

Personal Health newsletter

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR A HEALTHFUL LIFESTYLE

Volume 15, Number 1

Canada Post Publications Mail #40040712

April-May-June 2009

**Helping
you make
your own
decisions
about your
personal
health . . .**



Tired? Put carbohydrates in your tank!

Feeling tired? No energy? Charge up with carbohydrates! Carbohydrates (carbs) are the body's chief source of energy – like gasoline is to a car. Carbs provide energy to all body tissues in the form of glucose, fuelling your body and your brain too.

Carbs are especially necessary for those suffering with severe fatigue issues. Former Olympic Medal Gymnast Lori Fung came down with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in the mid 1980's.

"I'm still affected to some degree," says Fung. She's noticed the type of carbs she chooses plays a big role in boosting her energy levels.

The richest sources of carbohydrate grow from the earth – fruit, vegetables, grains and legumes. These are also whole foods or complex carbohydrates, which our body breaks down *during* digestion.

What Fung avoids is the junk carbs so prevalent among our food choices today; the processed, refined carbs. These are whole foods or complex carbs that humans have broken down and changed *before* digestion.

The body is designed to slowly and methodically break down a whole food into the nutrients it needs. Refined sugars and processed foods are already broken down and absorbed very quickly. Eating them too frequently is stressful to the body. In addition, processed foods are generally high in fat and/or sugar, and have lost many nutrients vital for good health.

"We need to choose quality carbohydrate foods," says Vancouver dietitian Patricia Chuey, in her book 101 Most Asked Nutrition Questions. "In my opinion, we are grain-a-holics." Chuey thinks we overdo it on lower quality grains that are high in fat, high in sugar or low in fibre. These are also known as processed foods. Most nutritionists agree we're ruining our health on re-

fined foods, like the processed and refined carbs. Many of us don't know the difference between good carbs and bad carbs. Chuey says it's not a low-carb diet we should be following, but a "proper carb diet."

Today, obesity, diabetes, immune disorders, cancers and cardiovascular disease are rising drastically. The low-carb diets tell us carbs are the reason. But "carbohydrates" were around long before these high disease rates occurred. Processed carbs weren't. Therefore, carbohydrates aren't the problem, say nutritionists. It's the processed, refined carbs that throw our bodies out of balance. Our current wide selection of processed and refined or "convenience foods" are a contributing factor to declining health. They lack the nutrition needed to strengthen our bodies and our immune systems.

Carbohydrates are our main fuel source. A lack of them causes physical and mental fatigue. Carbohydrates stored in the liver are the chief energy source for the brain. The brain needs over 400 calories of carbs daily, and the liver's carbohydrate stores must be refilled regularly. Low-carb diets provide far less than half the carbs needed by the brain. (*Continued page 2*)

Inside this edition . . .

**It's normal to forget, Preventing
and treating shin splints, Having
fun with Martial Arts . . .
and much more!**



From page one . . . Carb up!

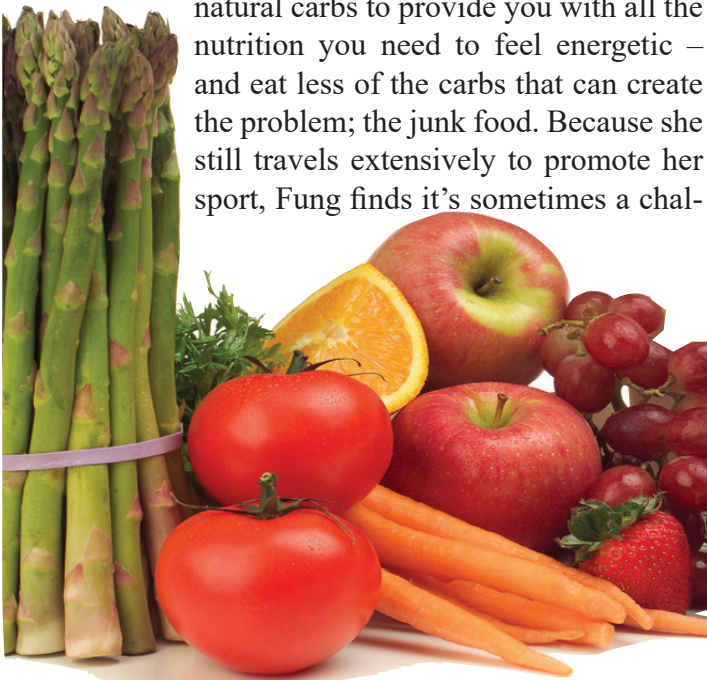
A restricted variety of food restricts nutrients vital for good health – including fibre. The deeper and brighter-coloured fruits, vegetables and root vegetables (some are banned on low-carb diets) are the richest source of disease-fighting compounds needed to boost immunity – including the compounds that haven't been discovered yet.

If we infrequently eat processed carbs our good health won't be threatened. However, today we are tempted by many convenient choices for every meal. Breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks for the average person contain carbs that don't resemble their original form; white flour, white rice, cookies, cakes, pastries, chips, snack bars, and sweetened fruit drinks didn't occur that way naturally.

Perhaps the best strategy to correct constant fatigue and low energy is to eat more natural carbs to provide you with all the nutrition you need to feel energetic – and eat less of the carbs that can create the problem; the junk food. Because she still travels extensively to promote her sport, Fung finds it's sometimes a chal-

lenge to eat properly. Keeping her weakened immune system strong means eating as healthfully as possible. On the road she tries to avoid the convenience snack foods, and chooses fresh fruit and vegetables whenever they're available.

Nutritionists recommend at least 55% carbohydrates of daily calories. That's about 300 grams in a 2000-calorie diet. Eat mostly complex carbs: If it isn't in a form Mother Nature created, it may not be a healthy choice (*tip: Ask yourself, "Would a caveman have eaten this?"*). Cut back on the foods designed and altered by humans. Like Fung, choose to eat fresh fruit as a snack instead of a granola bar. ~~~~~~~~~



Rx Laughter

Marriage is the number one cause of divorce. *Red Skelton*

Bob Hope, on sailors: They spend the first six days of each week sowing their wild oats, then they go to church on Sunday and pray for crop failure.

National Parks have long waiting lists for camping reservations. When you have to wait a year to sleep next to a tree, something is wrong. *George Carlin*

The hardest years in life are those between ten and seventy.

Helen Hayes (at 73) ~~~~~~~~~

PERSONAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

is published four times yearly by Effective Visual Enterprises **EVE** Available by e-mail only.

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Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year, \$26.00 two years. GST is not charged.

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Weight-loss tip: Your body will think it's starving if you eat less than 1,200 calories daily. This "starvation mode" will signal your metabolic rate to slow and therefore your weight loss slows. Getting insufficient calories is also no guarantee that you are getting enough vital nutrients to keep you healthy — and alive!

Preventing and treating shin splints

Shin splint is an overall term to describe pain in the front of the lower leg. The pain is caused by microscopic tears in the muscles, where they attach to the shin bone (tibia).

Shin splint pain can be felt at the very front of the shin, or on the inner side of the lower leg. Novices or seasoned athletes are both prone to shin splints. They're caused by changing your training surface or changing your footwear. Muscle imbalances can also cause shin splints, as can a sudden increase in how hard or how long you train. With the novice exerciser, poor running or walking technique can also be the cause of shin splints.

Ice and rest are the immediate recommendation for treating shin splints. A visit to your doctor is advised, especially if the injury is chronic and severe. Your physician may suggest X-rays, anti-inflammatories, and/or a visit to a physiotherapist. After this point, the treatment methods will vary with the individual.

An analysis of running and walking technique may be required, or you may need an assessment to rule out structural problems of the legs and feet (you may be sent to a podiatrist). Recommendations for footwear, training surfaces and specially tailored workouts while you recuperate will differ for each individual.

Exercises to strengthen all the muscles of the lower leg and stretching before and after physical activity is also advised. Consult with a fitness professional for suitable exercises and stretches.

Read the label and know what you're eating

Read the food label for healthier food choices. Ingredients on the label are listed in order of greatest amount. Therefore, if an item you'd rather not consume is listed first, the food may not be a suitable choice for you.

For those concerned with weight loss, the food label should show not more than 3 grams of fat per 100 calories. Sugars should be no more than 5 grams per serving for general health or weight loss (sugars can increase appetite in some individuals).

Watching your sodium intake? The milligrams of sodium in a serving should be no more than the total number of calories in a serving.

Check the date and other milk trivia . . .

Soured milk is unlikely to make you sick, but cultured milk products (yogurt, sour cream, cottage cheese) contain molds which could make you ill if the product has gone bad.

Check the date on your dairy products, to assure freshness, which is lost quickly in warm temperatures (more than 7°C or 45°F).

Milk can be frozen for up to three months without losing its nutritional value. Transfer the milk into freezable containers, allowing enough room at the top for expansion of the liquid when it freezes. When milk is frozen, the water separates from the milk solids, so shake it well after it's thawed.

Milk and milk products are a good source of calcium and other bone building nutrients like vitamin D, magnesium, phosphorus and protein. A healthy eating plan, which includes calcium and vitamin D along with daily activity will help prevent osteoporosis. Aim for 2-4 servings of milk and milk products each day.

Personal Health newsletter

offers basic health and fitness information for all ages. The editor is a journalist and former newspaper editor and has been a fitness professional since 1983. Personal Health Newsletter strives to provide credible, unbiased and well-researched information, helping its readers make their own decisions about their personal health.

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Apr09

Avocado: Ancient beauty secret


Don't limit avocados to just a bowl of guacamole. Ancient Mayan and Aztec women knew the avocado as a beauty aid. It's rich in beneficial oils that rejuvenate and protect the skin with its rapid skin penetration and natural sunscreen abilities.

Rich in protein, fibre, calcium, iron, vitamins A, C and E, and several B vitamins, the nutrient-dense avocado even controls weight – despite its high fat content. Its monounsaturated fat speeds up the basal metabolic rate, as compared with saturated fat. And its high fat and fibre create a feeling of fullness, to help reduce overeating. Avocados can contribute to preventing cancer, heart disease, arthritis, eye cataracts and even delay the processes of aging because they're rich in antioxidants (vitamins C, E, and beta carotene). Antioxidants protect against cellular damage.

Avocado is a healthier option than butter or margarine. Slice off the end of a fresh avocado so that it's easy to dig a knife into it. Store it in a plastic container in the refrigerator. Use instead of butter on toast.

Here are some effective beauty tips: Puffy eyes? Relax for about 20 minutes with crescent-shaped slices of avocado under each eye. Dry skin face mask: Spread 1/2 mashed avocado evenly on your face. Leave 15-20 minutes. Rinse with warm water (for oily skin add one teaspoon lemon juice and an egg white to the avocado). For soft, shiny hair, mash and combine one avocado (use 1/2 this recipe for very short hair), one egg yolk, and 1/2 teaspoon olive oil. Leave in hair 30 minutes. Shampoo as usual. 



The secret to happiness is a good sense of humour and a bad memory! 

Having fun with martial arts!

Martial Arts is for fitness and self confidence – as well as self defense. It helps reduce stress, enhances the immune system and improves both physical and emotional health.

Karate, Aikido, and Tae Kwon Do are just a few of many types of Martial Arts. The styles vary from the gentle, graceful movements of Tai Chi, to the more fast-paced and aggressive Judo or Kickboxing. The low-impact movements are easy to learn, suitable for all ages and fitness levels and most disabled people. Older adults improve balance and coordination in activities like Tai chi, thereby lessening their risk of injury from falling. For everyone, the deep breathing used in Martial Arts aids in mind control and relaxation. In addition, it's helped kids improve their focus in school, assisting in improving their grades. Martial Arts can be done anywhere and special equipment isn't required.


Martial Arts originated from the fighting arts. But Martial Arts is not about violence. It's about building confidence and providing valuable skills both physically and mentally. And it's empowering to know you can protect and defend yourself should the need arise.

The sport has evolved into a popu-

lar mind-body health pursuit. Besides doing it to stay in shape, people practise Martial Arts as a sport and to compete, as an art and a discipline, to improve self-confidence and emotional health, and, of course, as a means of self-defense. It's also popular as an enjoyable recreation or social activity.

In addition to the benefits already mentioned, practicing Martial Arts at least three times weekly gives many other noticeable improvements. These include quicker mental and physical reflexes, improved flexibility and muscle strength and power, enhanced concentration and meditation skills, lower blood pressure, develops self-discipline, confidence and respect for oneself and others.

For those concerned with body weight, the more aggressive types of Martial Arts will burn the most calories. Martial Arts combined with aerobics (such as Tae-Bo) can burn up to 800 calories an hour.

You can find Martial Art instructors (for private instruction) and classes at most health clubs, Martial Arts schools, and community centres. 



It's normal to forget

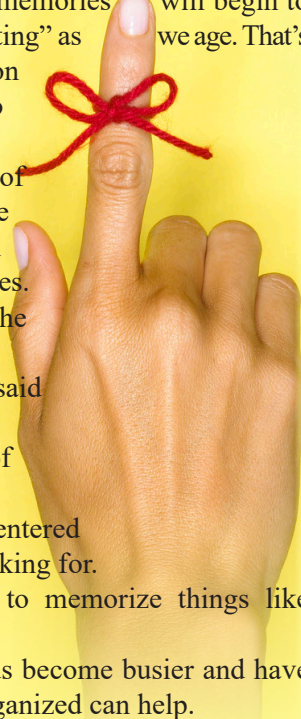
Being a little forgetful is nothing to worry about. When we reach our mid 30's our memories will begin to fade and we'll continue "forgetting" as we age. That's normal. Here are some common memory lapses we're bound to experience as we grown older;

- Forgetting the names of people we don't often see or the names of familiar people when we see them in unfamiliar places.
- Repeating a story to the same person within a week.
- Forgetting what was said in a recent conversation.
- Forgetting one item of several on a trip to the store.
- Forgetting why you entered a room and what you were looking for.
- It becomes harder to memorize things like phone numbers, codes, etc.

As we age, many of us become busier and have more to remember. Getting organized can help.

- Keep a list of tasks that must be done. Write reminders on your calendar or in your daily diary.
- Don't put things off; do them as soon as you can, so they won't be forgotten.
- Repeat what you want to remember several times to yourself and you probably won't forget it.
- If you worry about forgetting an appointment or picking up the kids, set an egg timer or your watch alarm.
- Listen carefully during conversations. You'll be more likely to remember the details and people's names.

Severe memory problems, however, can be a warning of more serious illnesses such as Alzheimer's. Be concerned if you forget names of close family members; forget more than one conversation daily, repeat a story to the same person within a few hours, or completely forget something you've just done, like a trip to the store.



A single meal or day of eating rich foods won't make or break an otherwise healthy eating pattern. What you eat on a regular daily basis matters the most. Enjoy your occasional treats but follow a healthy meal plan *most* of the time.



Chew on this for good health . . .

Chew your food well. The longer you chew the food, the more time the enzymes in your mouth will have to begin the process of digestion.

The enzyme ptyalin helps break down starches before they are swallowed. Enzymes only act on the surface area of the food particles. The more chewed the food, the smaller the particles and you'll have more efficient digestion. Pay particular attention to chewing raw fruits and vegetables, to break down the indigestible cellulose membranes they contain.

Chewing triggers the body's production of enzymes, so the more you chew, the more digestive enzymes your body will have to effectively digest the food you eat. Inadequate chewing and gulping down your food quickly results in malabsorption of the vital nutrients your body needs, and also causes a build-up of undigested matter. This contributes to waste accumulation in the intestines, indigestion and a slowing of the metabolic rate. Excess body fat may result.

Be relaxed and take your time when you eat. Sip your drinks, don't gulp them down — and try to chew each mouthful of food until it becomes a watery pulp.

Balance is best . . .

It's not just carbohydrates that improve memory in older adults, finds a research study at the University of Toronto.

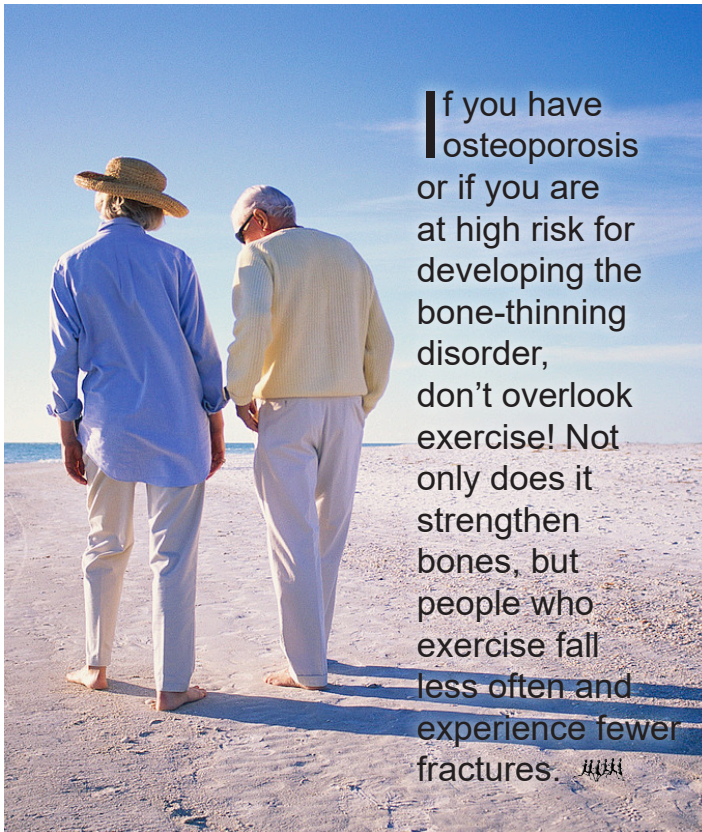
In the past, researchers found positive effects of carbohydrates in enhancing memory in healthy older adults. However, the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Toronto found dietary protein and fat can also contribute to improving memory.

In previous studies, large amounts of carbohydrate made a beneficial impact on memory in the elderly. However, the present study found people performed better on memory tests after eating a proper balance of carbohydrate, fat and protein. The message here is simple; dietary balance works best!

Sweet facts . . .

Don't think artificial sweeteners will help you lose body fat. In fact, any type of sweetener can stimulate appetite in some people, so using only "fake" sugars may not help curb your appetite to lose those extra pounds.





If you have osteoporosis or if you are at high risk for developing the bone-thinning disorder, don't overlook exercise! Not only does it strengthen bones, but people who exercise fall less often and experience fewer fractures. *JKM*

Fitness facts . . .

● Fitness professionals suggest the minimum for physical activity is 30 minutes of moderate intensity done at least 3-4 days of the week.

● Even just a moderate activity, like brisk walking, can improve your fitness and health if you do it on most days of the week.

● Your daily physical tasks can be added to your regular exercise sessions as a benefit to your health. Walking up a flight of stairs, gardening, taking out the trash, vacuuming, and even grocery shopping, are all physical activities that add up in the long run.

● Spaced throughout the day, several brief exercise sessions give all the same health benefits as one long exercise session.

● If you hate exercising, find ways to fit it into your daily routine. Walk on the treadmill while you watch the news on TV. Read the newspaper or a book while you ride your stationary exercise bike. Listen to talk tapes or the radio news as you walk around the block. Several times a day (at home or at the office) use a mini-stepper or a rebounder for a five-minute exercise break.

● Consider your personality before choosing a sport or activity. If you are introverted, quiet and dislike being in large groups of people, an aerobic dance class at the gym is *not* for you. Do what you enjoy and you'll likely stick to your exercise program. *JKM*

Steps to avoid being a quitter . . .

Staying with an exercise program is a problem for many. Here are the major keys to success to consider if you're having difficulties. If you follow them, you'll likely stick to your exercise commitment.

● GOAL SETTING

You must have a purpose for exercising. Affirm it clearly in your mind (i.e. weight loss, stress control, strength improvements). Set one major long term goal. Then make several small, realistic and obtainable goals that will help you reach that major goal.

● PATIENCE

Start easy, advance gradually.

● CONSISTENCY

Exercise regularly. Try to set aside a regular day and time for your physical activity.

● ENJOYMENT

Do not force yourself to do an activity you don't like. Experiment with several until you find the one that appeals to you. *JKM*

TIP: Store your natural peanut butter upside down for a smoother consistency. Natural peanut butter or other types of "nut butters" have no added oils. The natural oils settle to the top of the jar and anything left at the bottom becomes dry and unspreadable. After each use, tightly seal the lid and place it upside down in your refrigerator for a smooth and easy spread every time. *JKM*

