



Winter Health Update 2009

In The News:

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The Basics (and Acids) of Foods

Most of us remember from our school days that pH has to do with acids and bases. A pH lower than 7 is acidic and a pH greater than 7 is basic (alkaline). The blood pH is tightly regulated at about 7.4, and sustained levels above 7.4 (more alkaline) or below 7.4 (more acidic) can cause major health problems.

Did you know that the foods you eat can affect your body's pH? Today's common diet of processed foods is highly acidic compared to human diets going back for thousands of years. The pH of body fluids such as urine and saliva are easier and faster to change than blood pH, but if you have on-going levels of acidity in your bodily fluids, eventually the blood pH will also become stressed—a condition called low-grade metabolic acidosis.

An example of conditions related to low-grade acidosis is osteoporosis and kidney stones. How so? The body buffers increased blood acidity with minerals. If you eat a highly acidic diet, your body will leach calcium from your bones to raise the blood pH to a more alkaline level. Less calcium in the bones, and more calcium going through the kidneys, is associated with osteoporosis and kidney stones. Poor healing and recurrent injury are also associated with increased pH levels.

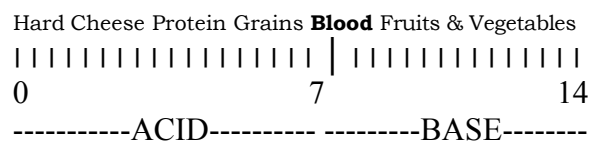
As you might have guessed, the best foods in terms of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and alkaline pH levels are fruits and vegetables. Raisins and spinach have the highest alkalinizing effect of all fruits and veggies. On the



other side, hard cheeses like Parmesan have the highest acidifying effect. As a general rule, all proteins such as eggs (yolk), beef, pork, fish, and fowl are acidic. Non-cheese dairy products are

slightly acidic. Cereals, pasta, and flour are slightly to moderately acidic. Fats and oils are neutral. Most beverages (not Coca-Cola) are alkaline.

The bottom line: Try to avoid highly acidic meals. It's not that you shouldn't eat proteins and grains, but rather that you should balance every meal with enough vegetables and fruits to stay pH balanced.



Who Uses Alternative Medicine?

The federal government's National Center for Complimentary and Alternative Medicine and the National Center for Health Statistics recently updated their survey on the use of Complimentary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) in the U.S. The survey investigated the use of 36 different therapies.

Musculoskeletal conditions (muscle / joint problems) were the number-one reason for

seeking a provider of Complimentary or Alternative Medicine (CAM). The top four therapies used were 1. Natural products, 2. Deep breathing exercises, 3. Meditation, and 4. Chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation.

The survey found that 8.6 percent had used chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation in the past twelve months, which extrapolates to about 19 million in the general population. Overall, CAM use was the most prevalent among women (who are more likely to seek any kind of health care), adults aged 30-69, adults with higher levels of education, non-poor adults, and adults living in the West.

The survey concluded by stating that CAM practices are a frequently used component of American health care, which points out the need for patients and their health care providers to openly discuss CAM use.

Sure-Fire Weight Loss

You're thinking "eat less and exercise more" right? If it were only that easy, then obesity would not be such a huge problem (no pun intended). Sustained weight loss is a major challenge because eating concerns the mind as much as it does the body.

A recent study in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine enrolled 1685 overweight adults in a multi-center weight-loss program. The researchers found that the most successful strategies for weight-loss among the study participants included keeping a food record and regular moderate-intensity physical



activity.

So, ultimately the study did prove that a sure-fire way to weight loss is to eat less and exercise more. However, they also showed that keeping track of the foods that were eaten and the number of exercise minutes per week were key factors in that weight

loss. And this is true because of *accountability*.

Imagine a company going to a business consultant for help in trimming excess fat from their operations. The company would need detailed records of their expenses, sales, growth, etc. Only by looking at the numbers could the consultant find the most efficient way to trim down the budget and maintain the health of the company. Likewise, losing weight requires a similar method of looking at what foods are being eaten, the portions, and how often, as well as charting physical activity or lack thereof.

Only by carefully tracking energy going in and out of the body can predictable changes in weight be achieved. Aside from regular old paper and pencil to help in this regard, there are highly recommended online tools available such as www.myfooddiary.com.

Forearm Pain!

Pain in the forearms is common. The big muscles that move your fingers, hands and wrists are in your forearms. Look at your forearm with your palm facing up and you are looking at the flexor muscles that attach at the inside of your elbow. Look at your forearm with your palm facing down and you are looking at the extensor muscles that attach at the outside of your elbow. A common flexor muscle/tendon injury is "golfer's elbow" and a common extensor muscle/tendon injury is "tennis elbow."

The good news about forearm pain from



muscle and tendon injuries is that these problems often respond successfully to Active Release Techniques

(ART) treatment. Sport's injuries or computer overuse that causes tightness, pain, and scar tissue fibrosis can be released with ART combined with preventive care strategies. For more info on ART check our website at www.PosturePress.com.