



NEWS RELEASE

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Add a little spice to your life

*By Lt. Col. Karen E. Hawkins,
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FORT LEE, Va. – Remember eating cinnamon and sugar on toast or in your oatmeal as a child? Well, cinnamon is not just for breakfast anymore. Tired of eating the same foods with the same dull flavors every day? Try adding a little spice to your food and enjoy the flavors along with numerous health benefits. Spices are full of antioxidants similar to many fruits and vegetables. We know that adding spices to food enhances flavor while allowing you to cut down on salt, fat and sugar when cooking. Growing evidence supports the health benefits of using spices in your everyday meals along with trying some new dishes. And, remember, you can get these spices at your local commissary and save more than 30 percent on your purchase.

Cinnamon

Cinnamon is one of the oldest spices known. When used in baking, the aroma is mesmerizing. Not only does it smell and taste good, research has shown that it may be good for your health. The cinnaldehyde in cinnamon helps prevent blood clotting which is beneficial for blood circulation. Several studies have also shown that small amounts of cinnamon, about one teaspoon, can lower blood sugar in people with diabetes.

Ginger

Ginger soothes a queasy stomach. Several studies show that eating about 1/2 to one teaspoon of ground ginger curbed nausea for pregnant women. So even if you're not pregnant, give it a try for an upset stomach. Most ginger ale has little ginger in it, so drinking it may not help. It can provide much-needed fluid and calories though when you are sick, especially for small children. Growing evidence shows that ginger may also help prevent cancer and has been useful for treating headaches.

Turmeric

Turmeric contains curcumin, the compound that makes it yellow. Evidence shows that lab rats given curcumin get fewer breast, skin, mouth and colon cancers. The verdict is still out in people. More research is needed to see if it has the same effect at preventing cancer. Research on curcumin and the human brain is just beginning. However, it is known to protect the brain cells in animals, with strong indications for helping prevent Alzheimer's and stroke. It is important to note that only about 2 percent of turmeric is curcumin. Curry powders vary greatly in how much curcumin they contain; eating curry will not guarantee that you get the health benefits. Eating mustard which contains turmeric is one way to get curcumin in your diet.

Spice it up

Sprinkle cinnamon in your coffee, tea, yogurt, oatmeal, cereal and milk, fresh or canned fruit, ice cream and pudding. Add turmeric to rice, potatoes and pasta. Mix it into egg salad.

Dice it up

Peel and dice up some fresh ginger, add it to soups, stir fry and salad dressing.

Bake it up

Add some cinnamon when baking bread, brownies and cookies. Add ground ginger when making cookies, bread and bars.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Also Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on <http://www.twitter.com> and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For

delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*