

Yogurt



a. Food Fact:

- Yogurt is an excellent source of calcium, protein, riboflavin, vitamin B-12 and vitamin A, selenium, potassium and magnesium. Choose either low-fat or fat-free.
- Yogurt is easy to digest, especially for those who are lactose-intolerant and have difficulty digesting milk and cheeses.
- Yogurt has live active cultures, such as *acidophilus* and *bifida* that colonize the lower intestines with beneficial bacteria. They also reduce disease-causing bacteria. If you take antibiotics, eat yogurt to help prevent the side effect of diarrhea.
- Beneficial bacteria in yogurt may also be protective for women prone to vaginal yeast infections.

b. Food Product and/or Shopping Idea:

- To assure you are getting the live, active cultures, make sure the yogurt you purchase has a good seal.
- Cooking and freezing yogurt provides culinary versatility, but the beneficial bacteria is killed, therefore eat it fresh as much as possible. However, you'll still get the other nutrients, such as calcium.
- Consider making yogurt cheese as an alternative to high-fat products, e.g. cream cheese or sour cream: Place low-fat or fat-free yogurt in a *yogurt strainer* for at least 8 hours. (If you don't have a yogurt strainer, you can use a double thickness of cheese cloth to line a colander, or you can try using a coffee filter). Cover it with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator with a bowl under it to catch the liquid. Depending how long you let the yogurt sit will depend on how you would like to use it. If it sits for 8 hours, you can use it for dressings, as well as for sour cream. If it sits for 12 to 20 hours, you can use it for spreads for bagels, toast, and crackers, and if it sits for 24 hours, you can use it as a substitute for desserts, like cheesecake.) It's a wonderful way to save calories and fat, and also get the nutrition and health benefits of yogurt. Yogurt cheese will keep for up to one week.
- Now, what do you do with the liquid that results from straining the yogurt? DON'T throw it out, as this is the WHEY (you know the nursery rhyme, "curds and whey"), and it is "calcium-rich." Save the liquid and use it in soups and gravies for added nutrition.