



## Lady of America Newsletter – September 2009

### Natalie's August Tip and Spot Check

**Hello Ladies,**

Since last month we talked a lot about nutrition, let's keep the hits on playing! When we start an eating program, the first week is always the easiest. As time goes by we tend to get hungrier and hungrier, even though we are eating enough calories to get us through the day – it happens to all of us, even me!

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Your best weapon to combat this hunger is fiber. A study by The Journal of Nutrition showed that women who increased their fiber intake significantly reduced the risk of gaining weight. This is due to the fact that ingesting high-fiber foods increases that feeling of fullness. Also, fiber promotes good health for the heart and digestive system. A study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine confirms that eating high-fiber foods, such as flaxseed, helps prevent heart disease. Almost 10,000 American adults participated in this study and were followed for 19 years!

My tip for increasing the amount of fiber in your diet without making major changes is to add a spoonful of ground flaxseeds (or flaxseed oil) each day. I add it to some of my meals (soups, salads, yogurt and protein shakes). Some quick serving ideas include:

- ❖ sprinkle ground flaxseeds on your cereal
- ❖ give cooked vegetables a nuttier flavor by sprinkling ground flaxseeds on top
- ❖ add a tablespoon of flaxseed oil to your smoothie or breakfast shake

Other benefits of adding flaxseed to your diet include regularity, anti-inflammatory benefits and a positive effect on cholesterol. Plus, flaxseeds are rich in ALA (alpha linolenic acid), an omega-3 fatty acid that supports heart, skin, hair and nails health. New studies indicate that flaxseed shows a lot of promise in fighting disease, including a possible role in cancer prevention – especially breast cancer – can reduce hot flashes by 60%, reduce dry eye syndrome in women and can prevent/control high blood pressure.

Whether you purchase ground flaxseeds or you grind them at home, it is important to keep them in a tightly sealed container in the refrigerator or freezer to prevent them from becoming rancid. Flaxseed oil is especially perishable and should be purchased in opaque bottles that have been kept refrigerated. Flaxseed oil should have a sweet nutty flavor. Never use flaxseed oil in cooking; add it to foods after they have been cooked or heated.

So for good health and that full feeling, get your flaxseeds and sprinkle it up!

**PS: Don't forget your water. Remember to drink 6 to 8 glasses every day.**

## Spot Check:

I am constantly asked by the Lady of America community and my clients about the abs. The most effective way to strengthen the core is to perform exercises that engage all of the main core muscles. One of the most effective exercises is the plank because it works the entire body.



The plank is an isometric exercise, which means it requires simply holding the muscles in a contracted position and motionless for a set amount of time. In the standard plank your body is held resting on your elbows and toes. Similar to a push-up position, it is important to keep your body straight and flat. This position can be held for various amounts of time, and as strength is established, that time should increase.

I want you to begin by holding the plank position for 30 seconds. Once you are able to do this, increase to 60 seconds. The key is to hold the position for as long as possible. Continue to add time as you are able, up to 2 or 3 minutes.

To perform the plank, lie face down on a mat. Your elbows are on the ground, beneath your shoulders and your palms are flat on the floor. Prop yourself up to form a bridge using your toes and forearms – think push-up position. Keep your back flat, in a straight line from head to heels. Do not allow your hips to sag toward the floor. Tilt your pelvis and squeeze your abdominals to prevent your rear from sticking up in the air. Hold for 30 seconds, lower to the floor and repeat for 3 to 5 reps.

As you advance and it becomes easier to do the exercise, try adding an arm lift. At plank position, shift your weight to your right forearm and extend your left arm in front of you. Hold for 10 seconds then switch sides to complete 1 minute.

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