Magnesium

Introduction to magnesium

- Enzymes initiate and/or speed up the biochemical reactions that occur in our bodies.
- In order to function properly, enzymes require cofactors (vitamins and minerals).
  - In general, cofactors act by ‘turning on’ the enzymes that are required to support the biochemical reactions.
- Magnesium is an essential mineral (that is quite often forgotten about).
  - Magnesium is required by the enzymes that are responsible for catalyzing many of the biochemical reactions that occur in our bodies.

Magnesium in the body

- When people think of bone health, muscle contraction and proper heart function, calcium is usually the mineral that comes to most people’s minds.
  - Did you know that the role of magnesium in the body is just as important as the role of calcium?
  - Magnesium is absolutely essential for the above physiological processes in addition to being a major player in over 300 other biochemical processes.
- Magnesium also assists in calcium uptake, blood sugar regulation and macronutrient (fat, protein & carbohydrates) metabolism.
- Approximately 50% of the magnesium in our bodies is found in bone; nearly 50% is stored in our tissues; and a very small amount is found in the bloodstream.

Magnesium for disease prevention

- Adequate intake of magnesium in the diet can help prevent diseases and disorders such as hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- Dark green leafy vegetables, like spinach, are high in magnesium.
  - Chlorophyll, the dark pigment molecule in plants, contains high amounts of this mineral.
- Almonds, nuts and whole grains are also good sources of magnesium.

References:

Stuffed Squash

Overview
Do you need a break from all the hectic and complicated holiday cooking? This creative dish will certainly please you and your family because it is simple to make and full of flavor. This squash is stuffed full of spinach and pine nuts; and is a good source of magnesium!

Ingredients
- 4 small acorn squash
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter (cut into 4 pieces)
- 1/2 lb ground pork
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 cup chopped carrot
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 1/2 cup cooked rice
- 1 package frozen chopped spinach
- 1/2 cup toasted pine nuts
- 1 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- pinch kosher salt
- pinch freshly ground black pepper

Directions
- Preheat oven to 400°F
- Cut 1-inch off the top of the acorn squash and scoop out the seeds. Place 1 of the 4 piece of butter into each squash.
- Cook ground pork over large sauté pan on medium heat. Remove from pan.
- Add olive oil to pan and sauté onion, celery, and carrot until soft. Deglaze pan with white wine.
- Add cooked pork back to the pan with cooked rice, spinach, pine nuts, oregano, salt and pepper. Stir constantly for approximately 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat and divide evenly among squash.
- Top each squash with its lid and bake for 1 hour or until squash is tender. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Information
This dish provides 3 servings of vegetables and fruits, 1 serving of grain products and 1 serving of meat and alternatives.

Recipe courtesy of foodnetwork.ca

Nutrition Facts (per serving):
- Calories (kcal) 507.8,
- Fat (g) 31.3,
- Protein (g) 16.3,
- Carbohydrate (g) 40.5,
- Sugar (g) 2.3,
- Fibre (g) 5.9,
- Vitamin A (µg) 482.9,
- Vitamin C (mg) 24.4,
- Vitamin D (µg) 0.3,
- Vitamin E (mg) 4.2,
- Thiamin (mg) 0.6,
- Riboflavin (mg) 0.3,
- Niacin (ne) 8,
- Folate (µg) 131.3,
- Vitamin B₆ (mg) 0.6,
- Vitamin B₁₂ (µg) 0.2,
- Calcium (mg) 176.6,
- Iron (mg) 5.4,
- Sodium (mg) 132.3,
- Potassium (mg) 1165.2