

Summer is nigh upon us again and the festive season is coming with it. In this edition of Healthbites, we welcome new readers. The Christchurch Show was a success for many people with 110,000 coming through the gates over the three days. We are not sending healthbites to that many new readers, but we do welcome those of you who went in for the draw of the Natural Remedies Encyclopedia and consequently have opportunity to receive healthbites. The draw was taken the week after the Show and the prize went to the first draw out, the prizewinner being in Christchurch city. Congratulations to that prizewinner and we do have the books available at any time.

With the festive season just ahead of us, watch what you eat. It's meant to be a season of happiness but you may end up depressed! Read the article below and you might be surprised how our food can affect our mood. Also with summer upon us, its time to get out and get some exercise and free the joints up, getting fresh air and sunlight. Actually there are some definite specific results from exercise. They are listed in the article overleaf. All the best for the coming holiday season from the team here at Lifestyle Matters and a prosperous New Year to you all.

The Unhappy Meal

You have probably read a lot about foods that have the potential to boost your mood when you are feeling blue. Unfortunately, there are several foods that you should be avoiding, because they may be bringing you down.

Fats, added sugar and sodium are way too prevalent in our modern day diet full of processed foods. Many of these ingredients have been linked to an increased risk of depression in our society.

And there are a lot of us who are depressed... Could a simple change in diet fix all of that? Well, it's not likely that your mood is solely based on what you eat, but if you make small changes such as improving your meals, committing to exercise, getting enough rest and tackling unnecessary stress, you will probably find that your outlook on life is much sunnier.

Saturated Fats, Trans Fats

There have been many studies that link processed foods, fried foods and other foods loaded in fat to an increased risk of depression. For example, a study published in the journal PLoS One found that consumption of saturated fats and trans-fats, found in foods such as meats, butter, potato chips, and baked goods contribute more to depression than monounsaturated fats found in nuts, vegetable oils and fish. A separate study, published in Public Health Nutrition, noted that eating fast food increases the risk of developing depression by 51%.

Sugar

Over the past several decades there has been a "massive increase" in our consumption of sugar. One of the major sources has been soda, which Americans consume (on average) of 216 liters annually. Each liter of soda contains 108 grams of sugar.

How does sugar contribute to depression? When we first eat sugar, it is broken down into its components of glucose and fructose. Glucose flows through our bloodstream to be carried to cells for energy. If we are healthy, blood glucose levels return to normal fairly quickly, before it can do damage. However, those with diabetes, or prediabetes, glucose remains circulating throughout the body longer, causing damage to body tissues, including the brain.

Nutrient Deficient Diets

Among many processed foods are several that may contribute to depression. Vitamin D and Selenium deficiency have also been linked to depression and suicide.

Just about all of the B-vitamins have mood-boosting qualities. Eating processed foods could lead to a diet that is lacking in many B-vitamins, especially folate, vitamin B12, and vitamin B6.

Overall, a healthy balanced diet consisting of a variety of foods gives you the best chance at lifting your mood and making you feel more energetic throughout the day.

—EmaxHealth, November 20, 2012

Quote of the Month

*Both physical
and mental
strength depend
to a great degree
upon the food we
eat; therefore the
one who prepares
the food occupies
an important and
elevated position.*

—E G White



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little bites

Moderate drinking in pregnancy may affect infant IQ

Reuters Health, 14 Nov. 2012

Advice to pregnant women about drinking is contradictory, with some guidelines recommending no alcohol at all and others suggesting the odd drink now and then is safe. Researchers using genetic analysis of more than 4,000 mothers and children found that drinking between one and six units of alcohol a week during pregnancy can lead to lower Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores by the time a child is eight.

—Paul Casciato

Why real men eat real meat: It makes them feel manly

NBC News, 21 Nov. 2012

Hank Rothgerber of Bellarmine University in Louisville, USA says, some research he's done suggests that eating meat is deeply intertwined with American perceptions of masculinity. Meat consumption is a symbol of patriarchy resulting from its long-held alliance with manhood, power, and virility. When men consume meat in this way, especially when it's public and it's celebrated, they are validating their manhood and feeling good about what they are,"

Rothgerber says. —Maggie Fox

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Five Benefits of Exercise

If you're discouraged about weight loss, don't give up your exercise program just yet. Even if you have difficulty shedding pounds, it's important to know exercise has benefits that go beyond just fitting into those skinny jeans.

Dr. Eudene Harry, author of "Live Younger in 8 Simple Steps," and the Medical Director for the Women's Wellness Society, a national society focused on women's health, explains the hidden benefits of maintaining a regular exercise routine:

Skin benefits

Younger, blemish free skin – According to Dr. Harry who is the Medical Director for Oasis for Optimal Health, "The increase in circulation and perspiration that occurs with exercise delivers more nutrients to your skin while allowing impurities and waste to be removed." Exercise promotes a healthy, glowing complexion.

Mood

Exercise helps us sleep better and lifts depression because of natural chemicals that are released like serotonin and dopamine.

Serotonin is a chemical found mostly in the gut and blood platelets that increases when we exercise. Imbalance of the chemical is thought to lead to depression. Because it acts as a neurotransmitter the chemical affects brain cells related to mood, and sexual desire. Dopamine is a neuro-hormone that promotes happiness.

Constipation

Exercise promotes colon health and can relieve constipation. Harry recommends waiting an hour or two after eating. Exercising too soon can deter blood flow from the intestines, slowing down digestion.

Strong bones

Stronger bones is an important benefit of exercise. As we age - and for women after menopause - the bones can become brittle, leading to osteoporosis. Muscle contractions that occur during exercise helps the body build new bone cells, reducing the chances of fractures that could otherwise happen with even minor injuries. Examples of exercise to help bone health include yoga, jogging, walking, weight training and dancing.

Immunity

When we exercise our body temperature increases, making it more difficult for bacteria to attack. Regular moderate physical activity enhances immunity to keep us well, which is an important note during the winter months when colds and flu are easily spread. When we exercise, antibody levels increase in the blood stream to protect us from viruses and infection, explains Harry.

It's also important not to exercise too vigorously or you won't see the benefits. Moderate exercise is best – swimming, cycling or taking a brisk walk. Harry says, "For instance, you can actually increase stress hormones, which can make you more vulnerable to illness, rather than building your immunity."

Exercise and eating a nutritious balanced diet are both important for weight loss and avoiding weight gain, but the benefits of exercise go beyond just fitting into your favorite 'skinny jeans'. Regular moderate exercise improves complexion, promotes better sleep, lifts mood, boosts immunity, helps us feel self-confident and empowered and more. — EmaxHealth, November 18, 2012



Recipe of the Month

Steamed Fruit Pudding

4 ripe or frozen bananas	2 c dried mixed fruit
2 c fresh wholemeal breadcrumbs	1 t vanilla
1 small grated apple	

Blend or mash bananas and mix with all other ingredients. Place in an oiled pudding basin. Cover basin with greaseproof paper and pudding cloth, tie firmly. Steam for 1 hr 20 mins in pressure cooker, or 2½ hours in covered conventional saucepan. Yield: 6-8 servings.

