



Winter is the time to watch for ills and chills, and especially make sure our extremities are kept warm. When our bodies start to feel cold, the blood is prioritized to the main trunk where our vital organs are and less blood will travel to the arms and legs. So it is important to keep the body, as well as the extremities warm.

Of course it is best to do this with natural fibers and well fitting clothing, not with body fat! That is one topic that we are looking at in this edition of healthbites. Its interesting that with the fashion of midriffs seems to correlate to increased fat storage around the waste. The body seems to be trying to replace the lack of clothing with its own store of fat to protect the lower body organs such as the kidneys.

Another interesting point we look at in this edition is rhubarb. Its one of those foods we love—either love to eat or love to hate! Not only does it have a distinctive taste but it also has medicinal properties.

Big Kids, No Small Problem

An article in a recent Australian newspaper¹ tells us that clothing manufacturers in Australia are catering for increasingly obese children by making school uniforms as big as size 30, that's XXXXXL!

Clothing of that size measures 110 centimetres around the waist, 46 centimetres more than the smallest size, XXXS, which is made to fit the average 10-year-old.

This is just another article that enforces the awakening to a trend of adolescent obesity in the western world. Interestingly, these same countries share a similar diet.

Nutritionist Rosemary Stanton says, "Children are thinking they are abnormal if they do not have junk food every day. There isn't any mystery. We know kids are eating more."

Children were walking to school less often because it was not considered safe. Junk food has become the norm because of the sheer amount of snack foods that are readily available, Dr Stanton said.

"The kids are the victims here," she said. "We've got to take child obesity seriously, but overwhelmingly it is society's problem."²

Fortunately, as well as admitting the problem, there is a move to curb it. And the solution is basically to reverse the cause —get back to a more simple, less refined diet and revert to a more physical based lifestyle including exercise.

Jennifer Foltz, M.D., a pediatric fellow and an attending physician at the University of Rochester Medical Center, says that over time, they [adolescents] could add in an apple for a snack or have a salad in addition to a vegetable at dinner, and that would make a big difference.

Similarly, if the 22 percent of teens who spend five or more hours in front of a TV or computer traded some of that time for a walk or if the 43 percent who drink three or more servings of sweetened beverages switched to water, the lifelong impact could be huge, Foltz said.

"Clinicians and community leaders need to focus on these four, simple goals to get the message across to adolescents and families that small changes can reap lifelong benefits," Foltz said. "Doctors should be talking to their patients about nutrition, physical activity and screen time, and the public health community should be promoting and increasing the availability of fruits and vegetables while decreasing consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages."³

1. Sun-Herald, Monday, 7 May 2007. 2. ibid. 3. American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Illinois, USA.



Quote of the Month

For fast-acting relief try slowing down.

—Lily Tomlin

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healthbites

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little bites

Pre-birth apples 'benefit babies'

BBC News, 20 May 2007

Children of mothers who eat plenty of apples during pregnancy are less likely to develop asthma, research suggests.

The University of Aberdeen project found that those who ate four or more apples a week were half as likely to have an asthmatic child compared with those who ate one or fewer.

Obesity plagues pets

Lisa Sloan, Central Leader, 14/5/07

It's not only humans at risk from a rising tide of obesity. Auckland vet Alex Melrose says Kiwi cats and dogs are getting far too fat... Australian studies show one in three cats and dogs are overweight or obese and he fears the situation is similar here.

"Many Kiwis simply can't see they are harming their pets with too much food and too little exercise," he says. "If they knew the extent of the harm, they would be horrified."

Single fatty meal hits blood pressure

By André Picard - Tuesday's Globe and Mail, 24 April 2007

A single fatty meal like eggs, sausages and hash browns can drive up blood pressure and damage blood vessels, even compared to a sugary meal of cereal, juice and yogurt, researchers found.

"You can see the impact with just one high-fat meal," said Tavis Campbell, a professor in the department of psychology at the University of Calgary.

"So you can imagine the long-term effects. ... There is going to be a lot of extra wear and tear on the body."

Cooking Class 2007



with Natural Foods

Another *What's Cooking* health and cooking series is planned for the Ilam area of Christchurch in November this year. We will keep you updated in further issues.

Rhubarb

Q: Dear Doug and Angela,

Do you have a way of cooking rhubarb without sugar? It seems to need so much sweetening and I didn't want to add piles of honey without asking in case I ruin it.

A: Thanks for your question and for allowing us to share it with other healthbites readers.

It is no problem to use honey to sweeten rhubarb. Angela recommends plain clover honey. Strong flavoured honeys will start to take over the flavour of the rhubarb.

But she does have another recommendation, and that is to put one measure of rhubarb to one measure of apple (i.e. half and half). The apple takes much of that bite out of rhubarb and it does not need nearly as much honey to sweeten.



While talking about rhubarb we decided to examine some more of its properties.

A member of the buckwheat family, rhubarb has big, heart-shaped, crinkled leaves and red-tinted stalks.¹

Rhubarb is a very old plant. Earliest records date back to 2700 BC in China where Rhubarb was cultivated for medicinal purposes.² Thanks to the Romans, the word "rhubarb" takes its name from the Latin *rha barbarum*. Rhubarb grew along the banks of the river Rha, the ancient name of the Volga. Back then, the region was considered foreign, or barbarian territory. Thus, rhubarb literally means "from the barbarian, Rha."³

It's one of those foods you love or hate. It is technically a vegetable but is usually eaten with and as a fruit. It adds a zippy flavour to pies and tarts. When combined with strawberries, raspberries, apples, and other fruits, the flavour is enhanced. Rhubarb can also be used in a sauce, or adding diced rhubarb to muffins and biscuit recipes adds to the flavor without making the batter runny. Rhubarb, like apples, holds moisture well in recipes.

Rhubarb has been used in medicines and folk healing for centuries.

It enhances digestion, firstly in the mouth where it stimulates the taste buds which gives a sense of cleansing out the oral cavity. When it reaches the stomach its digestive effects come into full play, causing an increase of the flow of gastric juice and inducing their movement, thus favoring the processing of the contents of the stomach. Besides stimulating the secretions from the liver which convey the bile salts, it assists the intestine in regulating the absorption of fats.

Rhubarb is used as a laxative, antiphlogistic, and homeostatic in the treatment of constipation, diarrhea, jaundice, gastro-intestinal hemorrhage, menstrual disorders, conjunctivitis, traumatic injuries, superficial suppurative sores and ulcers. It is also applied externally for thermal burns.⁴

1. www.plantea.com/rhubarb.htm

2. www.rhubarbinfo.com/rhubarb-history.html

3. www.plantea.com/rhubarb.htm

4. www.rhubarbinfo.com/rhubarb-medicinal.html



Recipe of the Month

Rhubarb & Apple Pie

3-4 stalks of rhubarb

3-4 apples

1½ c concentrated apple juice

1/3 c sago

3-4 T cornflour

water or juice

Peel and cut rhubarb. **Cook** with apples, apple juice & sago. **Stir** occasionally until tender and sago is clear. **Thicken** with cornflour moistened with a little water or juice. **Stir** until clear. **Pour** into pre-baked pie shell and **chill**.

Variations: You may like to pour into an unbaked pie shell and then cover with pastry, or pastry strips and bake until pastry is browned.

Recipe sourced from *Rosalie's Simple Truelife Recipes*, 124 pages, \$12.50

