

TOTAL WELLNESS NUTRITION

NEWS

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In this issue: Environmental Toxins and Children's Vulnerability to their Damage
Sleep – The Silent Healer
Is Chocolate “Healthy Food”?
Folate and Blood Pressure
Herbal Remedy for Migraines
Benefits of Calcium Supplementation during Adolescents
Ritalin and Cancer Risk

Spring has finally arrived and with that is my quarterly newsletter. I hope you had a productive and fun winter. In my quest to stay up to date on the latest nutritional research I gathered some information this winter that I would like to share with you in this issue. Before doing so I want to let you know that my new website www.totalwellnesnutrition.com will be up very soon and my new book: *Take Back Your Health* should be in print some time in late June. I hope you will be able to benefit from them.

Enjoy the spring, stay in touch and let me know how you are doing! Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone who you think could benefit and let me know if you want to be taken off of the distribution list.

Yours in good Health,

Renee

Environmental Toxins and Children's Vulnerability to Their Damage

There has been a lot of talk these days about environmental toxins and their known and unknown side effects. Many studies suggest exposures to environmental toxins have been linked with higher rates of mental retardation, intellectual impairment, and behavioral problems, as well as preterm birth, low birth weight and spontaneous abortion. In a recent article written by Lanphear

BP, Vorhees CV, and Bellinger DC (2005) under the title: *Protecting Children from Environmental Toxins* the authors suggest many environmental chemicals do not get tested for developmental neurotoxicity (DNT) and reproductive toxicity. Therefore it's crucial that people, especially young children and pregnant women, be aware of those potential hazards and refrain from exposures to environmental toxins as much as possible.

Sleep – The Silent Healer

Many of us deprive ourselves from adequate amounts of sleep and over look the therapeutic value. Numerous studies have come to the conclusion that our body needs sleep to: repair itself from the daily wear and tear (parasympathetic system kicks in to start the healing process) and completes the emotional and thought process that occurred during the day. We often use excuses for not getting enough sleep such as not having enough time during the day to get everything done, enjoying being a night owl, watching TV, or having too much energy to wind down. Some people have a difficult time falling asleep. Here are some tips that can help with getting ready for bed:

- *Eat dinner at least two hours before bedtime.*
- *Avoid sweets, juices or chocolate, especially at night.*
- *Avoid stimulants like coffee, particularly in the evening.*
- *Be sure to reduce mental activity in the evening.*
- *Avoid vigorous exercise in the evening.*
- *Be sure you are warm enough.*
- *Make sure your bedroom is dark and quiet.*
- *Let go of physical tension in the body.*
- *Let go of fears and worry at bedtime. I often advise my clients to write down all of their problems before bed in their worry journal as a ritual to get them off of their mind.*
- *Fresh air is often helpful for sleep.*
- *The type of bed or mattress can matter a lot.*
- *The size and shape of pillows can make a difference.*
- *Avoid becoming overtired.*
- *Follow a consistent routine. The recommended time is to go to bed by 10 PM if possible and wake up with the sun at 6 AM.*

Lack of sleep can also cause changes in your mineral patterns which can be reflected on a hair analysis. Things such as decreasing potassium levels, low sodium/ potassium ratio, fast or slow oxidation, depletion of zinc and an increase in the copper level can all be affected by not enough sleep. Lack of sleep can also contribute to impaired digestion which may be indicated by low phosphorus levels and impaired adrenal function. In some cases accumulation of toxic metals can also contribute to lack of sleep. Some supplements and herbs can be very helpful in overcoming sleep deprivation. If the sleep problems are caused by excess tissue copper, taking a zinc supplement can balance the copper /zinc ratio and eliminate the problem. Calcium (500-1000 mg.) and magnesium have sedative effects if taken in divided doses with dinner and at bedtime. There are some natural remedies that aid in sleep which include: valerian, hops, passionflower, chamomile, skullcap and other relaxing herbs. Other symptomatic remedies are tryptophan, 5HTP or melatonin. Please let us know if you would like help with a nutritional and life style program to help improve the quality of your sleep.

Is Chocolate “Healthy Food?”

Recently there have been reports that suggest a daily intake of small amounts of dark chocolate (70% cocoa) can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Dark chocolate contains flavonoids which are natural antioxidants, preventing cellular oxidation. While this is great news for chocolate lovers we have to keep in mind that there are some side effects from eating too much chocolate. Some people are addicted to chocolate and can't just consume it in therapeutic doses; some have skin breakouts with chocolate intake; it may aggravate gastric reflux for some individuals; and those who are prone to migraines can increase their chances of getting headaches when consuming too much chocolate. So while it can be beneficial to some, it is not the best choice for everyone.

Folate and Blood Pressure

Folic acid is known to improve endothelial function, so critical in maintaining normal blood pressure. The results of two small studies on young women with hypertension indicated a decrease in blood pressure. These women took daily supplementations of folic acid along with dietary folate. The studies suggest that supplementation of about 700mcg/day along with dietary folate may result in decreasing hypertension in women. The best sources of dietary folate are green leafy vegetables and fortified cereals.

Herbal Remedy for Migraines

New research claims intake of an herbal remedy, Petadolex otherwise known as Butterbur extract can reduce the number of monthly migraines. The research that led to these conclusions included women who had frequent migraines but excluded participants who were pregnant, lactating or had migraines that lasted longer than six days. However for those who did participate there was a significant reduction in the frequency of migraines but no reduction in the duration and intensity of the headaches. Researchers claim that the benefits of Petadolex are similar to popular preventive medications without having any of their side effects.

Benefits of Calcium Supplementation during Adolescence

We have often heard about benefits of calcium supplementation after menopause to reduce the risk of osteoporosis, but the importance of earlier supplementation has been overlooked. A recent study compared the bone density mass of a large number of adolescent girls who took about 1000mg of Ca daily (supplements and dietary) and placebo for a year. The bone density mass of those who took Ca was about 2.4% higher than the placebo. This amount is considered significant and suggests that emphasis of Calcium intake should be shifted toward earlier years to promote healthy growth and prevent future osteoporosis.

Ritalin and Cancer Risk

Many children with ADD/ADHD are prescribed the drug Ritalin every year. A small but important study evaluated the chromosome status of 12 children who took Ritalin. The results were rather alarming. All of the children in the study experienced a significant increase in their level of chromosome abnormalities. Follow up studies are on the way for confirming the results. While this doesn't mean that they will get cancer, it does suggest that they are exposed to a cancer risk factor. Even though Ritalin might be the only drug of choice for some children, it is beneficial to try alternative approaches to treating ADD/ADHD before surrendering to drugs such as Ritalin. Please call our office if you would like a natural program to help your child with ADD/ADHD symptoms.

