

St. Charles Cancer Treatment Center  
DEFEAT Cancer's September, 2008

## HARVEST for HEALTH



### It's CORN!

#### Corn Facts

- The average ear of corn has 800 kernels in 16 rows totaling 12,800 kernels!
- Twice as much corn is grown in the U.S. than any other crop. Nearly one-third is exported.
- A corn plant can be 5 to 12 ft. tall, with the root system reaching 6-1/2 feet into the ground.
- Corn pollen is carried by the wind so its flowers have not evolved with bright colors or aromas to attract pollinators such as bees or birds.
- Each fertilized strand of silk develops into a single kernel of corn. Thus, every strand must be pollinated to develop a full ear of corn.
- Although often thought of as a vegetable, corn is actually a grain.
- There are more than 3,500 consumer and industrial products that contain some form of corn – from ceramics, chewing gum, cosmetics, drugs and vitamins, fireworks, paint, paper goods, textiles, tires and ethanol.

#### Did You Know?

The Native Americans created “three sisters gardens” with corn, squash and beans. The corn stalk acted as a pole to support the beans. The beans absorbed nitrogen from the air and converted it into the soil for the corn to use. The squash covered the soil, helping to control weeds, retain moisture and deter predators.

Another tidbit: early Americans believed that popcorn popped because a tiny, angry spirit lived in the kernel and wanted to escape. It hasn't

deterred our love for it – on average an American eats 38 quarts of popcorn per year!

#### Nutritional Value

Corn is a good source of many nutrients including thiamin (vitamin B1), pantothenic acid (vitamin B5), folate, dietary fiber, vitamin C, phosphorus and manganese. It promotes antioxidant protection, lung health, heart health and energy production. Yellow corn has more health benefits than white because of the carotenoids. Corn also provides other phytonutrients, such as phenolics, which function as powerful antioxidants and work in many different ways to promote health. Corn's concentration of dietary fiber helps reduce cholesterol levels and promote colon health.

#### Selection

Look for fresh green husks, tightly wrapped and slightly damp. Kernels should be bright-colored, plump and milky. Warm temperatures change the sugars in corn to starch and reduce their level of sweetness, so look for corn that has been refrigerated or kept shaded after being harvested.

#### Storage

Corn will remain fresh 2-3 days when properly stored. Place in a plastic bag, wrapping the bag tightly to squeeze out as much air as possible. Do not wash fresh corn before refrigeration because exposure to water will encourage it to spoil.



#### How to Prepare

Corn can be eaten fresh off the ear, but is more commonly eaten cooked. Although boiling is the most popular method of cooking corn, it is one of the least nutritious. When boiled, corn loses minerals, water-soluble vitamins (such as C and the B-complex vitamins), health-promoting phytonutrients and even some of its flavor. For tastier, more healthful results, steam corn instead. Place cleaned fresh corn (or frozen) in a steamer basket over 2” of boiling water. Cover and cook for about five minutes until “tender with a little crunch.” For an extra nutritional boost, use a little olive oil instead of butter.

## Add More Corn to Your Life

Think “color” when you look at a recipe – the more colors on your plate, the better. Fresh, frozen, roasted or canned, corn adds color, interest, texture (and nutrition) to any recipe.

- Add frozen kernels, or a can, of corn to your favorite chili or soup recipe.
- Change up your cornbread. Include drained corn kernels – or even blueberries!
- Liven up a pizza with fresh corn, zucchini, yellow squash and red bell pepper.
- For a little color and crunch, add corn to stir-fry.
- Choose corn tortillas instead of flour for additional health benefits. The same goes for corn chips vs. potato chips (baked, of course)!
- Instead of red sauce on spaghetti, top it with corn, olive oil, fresh basil, garlic, onion and lemon. Add peas or broccoli florets for extra nutrition and color.
- Cooked corn is a great addition to leafy green salad and is especially good with avocados, fresh tomatoes and balsamic vinaigrette. Roasted corn makes it even better!



## Corn Salsa

- 2 c. frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 1/3 c. chopped red onion
- 1/4 c. chopped red bell pepper
- 3 TBL. chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 TBL. fresh lime juice
- 1 TBL. finely chopped jalapeno pepper
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Combine all ingredients. Cover and refrigerate for 2-4 hours. Remove about 30 minutes before serving.

## Grilled Corn with Lime Butter

- 1-1/2 TBL butter, melted
- 1/4 tsp. grated lime rind
- 1-1/2 TBL. fresh lime juice
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground red pepper
- 8 ears shucked corn
- Cooking spray

Prepare grill or broiler. Combine butter, rind, juice and spices in a small bowl. Place corn on grill rack or broiler pan coated w/cooking spray. Cook 10

minutes, turning frequently. Brush w/ butter mixture. Serves 8. 103 cal; 3.2g fat; 2.6g protein; 19.6g carbs; 2.2g fiber. Recipe from: [www.cookinglight.com](http://www.cookinglight.com)

## Corn and Lentil Salad

- 1 c. dried lentils, sorted, rinsed & drained
- 2-1/2 c. reduced-sodium, lowfat chicken or veggie broth
- 2 c. corn kernels
- 1 c. chopped celery
- 1 c. chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 3/4 c. red onion
- 1/4 c. balsamic vinegar
- 2 TBL. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 TBL. fresh marjoram
- 1 tsp. dried orange zest
- salt & pepper to taste

Bring lentils and broth to a boil, then cover and simmer for 25-30 minutes or until tender. Drain. Transfer to a large bowl. Mix in corn, celery, parsley and onion and let cool. Make dressing with remaining ingredients and drizzle over lentil mixture. Toss lightly; serve warm or cold. Serves 6. 230 cal; 6g fat; 37g carbs; 12g protein; 12g fiber; 279mg sodium. Recipe from: [www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org)

## Resources

Remember to look for low-fat recipes, or substitute high-fat ingredients with low-fat options.

### Corn Recipes & Tips

- [www.cookinglight.com](http://www.cookinglight.com)
- [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)
- [www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)
- [www.whfoods.com](http://www.whfoods.com)

### Cancer/Nutrition Websites

- [www.cancerproject.org](http://www.cancerproject.org)
- [www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org)
- [www.cancer.net](http://www.cancer.net)
- [www.caring4cancer.com/go/cancer/nutrition](http://www.caring4cancer.com/go/cancer/nutrition)

**Harvest for Health and DEFEAT Cancer** are programs of **St. Charles Cancer Treatment Center**. DEFEAT Cancer is sponsored by the **Lance Armstrong Foundation** and supported by **Advanced Specialty Care**.

[www.bendcancer.org](http://www.bendcancer.org) & [www.defeatcancer.info](http://www.defeatcancer.info)

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