7 Secrets to Healthful Dining. Ditch the “let’s splurge” attitude, plan ahead and remove temptation.

Where’s the Safe Beef? Recent recall highlights the need for more oversight. How best to protect yourself.

Better Breakfast/Snack Bars. EN evaluates what makes a healthful meal-in-a-bar or snack to go.

Probiotics: Friend or Foe? New evidence advises caution if you’re very ill. Otherwise, no need to worry.

Apricot Appraisal. Enjoy these jujugnauts of nutrition now—eat them dried or canned if fresh are gone.

Green Leafy Vegetables May Limit Lung Cancer

No vitamin has received as much attention or sparked as much controversy over the years as vitamin C. Ever since the 1960s, when it was first touted as a cure-all for colds, vitamin C has been investigated for its role in numerous medical conditions. Recent research suggests even more potential to help prevent heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and more. How can it possibly do all that?

Premier Antioxidant and More. Vitamin C is best known as an antioxidant that blocks damage to cells caused by free radicals. That’s an important role, because experts believe that over time free radicals contribute to the development of disease. If antioxidants can help neutralize harmful compounds, they can reduce cell damage.

Less well known is that vitamin C is a critical ingredient of collagen, a protein integral to skin, ligaments, tendons, blood vessels and scar tissue. It’s this collagen connection that makes C vital for wound healing, as well as for the health of bones, teeth, cartilage and all body tissues.

Although vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant, for it to function effectively in that role, researchers think you must maintain relatively high blood levels, an indication that tissues are saturated with the vitamin. And because C is not stored in the body, this requires a steady intake. How much? Recent data from the National Institutes of Health shows that cells become fully saturated with C at doses of about 400 milligrams a day.

Here’s an update on vitamin C’s link to disease and on what it may or may not be able to do to improve your health.

Heart Disease and Stroke. The benefit of vitamin C in combating cardiovascular disease is mostly preventive, says Balz Frei, Ph.D., director of the Linus Pauling Institute at Oregon State University. Conclusions from the Nurses’ Health Study—based on surveys of more than 85,000 women over 16 years—indicate that a higher vitamin C intake may be cardioprotective. And a large analysis of nine studies of more than 290,000 participants showed that those taking more than 700 mg/day have a lower risk of heart disease and stroke.