

In this edition of *healthbites* we take a brief look at a huge topic — the family. We all know that our happiness is connected with the state of the family unit we live with, but some recent findings show links between the well being of the family unit and the health of its members as well as other benefits.

Over the page you will find some interesting information on comfrey, a sometimes debated plant that has valuable properties but comes with some cautions. The recipe in this edition is unique and tasty! You will also find some fascinating *littlebites* in the side column as well.

Family Health



Working on your family togetherness will help keep your family not only happy but healthy too! This is partly attributable to the security of the family environment in giving a more stable emotional and mental platform but also a more regulated diet pattern.

A simple thing such as spending mealtime together leads to overall health benefits. The New York Times published an article stating that “research has shown that those who regularly have meals with their parents eat more fruits, vegetables and calcium-rich foods, ingest more vitamins and nutrients, and consume less junk food. Some of the research has shown that kids who regularly sit down to a family meal are at lower risk for behaviors like smoking and drug and alcohol use.”

The World Congress of Families (WCF) has drawn attention to the connection of the intact family unit with better health, economic, educational and employment outcomes. Dr Pat Fagan, a US-based WCF Management Committee member, says that there is a huge link between the economy and the family, and that the breakdown of a nation's family unit is a “recipe for bankruptcy”.

Researchers surveying 835 youths in suburban Chicago and Beijing have found that youths who feel more responsible to their parents stay engaged in school and perform better.

The more supportive and stable family environment has also helped to prevent disease, while an abusive home has the opposite effects. Dr Stephen Ponder, writing at caller.com states, “As a provider of chronic care to children, I've been impressed with the positive role that a patient's home environment and family life plays in their health outcomes. A healthy family unit is an asset in combating a chronic health threat.”

“One of my guiding principles of high quality chronic health care delivery states that an intact, functioning family environment is associated with better health outcomes than in a broken or dysfunctional home... Adults abused as children have been shown to suffer greater rates of diabetes, cancer, heart disease, depression, substance abuse and early death.”

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Quote of the Month

The family is the corner stone of our society. More than any other force it shapes the attitude, the hopes, the ambitions, and the values of the child.

—Clyndon Baines Johnson

healthbites

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little bites

Heart attacks more serious at certain times of day

ScienceDaily, 29 April 2011

Heart attacks that occur between 6am and noon are more likely to leave a 20% larger area of dead tissue (infarct) caused by the attack, which is more serious for the person affected, than at any other time of the day, say researchers in Spain.

Diabetics twice as likely to develop cancer

NaturalNews, 15 May 2011

A new study published in the journal Diabetes Care reveals that diabetics have a nearly doubled risk of developing certain types of cancer compared to those without the disease. It was found that 16 percent of diabetic men and 17 percent of diabetic women develop cancer, while only seven and ten percent of the general population, respectively, develop it.

'Meat glue' cements profits from scrap

NaturalNews, 7 May 2011

Using a special product called 'meat glue', meat suppliers have been caught using meat scraps, too small to sell, to create normal sized portions of meat for distribution. This misleading sales tactic is so effective that even experts can't tell the difference between a regular piece of meat and a piece of meat tainted with 'meat glue'.

Early to bed and early to rise may help fight weight

EmaxHealth, 7 May 2011

Benjamin Franklin was very intuitive when he said "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." Research from Northwestern University has found that those who stay up late and consequently sleep late the next morning consume more calories each day and are at a greater risk of gaining weight.

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Comfrey for fast growth

Comfrey is a perennial herb with a black, turnip-like root and large, hairy broad leaves that bears small bell-shaped flowers of various colours.

The key constituent in comfrey is allantoin which encourages the growth of cells in both plants and humans. It's long been used in the natural health world to quickly regrow bones and even heal problems like torn ligaments. And in the garden, using some comfrey can boost the size of many plants and encourage lackluster plants to grow.

There are many ways to use comfrey in the garden – and of course the amount you'll need depends on the size and number of plants you have. An easy way to use comfrey in the garden is simply to use some dried, finely shredded leaves and soak them in water to make a tea. You can use half a cup of leaves or so per gallon of water – just let them sit for about 24 hours until it becomes a tea. Then, just water your plants with the tea and let the leaves fall around your plants too. You can water every few days or as desired - and smaller plants may just need a cup or so of the tea per watering, while larger plants can use a bit more. Generally, you'll start to see the difference in a month or so, with regular use.

Of course, comfrey can also be used on large farms, in place of chemical-based fertilizers. It's actually an ideal substitute - along with some basic composting - to add nutrients back into the soil. Comfrey teas have been shown to be comparable or richer in key nutrients for plants - like phosphorus and nitrogen - than manure or commercial liquid plant foods.

Comfrey also grows easily and it's mineral dense. In fact, it grows so easily that it's sometimes considered an invasive plant. However, for that reason, it's ideal for large farms because supply isn't an issue - and for smaller gardens it's best to grow it in large pots. Comfrey leaves can also be harvested every couple of weeks for an ongoing supply and a plant can be easily started from a root cutting.

There have also been concerns of excess use of comfrey as a liver toxin. The Australia New Zealand Food Authority had said people should have no more than one microgram of comfrey per kilogram of body weight in their daily diet.

—Sources: Wikipedia; NaturalNews.com, Kim Evans, 9 May 2011; Nelson Mail, 1 Jan 2010.



Quick-n-Easy Natural Recipes

Lorrie Knutsen

\$8.20 +p&p

These recipes use only a handful of ingredients and most take only minutes to prepare! Ideal for the experienced cook and for those who are not so keen on the idea. Great vegan vegetarian cookbook.

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Recipe of the Month

Comfrey Fish

½ c wholemeal flour
½ c white flour
1t raising powder (opt)
½ t salt

½ - 1 c soy milk
1t stock powder (opt)
1t ground linseed mixed to a jell with 3 T water

Mix together well (except linseed mixture). Fold the linseed in (this is an egg replacer). Batter should be quite thick. Dip whole comfrey leaves into the batter and place them into a heated, lightly-oiled fry pan. Flip after a minute or two when the sides are slightly browned. They can alternatively be baked on an oven tray at 180°C for about 10-15mins.

