



Strength in Plants *By Kate Murray*

Get to know your peanut butter

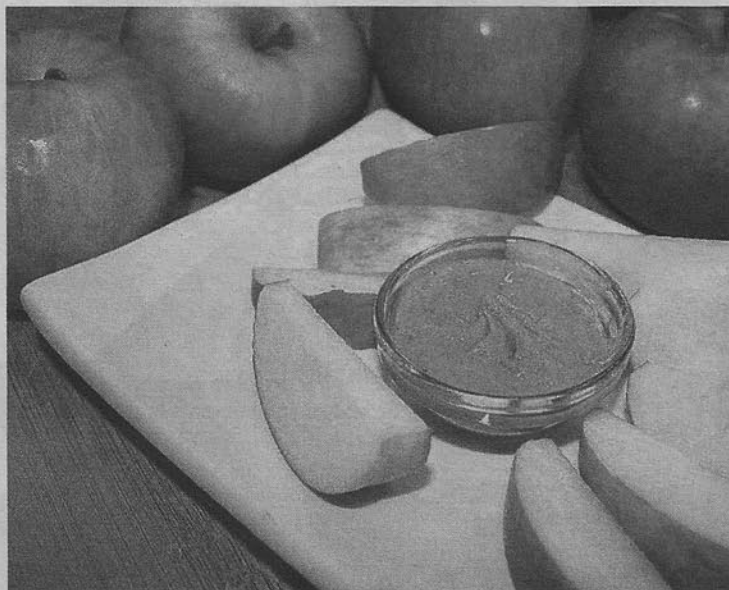
A LOT OF people ask me about peanut butter, and with good reason. Because peanut butter contains saturated fat, it's perceived as an unhealthy food.

Well, let's talk about that. Two tablespoons of peanut butter, or a serving, has the same ratio of saturated to unsaturated fat as a serving of olive oil (about 80 percent unsaturated).

However, peanut butter contains twice as much potassium as sodium, along with other vitamins, minerals and fiber from the nuts. That is quite favorable news for my family, because we consume quite a bit of peanut butter. We put it on apples, bananas, celery, with raisins on top, you get the picture.

But you have to choose your peanut butter carefully. So get out that jar of peanut butter in your cabinet and take a look at the ingredients. Most of the well-known brands contain an ingredient that is the game changer: partially hydrogenated oil. Whether it's listed as palm oil, sunflower oil, safflower oil, canola oil, they're all hydrogenated. If you want to read more about the dangers of hydrogenation, pick up a copy of my book.

For peanut butter, however,



SPECIAL TO THE READING EAGLE: KATE MURRAY

Natural peanut butter offers nutrients you won't find in olive oil, and it's free of hydrogenated oils.

what you need to know is this: Choose a natural peanut butter that has only two ingredients — peanuts and salt. That's it. If you've never made your own peanut butter, just wait until you taste the difference. It's so delicious you'll wonder how you ever ate those more widely known brands.

The natural peanut butters are among us; you just need to

know what you're looking for. I like Smuckers Natural Creamy Peanut Butter. When you open a jar of natural, you'll notice one difference right away: the oil floating on top. That is the way it's supposed to be. It's the natural peanut oil, and because it is not hydrogenated, it rises to the top.

To reblend it, scrape the contents into a large bowl and then whisk the oil back into the mixture. Then pour the entire mix back into the jar. Do not discard the oil, because otherwise your peanut butter will be too dry. It will stay mixed for weeks, possibly months — longer than it will take you to eat it.

Peanut butter makers use hydrogenated oils to prolong the product's shelf life and make it spreadable. They want that peanut butter to be able to sit on the shelf for up to two years and still look and spread like it did the day it was made. But the partial hydrogenation process increases the saturated fat content tenfold and

raises levels of harmful cholesterol. It also can trigger behavioral disorders in children, hyperactivity and autoimmune flare-ups.

We're consumed with health information from a variety of sources. Let's get back to basics. Natural peanut butter may cost 50 cents or \$1 more than the other jar, but how much does your visit to a specialist cost? Then there's the medication and follow-up visits, not to mention wear and tear on your body.

When you change your perspective on the way you look at health care, from reactive to preventive, you'll have a whole new outlook. I highly recommend making the switch to a natural peanut butter. Your body will thank you.

Vegetarian Stir-Fry With Peanut Sauce

INGREDIENTS

- 1 red onion
- 1 sweet red pepper, cored, seeded, sliced
- 1 bunch broccoli, cleaned and cut into florets
- 1 bunch sugar snap peas
- 4-5 scallions

SAUCE INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
- 3/4 cup peanut butter
- salt and pepper
- 3 tablespoons freshly chopped parsley
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds (optional)

PREP: Saute the onion and pepper until translucent (about 10 minutes) in Bragg's or 1 tablespoon of olive or sesame oil, then add the rest of the vegetables. Cook for about 5-7 minutes. The broccoli and snap peas should be al dente.

Whisk the peanut sauce ingredients together in a separate bowl and dress the vegetables. Top with fresh parsley and toasted sesame seeds. This dish can be served with rice or pasta, or it can be eaten cold, if you have enough left over for lunch the next day! ☺

Kate Murray is certified in plant-based nutrition and the author of "A Silent Cure in My Back Yard." Find more recipes at: astilenceure.org.

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Raffle tickets will be drawn at the September 25 meeting of Berks Heritage Council. Grand prize will be a family membership to the Berks Heritage Council participating site of your choice. Other prize baskets with assorted Berks County items will be awarded as well. If you are a winner you will be contacted by phone.

For further information and where to buy a map call Denise: 610-823-4976.