Ask the Expert:
What are Micronutrients?

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Our bodies need a variety of nutrients. Macronutrients, as discussed in previous issues, are nutrients needed in larger amounts such as carbohydrate, protein, and fat. Micronutrients, on the other hand, are needed in smaller amounts but are still essential to the body function. Some of these important micronutrients are:

- **Iron** is important for making red blood cells, carrying oxygen throughout the body, and allowing the body to fight infections. Good sources include animal proteins (beef, dark meat of chicken and turkey, light tuna, oysters, shrimp, eggs), fortified cereals, whole grains, dark green vegetables, legumes, lentils, nuts, seeds, and dried fruits.

- **Zinc** also helps the body to fight infections and keeps cells working to promote body health and metabolism. Zinc aids in wound healing and supports normal growth and development in the life cycle. Good sources are red meat, poultry, seafood, beans, nuts, whole grains, fortified cereals, and dairy.

- **Sodium** helps to regulate water in the body and is required for proper nerve function and for muscles to work. Sodium is found in almost all foods, especially in baked goods, processed meat, restaurant foods, pizza, canned soup, and table salt. Most Americans consume too much sodium and are recommended to limit the salt intake to less than a teaspoon for people over 14 years of age.

- **Potassium** also helps to regulate water in the body and is critical for proper nerve function, muscle contraction, and heart rhythm. However, potassium is a nutrient that most Americans do not consume enough of. Good sources include beans, potatoes (with skin), dried fruits, bananas, oranges, acorn squash, and spinach.

Food Safety:
Moldy Cheese
Written by Clara Vásquez-Mejía, Research Assistant in Department of Nutrition Science, Purdue University

Molds are fungi that live on plants or animals. These small organisms are very tiny but can sometimes be seen with the naked eye. Fungi can travel through air and water, and they may grow on food or areas where food is prepared.

Molds have root threads that grow inside foods and may be difficult to see. Bacteria is likely to grow along with the mold. While certain molds can produce dangerous toxins for humans, some molds are safe to eat and are actually added on purpose during the production of certain foods. For example, cheeses, such as Roquefort, blue, and Gorgonzola are produced by adding the fungi Penicillium roqueforti.

Cheese is popular in many countries, and has several health benefits due to its natural probiotic properties and for being a rich source of protein, calcium, and phosphorus. Moldy cheeses are safe to consume because they are usually hard or semi-hard (<50% of water content). Most cheese related foodborne illnesses have been linked to consuming soft

While there is still need for more conclusive research on the health benefits of moldy cheese, preliminary studies suggest that they might be beneficial to health.
Complementary Feeding: Baby’s First Foods
Written by Shelby Burke, Undergraduate Student in the Department of Nutrition Science, Purdue University

Complementary feeding is the introduction of food to infant diets. Complementary feeding is important to add essential nutrients to breastfed and formula-fed baby diets and begins at around 6 months. At this stage, babies begin to have good head and neck control, ability to sit up with limited support, and show interests in food.

The World Health Organization recommends beginning with 2-3 feedings per day between 6-8 months and 3-4 feedings at 9-11 months of age. The amount of food given will likely start with 1-2 teaspoons and increase over time based on the baby’s appetite.

Foods such as pureed fruits and vegetables, iron-fortified infant cereal soaked in breastmilk or formula are good choices. Puree thickness can be increased over time as the baby learns to swallow. Only one new food should be introduced every 3-4 days to be cautious of food allergies. Always spoon-feed from a bowl and discard uneaten food to avoid harmful bacteria growth.


Oven-Baked Avocado Falafel

Ingredients (21 falafels)
1/4 of a Hass avocado
2/3 cup parsley
2/3 cup cilantro
2/3 cup mint
6 sliced scallions
1-15 oz can garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
2 tbsp flour
1 tsp salt
1 tsp lemon juice
2 cloves garlic, minced

Directions:
1. Obtain a food processor and pulse all of the ingredients together to create a chunky, but combined mixture.
2. Refrigerate mixture for 1-3 hrs to allow the falafel mix to bind together.
3. Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.
4. Spoon out 1 heaping tablespoon of the mix and roll together in hands to create a ball. Place falafel rounds to a nonstick baking sheet, keeping about 1 inch apart.
5. Flatten each falafel ball into a patty. (This should make about 21 falafels)
6. Bake for 22 minutes.
7. Take out of the oven and flip each falafel, then return pan to oven for another 8 minutes.
8. Remove falafels from the oven and cool for 10-15 minutes.
9. Move to avocado hummus recipe for a delicious, simple, and healthy topping for the falafel patties.

Underlining denotes TEFAP commodity ingredients

Recipes Source: IEFRN Food Demo Recipes

Avocado Hummus

Ingredients
1 clove garlic, minced
3 tbsp lemon juice
¼ tsp cumin
1 ¼ tbsp tahini
1-15 oz can garbanzo beans (chickpeas)

Directions:
1. Obtain a food processor and blend all of the ingredients until a smooth, creamy consistency is created.
2. Serve as a topping for falafels or as a dip with carrot sticks, celery stalks, and pita bread.

Dark Chocolate Avocado Smoothie

Ingredients (2 servings)
1 Hass Avocado
2 bananas (frozen)
2 tbsp honey
2 tbsp cocoa powder
1 cup fortified milk
¼ tsp cinnamon
1 cup spinach
1 cup ice

Directions:
1. Obtain high powered blender.
2. Blend all ingredients until smooth.

Late summer is a great time to find fresh avocados at your local grocery store and at some food pantries. There are many quick and easy ways to use avocados in meals. Avocados are also a great source of several vitamins and minerals that all Americans need to increase. Visit the IEFRN website video library at https://www.purdue.edu/indianasefrnetwork/resources/videolibrary.aspx to view food demonstrations featuring avocados and giving you new ways to and enjoy this healthy food!