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**KEEP YOUR DIGESTIVE SYSTEM HAPPY;
EXCELA HEALTH DIETITIAN TOUTS PROBIOTICS**

GREENSBURG, PA, March 10, 2010 ... “An apple a day keeps the doctor away”or so the saying goes to maintain good health. But apples are not the only fiber-containing food with health benefits nowadays. “Keeping your digestive system happy seems to be the popular thing to do today as seen on several television commercials,” noted Dawn Davoli, RD, nutrition consultant for Excela Health’s *Golden Hour* Program. “But beyond improving your digestive health, fiber-containing foods also have been shown to prevent and manage cardiovascular disease and diabetes, help with weight loss and maintenance.” The recommended daily intake for fiber is 20 to 30 grams for most adults. Good sources of fiber include whole fruits and vegetables, legumes and whole grains.

According to Davoli, “yogurt has become a trendy food item in improving digestive health.” This is most likely due to the fact that several yogurts on the market, such as Dannon’s Activia and Yoplait’s Yo-Plus, contain probiotics. The term “probiotics” refers in this case to foods that contain beneficial or “good” bacteria that are similar to those normally found in the body. “Although you don’t need probiotics to be healthy, these microorganisms may provide some of the same health benefits that the bacteria already existing in your body do, such as assisting with digestion,” Davoli said. “Yogurt, as a snack or part of a meal, is a nutritional powerhouse containing an excellent source of calcium (450 mg per cup) and protein (13 gm per cup). Your best bet is to choose yogurts with live and active cultures that are low-fat or non-fat without lots of extra sugars. Pay attention to the expiration date; live cultures diminish with time.”

A quick and easy breakfast full of health benefits, and a favorite of Davoli's, is a blended fruit smoothie made with a probiotic containing low-fat or non-fat yogurt added to fresh or frozen mixed berries and 100% fruit juice. "This is a healthy, low-fat, high fiber, high calcium way to start your day1"