

the healthy swimmer



Bruce Block

In Season: Peaches

Prunus persica, more commonly known as the peach tree, is native to China and cultivated worldwide. The peach is a symbol of longevity in Chinese tradition. In the United States, the state of Georgia is known for its high quality peaches. The peach tree produces a delicious, juicy stone fruit, or drupe, that is typically harvested in late spring and summer months.

Peaches are high in fiber, potassium and are a good source of vitamin C. Foods that are considered a “good source” of a particular nutrient provide between 10 and 20 percent of the Recommended Daily Value, based upon United States Department of Agriculture guidelines. Peaches also contain phosphorus, magnesium, calcium, selenium and trace amounts of iron, zinc, manganese and copper. While the flesh is nutritious, peach pits contain a toxic substance known as hydrocyanic acid or cyanide, which should be avoided. Ingestion of large quantities of the pits can be fatal.

When purchasing peaches, look for soft ripe fruit with no bruises or traces of green skin. A perfectly ripe peach will be fragrant at the stem. Since ripe peaches spoil quickly, buy only what you will use in a day or two. <<<

Drink Safely

How safe is your drinking water? The United States Environmental Protection Agency Office of Water says the United States enjoys one of the best supplies of drinking water in the world. But threats to drinking water are increasing.

According to the EPA “Water on Tap” guide, contamination of drinking water is rare in the U.S., and typically does not pose health threats. But there is growing concern about the impacts on drinking water from improper disposal of chemicals, animal and human waste and even naturally occurring contaminants. Threats also occur when waste is injected underground, and water is improperly treated or disinfected.

What can you do if there’s a problem with your drinking water? The EPA suggests alternative sources, including water dispensers, bottled water sold in supermarkets, and home water filtration systems.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and some states regulate bottled drinking water, but bottled water does not undergo the same testing and reporting as water from a managed treatment facility, and production standards for bottled water vary by state. The bottled water industry is also under fire from environmentalists, who believe overuse of this natural resource is taxing the world’s ecosystems.

According to the EPA, home water treatment units are less popular than bottled water, but can improve the taste of water and provide a safety factor for those vulnerable to waterborne disease. Home treatment options include activated carbon filters, ion exchange, reverse osmosis and distillation units. <<<

>>> For more information about drinking water safety, visit the EPA web site at www.epa.gov/safewater/wot/pdfs/book_waterontap_full.pdf.

reader recipe

Peaches have a long and illustrious history. Originating in China, this nutritious fruit is now cultivated worldwide, and this recipe applies the peach’s benefits with a Latin flavor—a salsa that’s good with chips or as a delicious topping.

Peach Salsa

- 3 ripe peaches, diced
- 1/2 c red bell pepper, diced
- 2 T red onion, diced
- 1 T fresh squeezed orange juice
- 1/2 ts cayenne pepper
- 2 T fresh mint, chopped
- coarse salt (to taste)
- fresh ground black pepper (to taste)

Toss all ingredients together in a large bowl, adjusting seasonings to taste. Serve as a snack with tortilla chips, or as a fresh topping for grilled poultry, seafood or pork. <<<

Serves 4. 30 calories per serving. 0 grams of fat per serving.

>>> DO YOU HAVE A RECIPE OUR READERS WOULD ENJOY?

Send it to editor@usms.org, or mail to: Reader Recipe, c/o Bill Volckening, 1220 NW 119th Place, Portland, OR 97229.

Swim Safely

Open water swimming creates safety threats, such as anxiety attacks, physical contact between swimmers, fatigue, marine life, hypothermia, cramping, heart attacks, strokes, sun exposure and drowning.

The USMS Open Water and Long Distance Committee offers online materials to raise awareness about open water safety. The “USMS Open Water Safety Manual” compiles safety information that appears in other publications including the “Long Distance Swimming Rules,” “Long Distance Championship Guidelines,” “Open Water Manual” and championship forms. Contents include safety standards, guidelines for race directors, and information about escorts, emergency provisions and evacuations.

The first step in planning an open water swim is to consider safety factors. Organized races should be conducted with the assistance of lifeguards, emergency medical services agencies, the Coast Guard, and other appropriate authorities.

The best open water swimming events are structured to facilitate safety, and communication is always a key element in any safety plan. When entering an open water event, swimmers can learn about safety by reading the entry form. On race day, the pre-race meeting offers more information about the course, the conditions and safety. <<< >>> **If you are planning to participate in an open water event this summer, be a student of open water safety. Read the “USMS Open Water Safety Manual” at www.usms.org/longdist/safety.pdf.**

Stay Warm

Hypothermia occurs when body temperature drops below that required for normal metabolism and bodily functions. It is one of the leading safety considerations for open water swimmers—regardless of whether the weather outside is cold or warm.

One of the best resource is the article, “Hypothermia Prevention, Detection and First Aid,” by Nick Olmos-Lau, M.D. The article is available on the Web site of USMS Open Water and Long Distance Committee chair Marcia Cleveland. <<< >>> **View the article at www.doversolo.com/hypothermia.htm.**

Ten Tips Open Water Safety

- Apply waterproof sunscreen at least 15 minutes before exposure to the sun, and reapply after swimming.
- Swim only in areas approved for swimming. Avoid areas used for boating, fishing and other activities.
- Allow your body to adjust to the water temperature gradually, especially if the water is more than 30°F below your own body temperature.
- Do not swim if there is thunder or lightning in the area.
- Have a fully stocked first aid kit on hand.
- Apply petroleum jelly to skin to avoid chafing.
- Have a plan for dealing with emergencies, and have a mobile phone available at the beach.
- Look where you’re going. Avoid collisions with other swimmers, going off course, or getting lost by sighting periodically as you swim.
- Get warm after the swim. Take off the wet suit, dress warmly and drink warm fluids.
- Never swim alone.



ezorinka Jankovic

Sunburn: Prevention Beats Treatment

Summer is the time to play in the sun, but what do you do when you get a little too much exposure? Health experts from the Centers for Disease Control say it’s easier to prevent sunburn than treat it. CDC has an online guide for prevention and treatment of sunburn, part of the federal health agency’s “Traveler’s Health: Yellow Book.” The online resource features lots of information about travel destinations, vaccinations, diseases, motion sickness, and safe food and water.

Sunlight, exposed skin and time are the three factors that contribute to sunburn. The ultraviolet A (UVA) rays in sunlight cause tanning and wrinkling. UVB rays cause sunburn, aging, wrinkling and skin cancer.

Alas, the CDC says there is no quick cure for minor sunburn. Traditional remedies include aspirin, drinking lots of water, and applying topical moisturizers with aloe and hydrocortisone. Cool baths and cool wet cloths also may provide relief. The CDC also recommends acetaminophen and ibuprofen as over-the-counter, anti-inflammatory drugs for sunburn relief. Avoid further exposure while treating sunburn.

Even though these treatments can be effective, CDC says the best strategy is sunburn prevention. Use a full-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen that absorbs UV rays or a sun block, such as zinc oxide cream, to deflect all UV rays. Effective sunscreens should have an SPF (sun protection factor) of at least 15, which will allow exposure to the sun without burning for 15 times longer than without sunscreen.

Apply sunscreen at least 15 minutes prior to sun exposure, and reapply frequently, even on cloudy days. Sunscreens lose their potency over time, and new products are available every year, so ditch last year’s leftovers and start fresh this season.

>>> **For the full CDC article on sunburn, go to the CDC web site at: www.cdc.gov/travel/yellowBookCh6-Sunburn.aspx.**

Correction

The Healthy Swimmer department in the March/April issue of *SWIMMER* contained an item on breaststroker’s knee that incorrectly located the medial area on the outside of the knee. The medial area is located on the inside of the knee. *SWIMMER* regrets the error.

The information in this department is not intended as a substitute for professional or medical advice. It is not intended to provide medical advice on personal health matters. For personal medical advice, consult your healthcare provider. If you are concerned about a particular medical condition or injury, see your healthcare provider for evaluation and care.