further confirmation of their pivotal role in disease protection. In a German report published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, researchers found that amongst 2,500 adults those who included the most whole grains in their diet had a 27 percent lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes versus those who ate the least. Another study in the *American Journal of Clinical*

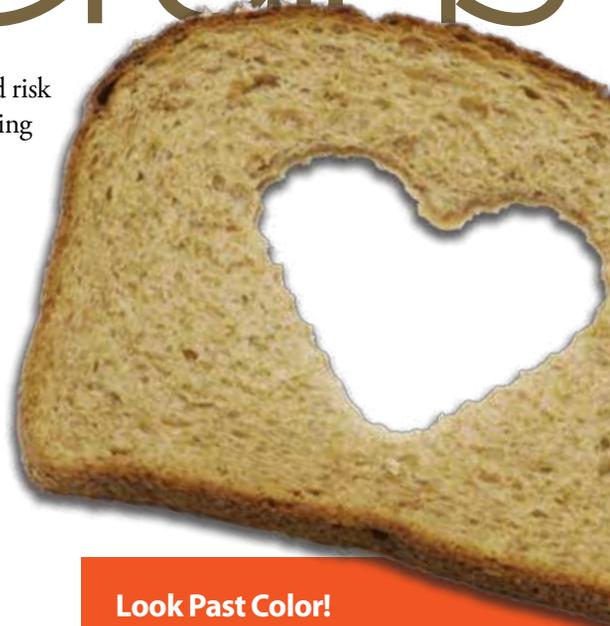
*Nutrition* found a 14 percent reduced risk of colorectal cancer in those consuming the most whole grains.

Whole grains do indeed offer health benefits and disease protection. The most well-documented benefits of whole grains include:

- Reduced risk of stroke
- Reduced risk of type 2 diabetes
- Reduced risk of heart disease risk
- Improved weight maintenance

## How Much Do We Need?

For optimal health, strive to consume at least two to three servings (1 serving = ½ cup) of whole grains daily and remember that physically intact, less processed whole grains like oatmeal (the plain, non-sweetened kind), brown rice, barley and high fiber cereals are your best bets for whole grains.



## Look Past Color!

Don't be fooled by the color of bread or misleading terminology on packaging. Some refined breads are dark because of molasses, caramel or other coloring. Go straight to the ingredients label to choose breads that identify 100 percent whole wheat or other whole grain.

## GO AGAINST THIS GRAIN

If you're like most, you're not getting enough whole grains in your diet. Recent data indicates that more than 40 percent of U.S. adults consume zero whole grains daily.

Unfortunately, all too many of us are eating the wrong kind of grain: **refined grains**.

### Refined Grains

Refined grains are milled—a process that strips out both the bran and germ. This refining process also removes many nutrients, including fiber. Refined grains are found in white flour, white rice, and white bread and many of the foods Americans have come to love like flavored breads, cereals, crackers, desserts and pastries.

Remember, whole grains like brown rice, oats, quinoa, wheat berries and whole grain pasta should be a regular feature on your table, with processed grains eaten less often.

## Super Star Food Of The Month: Quinoa



This ancient "whole grain" was revered by the Inca's and is arguably the healthiest of all whole grains (technically it is a seed, but we call it a whole grain because of its taste and texture). It is a fantastic source of health-building minerals, is high in protein, including all of the essential amino acids and tastes delicious. It cooks in 15 minutes or less and can be used just as you would rice.

# HEALTHY GROC

## NuVal 1-100®

The NuVal System helps you quickly determine the nutritional value of the food you buy. The NuVal System scores food on a scale of 1-100—the higher the NuVal score, the better the nutrition.

Visit: [www.nuval.com](http://www.nuval.com)

**1 Shop the perimeter of the store.** The outside aisles are where fresh, healthy foods like fruits, vegetables and fish are usually located. Avoid the center aisles where high-calorie, high-fat junk foods pack the shelves.

**2 Aim for a variety of color.** A report from the *Journal of Science in Food and Agriculture* confirms that the deeper and richer the color of fruits and veggies the better it is for you. Instead of white potatoes, choose sweet potatoes, instead of iceberg lettuce, choose baby spinach.

**3 Avoid foods that contain a laundry list of ingredients.** Whole foods (fruits, veggies, low-fat meat and dairy) should be filling your cart.

**4 Consider pre-cut packages of produce.** They may cost a little more, but if they enable you to eat more fruits and veggies, they're worth it!

**5 Choose herbs and spices instead of sauces and marinades.** Cilantro, sage, rosemary and garlic are just a few herbs and spices that are packed with beneficial phytochemicals and antioxidants and little to no calories.

**6 Recognize that a good deal doesn't mean a healthy deal.** Saving \$5 on a super-sized carton of cookies may seem like a good idea, but it usually leads to overeating. If you do buy treats, opt for the smaller boxes/servings.

**7 Give frozen fruits and vegetables (without the sauce) the green light.** They are a convenient way to eat healthy, especially when your favorite fruit or veggie is out of season.

**8 Learn serving size "tricks."** Some food packaging may advertise "only 100 calories" but be sure to check the serving size on the back. There may be two or three servings within the package, so if you eat the entire thing you're actually eating 200 to 300 calories.



# Tips For VERY SHOPPING

**9** Check the label for the words "hydrogenated" or "partially hydrogenated" in the list of ingredients. These are unhealthy trans fats that you want to avoid. Put it back on the shelf!

**10** Prepare a list ahead of time, and don't stray from it. This will help prevent you from grabbing tempting, highly processed, high-calorie foods.

**11** Be wary of any food that claims it is a weight-loss product. You don't see weight loss claims on broccoli or apples, yet these are the very foods that will help you lose and maintain weight. A chocolate flavored bar that claims it will help you lose weight may not be the healthiest choice.

**12** Use a healthy cook book or magazine for meal ideas and ingredients. Not only will you find fresh meal ideas, but you'll also likely find healthy tips and ingredients you might otherwise overlook.

**13** Stock up on canned goods. Canned beans, tuna, salmon, chicken and vegetables are all quick and healthy options. Always opt for the lower sodium variety if available.

**14** Choose red sauce over white or creamy sauces. Alfredo and other cheesy pasta sauces are usually packed with calories and fat. Red sauces are much lower in calories, and they are rich in lycopene—an antioxidant that may help prevent some cancers.

**15** Only purchase lean meat. Aim for meat that is labeled 90 to 99 percent lean. One patty of 80 percent lean beef still has about 15 grams of fat.

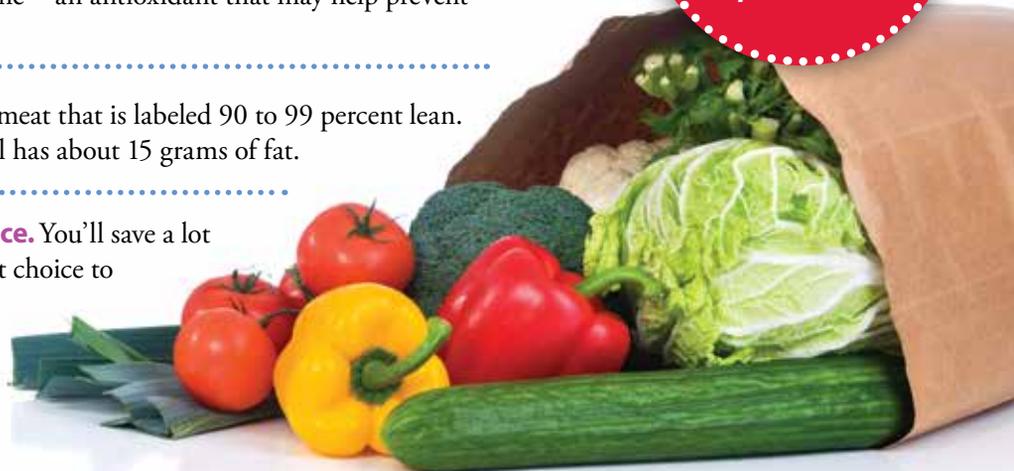
**16** Make water your beverage of choice. You'll save a lot of money and calories and it's the best choice to keep your body hydrated.



## Want To Eat Less? Downsize Your Dinnerware

Consider purchasing smaller dinnerware. We tend to serve ourselves less food and consequently eat less when we use smaller plates, bowls and utensils.

Remember to talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.



# MAKE THE MOST Out Of Your Daily Walk!

## 4 Fantastic Ways To Burn Extra Calories

Walking is perhaps one of the best exercises you can do. It certainly gets your blood pumping, and it's a safe activity for practically anyone. Here are some quick and effective ways to boost your walking workout.

**Take quicker steps.** You can burn more calories when you walk at a brisk pace. You can pick up the pace by taking quicker (not longer) steps. Aim to walk at a pace that allows you to carry on a conversation, but still takes some effort.

**Use walking poles.** Walking poles are truly fantastic when it comes to working the muscles in your arms, shoulders, chest and upper back while you walk. In fact, if used properly, they can help you burn 20 to 45 percent more calories. Look for walking poles online or in a sporting goods store.

**Change your speed.** Switching back and forth between a moderate and fast pace (also known as intervals) is a great way to torch extra calories. Change your speed every few minutes. For example, for the first five to 10 minutes, walk at a moderate pace. Then, focus on picking up your pace for five to eight minutes.

**Work some hills into your walk.** Adding an incline into your walk is one of the best ways to burn more calories while walking. Gradually include hilly areas to your route or increase the incline on the treadmill.

## PROOF THAT SMALL STEPS WORK

Chances are, you're way more likely to be successful in whatever you seek to accomplish if you take a small step approach. In fact, if you set major, nebulous goals you may just put them off, and off and off.

In a study published in *Psychological Science*, people were asked to fill out a questionnaire about everyday tasks like opening a bank account. The subjects were given a three-week deadline. Some were asked abstract questions about what the tasks entailed, while others were given very specific question about how to complete the tasks. Those who had to focus on the concrete steps were far more likely to respond on time (the three-week deadline), while the others who were given abstract questions tended to procrastinate more.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Small steps and habits can lead to success. Although big goals are great to have, if you make them too lofty or unattainable, it may only lead to procrastination.

**PROCRASTINATION:**  
in Latin means "for  
tomorrow" and can be  
a major obstacle when  
it comes to achieving  
and maintaining  
good health.

# Your Kidneys:

About 1 in 10 adults nationwide, or about 20 million people, have at least some signs of kidney damage.

## Small Organs That Do A Big Job

Compared to most other organs, your kidneys are quite small—each is about the size of your fist. They are located in the back of the abdomen in the middle of your back, and they serve a very important purpose.

### Do You Know What Your Kidneys Do?

Your kidneys essentially act as your body's waste management system. Their main job is to remove waste and excess fluid from your blood. Your kidneys work by cleaning your blood as it passes through tiny filtering units known as nephrons.

When blood passes through the kidney, the filters sift and hold on to the substances your body might need like nutrients and water. Harmful wastes and extra water and nutrients are flushed away as urine. Your kidneys also produce several hormones that help to control your blood pressure, make red blood cells and activate vitamin D, which helps keep your bones strong.

### How Do You Know If Your Kidneys Are Healthy?

If your kidneys' ability to filter blood is seriously damaged by disease, harmful toxins and excess fluid may build up in the body, which can have a serious impact on your health. Although many forms of kidney disease do not produce symptoms until late in the course of the disease, some warning signs include high blood pressure, blood in the urine, more frequent urination (particularly at night) difficult or painful urination, puffiness around the eyes, and/or swelling of hands and feet.

Primary risk factors for kidney disease include diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure or a family history of kidney disease. Additionally, as we get older, we lose a little of our kidney function. If you are above 60 or have any of these risk factors, your healthcare provider can perform a simple blood and urine test to determine if you have chronic kidney disease.



### Keep Your Kidneys Healthy!

You can help keep your kidneys in top condition by incorporating some healthy lifestyle habits:

- Exercise regularly—aim for 30 minutes a day
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Follow a healthful diet that includes fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy foods
- Don't smoke or abuse alcohol
- Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol levels at the target set by your health care provider
- Keep sodium consumption low—aim for less than 1,500 milligrams of sodium each day
- Don't overuse over-the-counter painkillers, like ibuprofen

Again, if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease or a family history of kidney failure, you may be at risk for kidney disease. Schedule an appointment with your health care provider to get your blood and urine checked.

In every issue you'll find 16 ridiculously simple ways to stay healthy!

## IN THIS ISSUE

- » The Truth In Your Tummy
- » Smarter Grocery Shopping Aisle By Aisle
- » How To Burn More Calories On Your Daily Walk
- » Do You Know Enough About Your Body's Waste Management System?



## DID YOU KNOW?

**60,000**

THE NUMBER OF ITEMS A TYPICAL FULL-SERVICE GROCER OFFERS. THAT'S A LOT TO CHOOSE FROM!

**2**  
inches  
or more

THE INCREASE IN WAIST SIZE SINCE YOUR EARLY ADULTHOOD THAT PLACES YOU AT A HIGHER RISK OF PREMATURE CHRONIC DISEASE.

**1 in 10**

ABOUT 1 IN 10 ADULTS NATIONWIDE, OR ABOUT 20 MILLION PEOPLE, HAVE AT LEAST SOME SIGNS OF KIDNEY DAMAGE.

## What's Considered A Big Belly?

For optimal health, you want to keep your waist as small as possible and as close as possible to where it was in your early twenties (given you didn't have a large belly in your twenties). If your waist size has increased more than two inches since your early adulthood, it is very likely that you have some excess fat in your belly that is placing you at a higher risk of premature chronic disease.

Here are simple instructions for determining your waist size.

1. Wrap a tape measure around your bare waist, just above your hipbones.
2. Pull the tape measure until it is snug, but not pushing into your skin. Make sure it is level all the way around.
3. Exhale, relax and then take the measurement.

FOR WOMEN	FOR MEN
Less than 32 inches is optimal	Less than 37 inches is optimal
More than 35 inches is considered high risk	More than 40 inches is considered high risk

The one good thing about belly fat is that it is typically the easiest fat to lose. Because it is so metabolically dynamic and lies in such close proximity to the liver and lots of large blood vessels, the body can more quickly mobilize and burn it.

## What's In A Number?

TYPICAL COST

**\$4**  
TO  
**\$6**

A BAG OF  
**POTATO CHIPS**

SERVING SIZE: 15 chips  
CALORIES: 160  
FAT: 10g



TYPICAL COST

**\$2**  
TO  
**\$4**

A POUND OF  
**APPLES**

SERVING SIZE: 1 apple  
CALORIES: 100  
FAT: 0

