



# HEALTH NEWS

☺ **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:**  
Three things in human life  
are important:  
The first is to be kind.  
The second is to be kind.  
And the third is to be kind.  
HENRY JAMES (1843—1916)

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**Preventing the Flu:**

In the wake of the recent flu vaccination shortage, medical experts are advising people on steps to take to avoid the flu that sound remarkably like those many of us have heard from our grandmothers.

Recommendations include careful hygiene, plenty of rest, a balanced diet, and lots of fluids.<sup>13</sup> Stress management is also an important factor. Frequent, thorough hand-washing, avoiding crowds and sneezers, and regular exercise are also highly recommended.

13. Associated Press, Oct. 9, 2004.

➤ **Yo! How's Your Immune Function?**

Just about everyone knows that yo-yo dieting - repeatedly losing (continued next column)

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and gaining weight - isn't very effective in the long term. And who wants to go through the frustration of dropping 10 or 20 pounds then putting it all back on and more? The reality is that far too many people are on yo-yo diets these days, and the consequences might expand (no pun intended) beyond simple weight loss and weight gain.

According to a study in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, repeatedly losing and gaining weight in cyclical fashion may actually reduce long-term immune function, and the reduction is proportionate to the amount of times the person has intentionally lost weight. This is significant because the immune system is essentially the body's line of defense against infection, illness and disease. When the immune system is low, your chances of getting sick are high - the lower your immunity, the greater the risk of acquiring anything from a common cold to cancer.

Maintaining a weight appropriate to your body height/type and following a sensible, moderate exercise and diet regimen are the keys to keeping immune function high - and they're great ways to stay happy and healthy, too! We can evaluate your current situation and, if necessary, recommend a permanent weight-loss strategy. Reference: Ulrich C, et al. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 2004;104:892-94, 903.



☺ **MARY'S DESK: CAN WE SURVIVE IN A TOXIC WORLD?**

**Part II - Pesticides and Food Quality**

Our bodies may become overwhelmed by the continual exposure to toxins we experience on a daily basis. In Part I of this article, we briefly examined the tremendous amount of carcinogenic pollutants being dumped in the environment and released in our homes, and how these chemicals find their way into our bodies. In this section, we will look at our foods for sources of toxicity.

There are primarily two aspects to food toxicity, the toxicity introduced in the growing / making and packaging of the food and then toxicity introduced in our bodies by our inability to digest our foods properly.

Foods commercially grown (non-organic) are regularly drowned in a flood of pesticides, fungicides, and herbicides. For example, strawberries top of the list for pesticide toxicity, even though they're considered by many to be a healthy desert choice.

A U.N. panel estimated that methyl bromide use has caused a 5% to 10% depletion in the ozone layer. This is one specific example of pesticide use, but according to the book Cancer and the Environment: What Health Care Providers Should Know, "Of the roughly 900 pesticide active ingredients registered in the U.S., more than 160 have been classified as known or suspected carcinogens by the U.S. EPA." The strawberry example is only one of many misuses of toxic chemicals introduced into our diet.

(continued next page)

Many toxic chemicals mimic the hormone estrogen which can unbalance the endocrine system and initiate adrenal and reproductive dysfunction. Soft plastic containers, food wraps, and microwave utensils are also sources of these pseudo-estrogen compounds.

Here is another startling fact; Americans consume about 3 million pounds of antibiotics every year. How? Farmers dose livestock with antibiotics to the tune of more than 24 million pounds for chicken and cattle annually. The antibiotics act as tenderizers to the meat and help the animals to survive the difficult living environment and poor feed quality. One problem with this is that the antibiotics in our food supply destroy the good bacteria in our intestines, which weakens our immune system and allows more toxins to enter the body. Another problem with the antibiotic overuse is the development of antibiotic resistant bacterial strains that sweep the population.

These issues are behind the current trend towards buying organically raised or grown foods. Competition in the market is driving the price of organic items downward, and availability is unprecedented and only spreading. The increased price of organic foods is offset by the higher nutrient value: organic produce costs about twice as much as commercial grown, but has 10 to 50 times the trace mineral and nutrient content and (continued next column)

is missing all of the toxic chemical additives. Look for antibiotic-free meats and free-range sources.

Our next installment will discuss the combination of preservatives, colorants, packaging materials, and processing methods that turn foods into toxic time-bombs. The good news is that there are also foods, herbs, and nutrients that assist the body to handle, break-down and clear toxins and we will also discuss methods to assist the body in its cleansing procedures.

To Your Good Health,  
Mary Stock R. Ph., CCN

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➤ **Standing Strong in the Fight Against Rheumatoid Arthritis:**

Approximately 2.1 million Americans suffer from rheumatoid arthritis (RA) - a painful, debilitating disease that causes joints to become inflamed, leading to pain, stiffness, swelling and loss of joint function. Declining bone mineral density (BMD) and progressive joint damage are common features of this frustrating condition.

Not a pretty picture - and certainly not a physical environment conducive to exercise, particularly exercise intended to build and maintain muscle strength and mass. In fact, loss of muscle strength/mass can be another consequence of RA. However, a study published in the *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases* (continued next column)

provides evidence that muscle strength gains and normal bone mineral density can actually be maintained in people diagnosed with early RA.

In the study, 70 patients were randomized to perform either home-based strength training or range-of-motion exercises for two years. Both groups were also encouraged to perform aerobic activity two to three times a week. After two years, the research team assessed patients' muscle strength gains, and then encouraged subjects to continue strength training on their own. Three years later, researchers found that not only had subjects' initial strength gains been maintained, but also that BMD had not declined, and radiographic evidence of joint damage had not progressed.

While these findings certainly aren't definitive, they do suggest several important points:

People with rheumatoid arthritis may be able to safely participate in physical activity, and exercise may help slow the progression of the disease.

If you suffer from RA, consult your doctor before beginning any exercise regimen.

*Reference:* Hakkinen A, Sokka T, Kautiainen H, et.al. Sustained maintenance of exercise induced muscle strength gains and normal bone mineral density in patients with early rheumatoid arthritis: a 5 year follow up. *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*, 2004; 63:910-16.

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