

Medical Moment

Thursday, 02 August 2007

August 14th, 2007

While the grocery list is one step in obtaining a healthy diet, setting yourself up to take full advantage of that grocery list is even more crucial. In order to eat right, resist temptation and stay away from bad food. Instead of removing junk food entirely, replace it with healthier portions of baked crackers, low-calorie sweets, and low-fat popcorn. Take your snack foods and place them into serving size baggies, so you're not tempted to eat until you're full. Leave a bowl of fruit out in the open for impulse eating. Switch your fruit flavored drinks to 100% juice. Choose lean chicken, turkey, and fish, and whole grain wheat when selecting your meats and breads. Last but not least, enjoy your food, and stick to a healthy plan that is easily sustainable so you don't get frustrated and give up.

Did you know your face may disclose more than you think about your emotions? And in a rather disturbing way. A report in the "Journal of Personality and Social Psychology" suggests facial asymmetry is a sign of emotional distress. Facial symmetry, where both sides of the face are similar to one another, has been a long-standing measure of beauty and sexual attractiveness. The report suggests that when you're upset, the two sides of your face lose their balance and you don't look as good. So keep smiling and happy to stay beautiful.

August 9th, 2007

Did you know that a cup of "Joe" may help protect your aging memory? A new study in the journal of Neurology suggests women over the age of 65 may receive the benefit of memory protection from an extra cup of coffee every day. The study observed over 7,000 people over the age of 65 whose memory skills were observed over a four year span. The results showed women who drank three or more cups of coffee or tea per day showed less decline in memory tests than those who drank a cup or less per day. The effects were not seen similarly in men.

While salted snacks like pretzels, chips, and crackers are known for their high sodium content, other foods on your grocery list may have a surprising amount of sodium as well. Frozen meals and canned goods, even veggies, can be loaded with extra salts used to enhance flavor and extend shelf life. A single serving of certain spaghetti sauces or canned soups can contain more than half your daily recommended amount of sodium. To help lower your sodium intake, health experts suggest making a habit of reading nutrition labels, and aim for less than 2,300 milligrams per day. Also, something as simple as taking the salt shaker off the dinner table or reducing sodium-based seasonings from cooking can help tremendously. Watch your entrees when you dine out as well; restaurants usually have very high sodium content in their food. Experts also say salt is an acquired taste, and after a couple weeks of cutting out sodium, you won't miss it as much as you think you would.

August 3, 2007

How should you, or anyone, cope with the fatigue of battling cancer? Cancer-related fatigue is a side-effect of the disease that hinders many cancer patients, regardless of the type of cancer they may have. To deal with the sporadic and sometimes paralyzing cancer-related fatigue, experts say to keep a diary of your daily routine and note when the

fatigue hits you the worst and when your energy levels are highest. Plan out your days to include rest and pace yourself more moderately to avoid rushing or over-exerting yourself. Make sure to eat complete, balanced meals and drink plenty of fluids. Also make sure to take a vitamin supplement and consult your physician on creating an exercise plan.

Did you know that "baby boomers" are in worse shape than the generation before them? A study published in the "National Bureau of Economic Research" shows adults aged 51 to 56 years old have worse health, more pain and more psychiatric problems than their elders. The study analyzed three groups throughout the last 15 years: people born between 1936 and 1941, "war babies" between 1942 and 1947, and "baby boomers" between 1948 and 1953. Surprisingly, the results showed baby boomers with more chronic problems, mental illnesses, and drinking issues than their predecessors. The reasons for the difference aren't exactly clear, but many experts suggest the baby boomer generation is more willing to disclose their ailments and are more educated on health issues. Many of the unhealthy participants indicated heavy smoking or drinking issues.

August 2nd, 2007

During a hard day's work or after a hearty meal, even the most energetic of us may feel the urge to crash. With a couple of changes in your life and diet you can keep up your energy level. Increase your magnesium intake by eating more almonds, fish, and whole grains. Take a quick walk around the block to get your heart moving. Take a short power nap in the middle of the day. Take time for a deep breath whenever possible to combat high stress and anger levels. Last but not least, replace sugary snacks with whole grain snacks will give you a consistent energy source without the crash and burn effect refined sugar can give.

In today's parenting corner: the effects of Ritalin on children. One of the biggest issues discussed with a child's development is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and one of the most widely used medications to treat ADHD is Ritalin, which is shown to improve a child's focus and concentration. While most children experience none or very few side effects, all children are different. Some reactions to the medication include insomnia, stomach-aches, decreased appetite, growth problems, and blood pressure issues. Furthermore, ADHD is frequently misdiagnosed. Sleep apnea is a disorder that can give a child, or even an adult, similar symptoms to those which often lead to an ADHD diagnosis. Sleep apnea blocks breathing during the night and so causes a child to underachieve and have problem focusing during the day. If you have any concerns about the benefits and effects of Ritalin on your child, or his possible diagnosis of ADHD, consult his or her doctor.