

Stacy Dragila's tips for healthy eating



*"Whenever
I make a salad,
I always toss
in a handful of
delicious, nutritious
California raisins.
They really
raise the bar
for flavor."*



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www.calraisins.org



HEALTHY FAMILY

TAKING THE WHINE OUT OF WINE

We all know how holiday parties and get-togethers can progress. First there's a toast, followed by a clink of the glasses, and a drink or two. Then another toast, clink, sip. Then another. Before you know it, you've overdone it.

The next morning you're wondering how a brass band got inside your head. To help dodge that unwelcomed cotton-mouthed holiday guest, try a remedy tested by researchers at Tulane University in New Orleans and the University of California, San Francisco.

In a study of 55 more-than-willing students, intrepid researchers at the two schools found that taking a supplement with prickly pear extract before drinking can reduce many symptoms of a hangover, including three of the worst: nausea, dry mouth, and loss of appetite. Where can you find prickly pear extract, also known as opuntia? At pretty much any health food store. Take one capsule (250 mg) per 130 pounds of body weight about an hour before you start drinking. Perfect Equation, a company that helped sponsor the study, also sells a prickly pear supplement online known as Hangover Prevention Formula. Ten-capsule packs are available for \$25 by calling 800/730-2970 or at www.hangoverprevention.com.

A warning from Dr. Marc Siegel, an internist and clinical associate professor at New York University School of Medicine in New York, who's treated many patients with hangovers: "Prickly pear does soothe the stomach, but it can be a mild diuretic, which can cause dehydration." With or without the help of prickly pear, one of the best ways to sidestep a sore head is to frequently sip water while drinking alcohol, so that you drink about two glasses for every glass of liquor. Then down a glass or two of H₂O before you go to sleep that night. —DOUG DONALDSON

SWEET, BUT INNOCENT?

From energy bars to soda, high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is in many processed foods. The sugar alternative may have undesirable effects. **IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS)** For some people with IBS, fructose ferments to produce gas, cramping, and diarrhea. Researchers at the University of Iowa in Iowa City found that 30 to 60 percent of patients with IBS can be helped by avoiding fructose—especially HFCS. **METABOLISM** Peter Havel, Ph.D., an endocrinology researcher at the University of California, Davis, says fructose acts like fat, triggering none of the beneficial hormonal effects that keep blood sugar levels steady. Translation: Diets high in fructose may promote weight gain.

MAGNESIUM IMBALANCE According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture study, fructose ups the retention of magnesium which crowds out needed calcium, increasing the risk of osteoporosis. "Eating foods in their natural form will automatically limit the amount of HFCS in a person's diet," says Jeannie Moloo, Ph.D., national spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. —AMY PATUREL