

# The Dietitian's Desk

## WELCOME TO THE DIETITIAN'S DESK!

This newsletter is committed to providing insightful nutritional information to promote a healthy lifestyle in school and at home.

This month's newsletter was developed by Sodexo's  
**Nicole Mangaudis RD, LDN**  
from Fitchburg Public Schools in Massachusetts.

**April 2021 Issue**

## Plant-Based Protein Power

### SEEN IN YOUR SCHOOL LUNCH

Sodexo menus are written with vegetarians in mind! Our menus currently offer at least one vegetarian option daily, such as a Yo-to-Go Box, Salad Greens entrée, or Mini Pizza Bento Box. We utilize eggs, beans, and/or cheese to provide adequate protein for each meal, while also meeting the nutrition standards set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

### PLANT-BASED PROTEIN POWER FACTS

1. Humans need protein for a variety of functions, such as building muscle, maintaining healthy hair and nails, and performing a great deal of unseen functions in our bodies, like digesting food. Our bodies produce some building blocks of protein, or amino acids, but others must be consumed in our diet and are therefore referred to as "essential amino acids."
2. Meat, eggs, and dairy foods are often viewed as superior to plant-based protein sources because they contain the essential amino acids in proportions that humans need. However, including a variety of plant-based protein sources in your diet throughout the day can help ensure that you still meet your protein needs.
3. Sources of plant-based protein include soy, found in tofu, edamame, and soy milk or yogurt, beans/legumes, whole grains, nuts/seeds, and more.
4. Plant-based protein sources are typically lower in saturated fat when compared to animal-based, making them desirable for those individuals looking to lower their "bad" cholesterol or overall risk for Cardiovascular Disease.

### HEALTHFUL HINTS

**Hydration** Water loss happens through sweat, urine production and breathing. Give your body back what it needs. Fruits, vegetables and soups can be an unseen way to get additional fluids into your diet.

### RECIPE OF THE MONTH

#### **Spicy Crispy Baked Tofu**

##### **Ingredients:**

- 14 oz. package Extra Firm Tofu
- 1 Tbsp. Olive Oil
- 1 Tbsp. Sriracha Sauce
- 1 Tbsp. Corn Starch

##### **Directions:**

1. Open the package of tofu and drain all of the liquid. Remove the block of tofu and cut into smaller pieces. I like to stand it up and cut it into 3 sheets, then cut each sheet into 15 pieces for a total of 45 pieces.
2. Place a towel on a cutting board and lay the tofu on top of the towel. Fold the towel over until all tofu is covered. Place a heavy object, such as a cast iron skillet, on top of the towel to help remove as much moisture as possible from the tofu – this helps it get crispy! Let the tofu dry for 30 minutes.
3. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
4. In a mixing bowl, coat the tofu with olive oil and sriracha sauce. Add the corn starch and combine until no powder remains.
5. Spray a sheet pan with cooking spray and lay the tofu flat on the prepared pan.
6. Bake for 25-30 minutes, flipping half way through the cooking time.
7. Serve in corn tortillas with guacamole and fresh cabbage slaw for meatless tacos!

\*Note: Recipe was adapted from the Cookie and Kate blog.



### FROM YOUR FARMER

During the month of April items like Arugula, Carrots, Kale, Mushrooms and Spinach are widely cultivated in our region. You can support your community by buying local!