

# NUTRIGRAM

## February 2007

## *Good Health: Think Food First*

There are always new headlines about things we can do to improve our health or about things we are currently doing that are bad for our health. All of the information can be overwhelming and leave us feeling confused as to what the right thing is to do. When it comes to food, your best bet is to keep things simple.

### **Energy**

With the explosion of energy drinks, energy bars and energy pills on the market today, it can be easy to forget where we really get our energy from...FOOD. Food provides us with calories from protein, carbohydrates and fat which our body uses for energy. Without these calories, no amount of caffeine or other stimulant will make us energized.

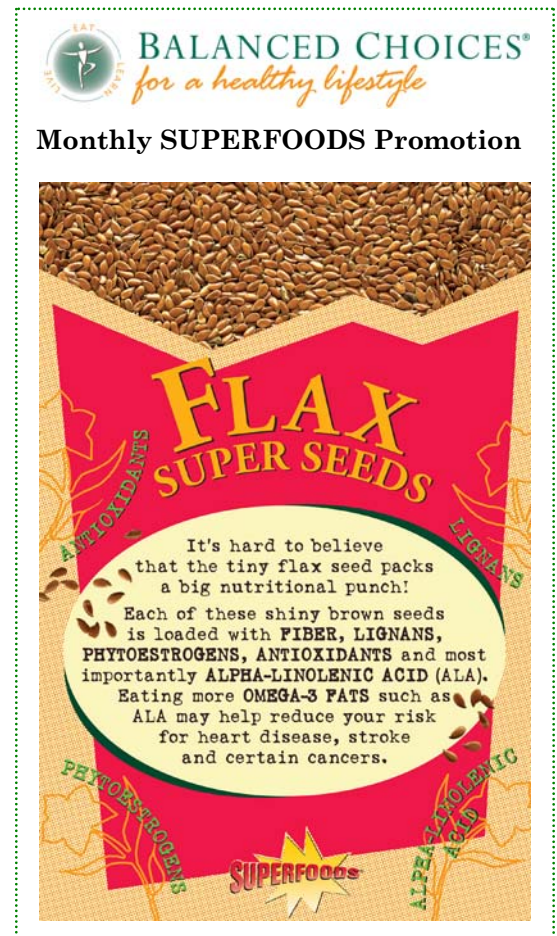
### **Vitamins & Minerals**

We need these small nutrients for everything from seeing well in the dark to having healthy bones. If you walk down the supplement aisle at your local pharmacy you may be under the impression that it takes a degree in biochemistry to figure out the right mix for good health. The good news is that it is a lot simpler than that. For most people, eating a variety of good foods every day will supply all of the vitamins and minerals that we need. Keep in mind that when we say "a variety of good food" that we don't mean cheese pizza for breakfast, pepperoni pizza for lunch and mushroom pizza for dinner. Foods from each of the food groups provide different vitamins and minerals, so it is important to choose a variety of foods from each group each day.

### **The Less Messed Around With the Better.**

When it comes to getting energy and nutrients from food, simple is almost always better. Vitamins can be damaged by the heat and air that they are exposed to when a food is cut, cooked and processed for packaging. In order to make foods stable at room temperature, salt and other preservatives are often added to packaged products. To make processed foods look better, artificial colors are often added. Most of these changes take away from how good the food is for us. To make healthier choices:

- ▶ Choose whole, fresh foods.
- ▶ Beware of foods in bags, boxes and cans. They are often highly processed.
- ▶ When eating prepared food, go to restaurants that use whole, fresh ingredients and less processed food (like your dining hall).



**BALANCED CHOICES®**  
*for a healthy lifestyle*

Monthly SUPERFOODS Promotion

**FLAX SUPER SEEDS**

It's hard to believe that the tiny flax seed packs a big nutritional punch!

Each of these shiny brown seeds is loaded with FIBER, LIGNANS, PHYTOESTROGENS, ANTIOXIDANTS and most importantly ALPHA-LINOLENIC ACID (ALA). Eating more OMEGA-3 FATS such as ALA may help reduce your risk for heart disease, stroke and certain cancers.

Jennifer M. Ignacio, MS, RD, CDN  
Nutrition Specialist  
[www.eatlearnlive.com](http://www.eatlearnlive.com)

Answers to your questions online...

"Ask the Food & Nutrition Experts"  
(In the Flik Independent Schools section)

**Flik**  
Independent Schools®  
by Chartwells®