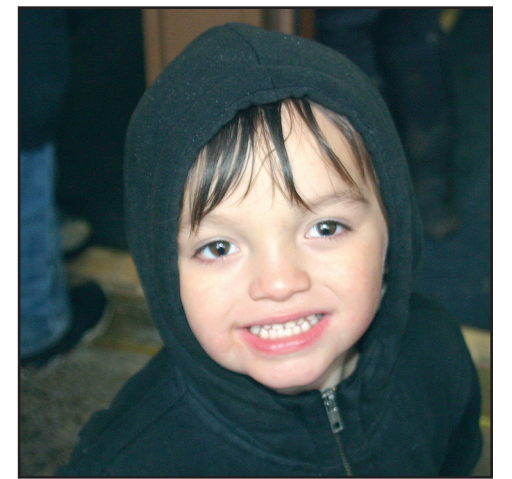




Courtesy photos by Alicia Keene

Cova St. Onge and her daughter, LouEllen Lhtrii-Ne Metcalf (above), join many other families (above right) at the Easter Egg Hunt in Siletz.



**Easter Egg Hunt  
April 19, 2014  
Siletz Tribal Community Center**

Joy Cordova and her niece (above left)

Josh Holmes Jr. (above)

Jennifer Wirick and her son, Jacob Wirick (below)

Dotty Highley and her grandson, Joshua Scott (bottom photo)



## Sea vegetables, anyone?

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RD, LD, Siletz Tribal Head Start Nutritionist

As part of my role as a consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families. This segment focuses on uses and benefits of using seaweed in traditional and innovative ways.

Most people who have eaten processed foods have eaten seaweed because the food industry uses it to stabilize or improve texture. This can hardly be counted as a source of nutrition, however!

How often have you gathered seaweed to use and consume? It can certainly be a fun group or family activity.

When I first moved to the Oregon Coast 30 years ago, I took a weekend workshop where we harvested in the mornings and prepared foods in the afternoons. Since that time I've continued to enjoy seaweed, but I often forget to plan my life around the negative low tides.

A few years ago, I took another weekend workshop that included both harvesting and creative preparation. For me, harvesting and preparing foods is most fun in a group.

Several issues remain important in wild harvesting, regardless of whether it is from the ocean or land. These are attention to sustainability (the continuation of harvest for years to come) and to a clean, safe supply.

There are harvesting risks today because of contamination. Some people say that because seaweed helps clean up the environment, they actually take on the contamination at a higher rate. We should certainly be cautious about choosing the cleanest area possible.

Seaweeds are marine algae botanically classified into three main groups – red, brown and green. These amazing sea plants are regarded as delicious and

health-giving foods by coastal cultures all around the world.

In the U.S., increasing numbers of people are learning that eating sea vegetables regularly provides a broad range of health benefits. The focus below is primarily on brown seaweeds, such as kelp.

Sea vegetables are some of the most nutritionally valuable foods on earth. They are, without a doubt, the best natural food source of minerals, trace elements and electrolytes.

Sea vegetables are also a good source of antioxidants, lignans, glyconutrients and all the known vitamins, including B12 (formed by bacteria on the surface).

The high levels of potassium, calcium, magnesium and other minerals in most seaweeds often helps with blood sugar problems, muscle spasms, osteoporosis and nervous system disorders such as hyperactivity, ADD, depression and insomnia.

Modern research suggests that eating sea vegetables regularly can promote a healthy immune system, inhibit cancers and metastases, prevent strokes and reduce chronic inflammation, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels and atherosclerosis.

In fact, the Japanese people's remarkable longevity and extremely low incidence of thyroid disease, breast cancer and prostate cancer largely may be because they have the world's highest per capita seaweed consumption.

Brown seaweeds have been successfully used worldwide to prevent and treat thyroid disease (hypothyroid conditions, goiter, etc.). Bladderwrack and kombu are very high in a form of iodine that seems to be easy for the thyroid gland to assemble into thyroid hormones.

Seaweed polysaccharides function as high quality water-soluble fiber in the digestive tract, functioning to soothe and tone the intestines. Algin (a specific polysaccharide in brown seaweed) facilitates

the removal of heavy metals and radioactive elements from our bodies.

During the 1950s, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission recommended taking 5 grams of powdered kelp, algin or sodium alginate daily for protection from the radioactive fallout from atmospheric nuclear testing.

Fucoidan (another polysaccharide found in brown seaweed) has significant blood-thinning, anti-inflammatory, antiviral, anti-cancer and tumor-inhibiting qualities, often reduces bruising and stimulates healing after injuries, sometimes reduces joint inflammation and could probably be used to reduce the risk of stroke in susceptible people.

Many red seaweeds contain large amounts of anti-viral, anti-retroviral and anti-herpetic carrageenans (polysaccharides).

How much seaweed should you eat? Three to five grams per day or about one ounce of dried seaweed per week are a good average dietary amount for nutritional and therapeutic purposes.

A small amount eaten regularly is more therapeutically effective than a lot eaten occasionally.

### Resources

Wild Rose and Western Red Cedar – *The Gifts of the Northwest Plants* by Elise Krohn, printed with partial support from the Northwest Indian College and Longhouse Media, 2007

James Jungwirth, herbalist and seaweed harvester, class notes from Breitenbush Herbal Conference and podcast [naturespiritherbs.com/Seaweed%20and%20Health%20Benefits.html](http://naturespiritherbs.com/Seaweed%20and%20Health%20Benefits.html)

[media65.podbean.com/pb/4d4fc6aa181efc64fa5b5444c77729fb/534699f5/data2/blogs23/45798/uploads/james\\_jungwirth.mp3](http://media65.podbean.com/pb/4d4fc6aa181efc64fa5b5444c77729fb/534699f5/data2/blogs23/45798/uploads/james_jungwirth.mp3)

John Kallas, Ph.D. Class notes and website [wildfoodadventures.com/workshop.html](http://wildfoodadventures.com/workshop.html)