

Chicken Pasta Salad with Blueberries

High protein, complex carbs, fruit and chopped vegetables combine in this hearty, healthy make-ahead meal.

Fruit and veggies are certainly important components to healthy eating, yet in our zeal to stress protein, protein and more protein, we often neglect them. Though many nutritionists recommend at least four servings of each on a daily basis, we may fail to get even 1-2 servings! Now, many sports nutritionists are arguing that even four servings might fall woefully short.

How can you meet those recommendations? Some ways to get your fill of fruit: Add a sliced banana or a cup of applesauce to your morning oatmeal. Prepare your protein shakes in a blender with fresh strawberries or melon. Drink a glass of orange juice with at least one meal each day. Carb up immediately before training with easy-to-digest fruit-based baby food.

Veggies are also easy to slip in. For example, fold grilled mushrooms and onions into your morning egg whites, add a cup of carrots or cauliflower to your rice and have a large garden salad with low-fat dressing with dinner.

Still not satisfied you'll hit the mark with fruits and veggies? Give this salad a try. It not only supplies protein in the way of chicken but also uses fresh blueberries, which are high in antioxidants that help prevent disease and aid muscle recovery. It has chopped vegetables for more nutrients and fiber, and is packed with complex carbohydrates from pasta. If you're trying to add fat-free mass, this is the perfect balanced meal.

Ingredients

9-oz. package frozen french-cut green beans, thawed
3 cups chopped cooked chicken breast (about 1 lb.)
3 cups cooked penne
3/4 cup thinly sliced celery
1/4 cup thinly sliced green onions
3/4 cup fat-free mayonnaise
3 Tbsp. fat-free vinaigrette dressing
1 cup fresh blueberries
Lettuce leaves
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Place thawed green beans between paper towels and squeeze out any moisture. In a large bowl, combine green beans with next four ingredients and salt and pepper if desired. Set aside. Combine mayonnaise and dressing, pour over chicken mixture and stir gently. Add blueberries and fold in very gently. Cover and chill at least two hours. Serve over a bed of lettuce. Makes three large servings.

Nutrition Score per serving:

Serves: 3

Prep Time: 2 hours

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Calories – 491	g Protein – 48	g Fat – 7
g Fiber 6	% Protein - 39%	% Fat 13%
g Carbs - 67	% Carbs - 55%	