

VIBRANT HEALTH BALANCED LIVING

natural SOLUTIONS

The best exercises for back pain

The Secret to HEALTHY BONES

Hint: It's not calcium

8 BOTOX ALTERNATIVES That really work!

What's your HEALTH sign?

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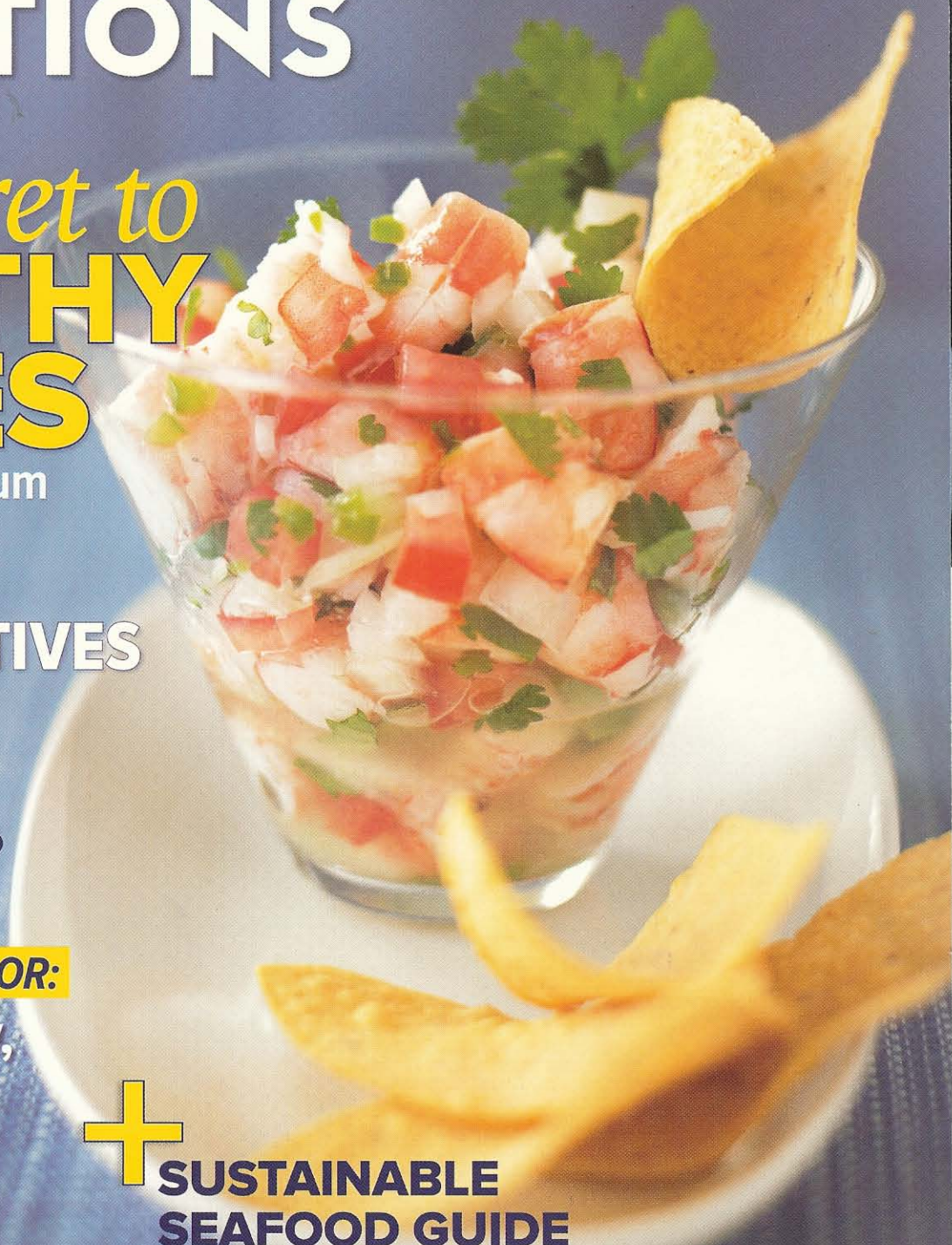
AUGUST 2009
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SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD GUIDE

And easy summer recipes



Carpal Tunnel Tips

It seems a new form of an ancient healing technique can hone in on carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) pain like a laser. New research shows that laser acupuncture—stimulating acupuncture points with laser light instead of needles—can ease the aching and tingling caused when the median nerve in the carpal tunnel is compressed.

Martha Howard, MD, founder and medical director of Wellness Associates of Chicago, says laser acupuncture can work well partly because it's painless and doesn't involve needles. "Even though acupuncture needles used on the hand and wrist are generally very small, people who are already in pain with CTS may not want to have needles used on that area," she says.

When it comes to preventing CTS and keeping pain from worsening, Howard suggests the "big three": proper workstation ergonomics; arm and hand exercises; and general inflammation prevention, including diet changes to help prevent flare-ups from potential food allergies.

"The simplest tip for avoiding CTS is to push your computer keyboard back and rest your arms—all the way up to the elbows—on your desk as you type," says Howard. The strain of holding your arms up while typing is a major cause of CTS. —BRYCE EDMONDS

{ 1 in 7 }

The number of US teens who are deficient in vitamin D



the beauty bar

Calendula

Calendula officinalis, also known as marigold, is one of nature's most potent herbs for healing and nourishing your skin. Calendula contains a powerful range of phytonutrients—plant-based compounds that protect the skin against cell damage from free radicals—explains Jeanette Jacknin, MD, a holistic dermatologist and author of *Smart Medicine for Your Skin* (Penguin Putnam, 2001). Research also shows calendula has anti-inflammatory and antiseptic properties, which inhibit bacteria and assist in wound healing. You'll find calendula in salves, creams, and ointments used for a host of conditions, including sunburn, rashes, bruises, wounds, and insect bites. Taken internally, calendula's anti-inflammatory properties help relieve digestive and menstrual cramps.

WE LIKE: Jurlique's Calendula Cream (\$32, 1.4 oz; jurlique.com), which combines concentrated calendula and witch hazel to smooth dry skin sans greasiness. Hyland's Calendula Spray (\$6.77, 4 oz; mothernature.com) uses extract of calendula flowers with a vegetable-glycerin and water base to soothe abrasions and skin irritations.

SUPPLEMENT WITH: Certified-organic Mountain Rose Herbs Calendula Extract (\$8.50, 1 oz; mountainroseherbs.com). —WENDY MCMILLAN

Lower Cholesterol With Blueberries



Getting tired of that morning bowl of cholesterol-lowering oatmeal? Switch to blueberries. New research published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* reports that these plump little fruits boast the same heart-health benefits as a bowl of oats. Researchers surmise that the polyphenols and flavonoids in blueberries bond with LDL (the "bad" cholesterol) particles, preventing cholesterol-raising oxidative damage. Add some blueberries to your cereal for breakfast, pop a handful for a midday snack, or get creative with this chilled blueberry soup: In a saucepan, combine 2 cups fresh blueberries, ¼ cup agave nectar, 2 tablespoons brown sugar, juice of ½ lemon, and ½ cup white grape juice. Cook and stir until mixture begins to boil. Cool. Add 1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt and process until smooth. Chill and serve. —WM



TOP: ANATOLY TIPLYASHINI; BOTTOM RIGHT: LINDA AND COLIN MAKIE