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Is a deficiency in vegetables the biggest cause of disease in Australia?

The last time an analysis of vegetable consumption by Australians was undertaken it showed that only 45% of women and 53% of men aged between 25 and 44 were consuming the recommended daily amounts of vegetables¹. The 25-44 age group is where you should be building your body for good health in later life but it appears that this is not happening.

The current Australian recommendations are to consume four to eight servings of vegetables each day for adults². If you can manage to consistently eat at the higher end of this range then the benefits to your long term health will be substantial. The scientific evidence is convincing that vegetables are protective against cancer, coronary heart disease and stroke^{3,4,5}. Vegetables may also play a role in preventing cataracts, diverticulosis, high blood pressure, and types of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease including asthma and bronchitis^{3,4}

Selecting vegetables by colour is a simple way of making sure you get a good variety of nutrients. Try to have at least one serving from every colour every day. One way of dividing vegetables into colours is set out below:

- Green – includes spinach, broccoli, lettuce, asparagus, peas, green beans, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, green olives
- Orange/yellow – includes carrots, pumpkin, corn, and sweet potato
- White/Brown – includes cauliflower, garlic, ginger, mushrooms, onions, chickpeas, and potatoes (note – only use potatoes if you need to gain weight or do more than five hours of physical work per day – otherwise avoid)

- Red – red capsicum, radishes, tomatoes (note – tomatoes are actually a fruit and contain high amounts of fructose which we have shown in previous newsletters to put you into ‘fat storage’ mode, so be careful to keep tomato consumption to a minimum)
- Purple/blue – beetroot, purple asparagus, red cabbage, olives, red onions
- Multi-coloured – avocado, zucchini, egg plant, beans can be a variety of colours, celery.

By selecting a good variety of vegetables you are obtaining a good selection of carbohydrates, fats, fibre, protein, water, vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals. The study of phytochemicals in vegetables is progressing rapidly, with scientists uncovering another health improvement aspect, or disease fighting aspect virtually every day.

What Could be Worse for Your Health than a low vegetable diet?

Australians are not just good at avoiding the consumption of vegetables they are also good at making their health even worse by consuming high amounts of alcohol.

In a survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2004-05, 15% of adult males and 12% of adult females reported drinking more than 5 standard drinks per day in the week of the survey and 55% of males and 43% of females reported drinking up to four standard drinks per day⁶. A standard drink is any form of beverage that contains 12.5mL or 10 grams pure alcohol. A study⁷ just released this month shows that alcohol consumption impairs memory and people completing surveys actually report lower alcohol levels than they actually consumed.

This means that, at least, 70% of adult males and 55% of adult females in Australia are consuming enough alcohol per day to set themselves up for health problems in later life.

One of the most basic things that all students of biochemistry learn is that after consumption of alcohol an important enzyme (γ -glutamyltranspeptidase, or γ -GT) which is located on the outer surface of the plasma membrane is dislodged and appears in the plasma. This dislodgement immediately reduces your ability to transport the ingredients of proteins (amino acids) to where they are needed. You need to transport dietary proteins to regularly rebuild virtually all aspects of the structural and functional elements of your body. In short, you cannot constantly consume alcohol and stay in good health.

Of course, heavy consumption of alcohol is directly associated with many diseases. As an example another study published this month links heavy alcohol consumption with gastric cancer.⁸

However, the main reason that combining alcohol consumption with a low vegetable diet is a deadly combination is that you need the wide range of ingredients contained in vegetables to support the processes of your liver, particularly the processes that remove toxins from your body and break up and remove cancer cells from your body. Alcohol consumption changes your liver processing requirements to deal with the alcohol and sends the toxins into storage rather than being cleared from your body – creating ‘time bombs’ just waiting to go off.

We recommend to our clients following our healthy ageing program to have one week per month free of alcohol and limit alcohol consumption during the rest of the month to sensible levels (one or two standard drinks per day)

Improving fertility health is a joint effort

We are often approached by our female clients to support their health when they are planning a pregnancy. However, there is a male factor involved in up to 50% of clinical infertility cases, making preconception care for both partners absolutely essential for the best chances of achieving a successful, healthy pregnancy.⁹

Proper development of the placenta is largely dependent on the expression of genes from the paternal chromosomes, further supporting the role of the male for optimal pregnancy outcomes.¹⁰

Infertility is estimated to affect 15 to 18% of couples in Australia.¹¹ While this is an alarming statistic, it is important to remember that many risk factors for infertility, including obesity, toxicity, stress, and oxidative damage, are modifiable through dietary and lifestyle intervention.

We also love to get those baby photos, so keep sending them in.

Healthy Ageing Update

More good news for those following our healthy ageing program - Your vision doesn't need to deteriorate as you age.

Lutein and its stereoisomer zeaxanthin are the only two carotenoids in nature known to enter the retina, where they concentrate at a level several thousand times higher than in the serum.¹² In-vitro evidence suggests that cyanidin-3-O-glucoside (C3G), an anthocyanin found in *Ribes nigrum* (blackcurrant), may have beneficial effects on vision through its capacity to bind to rhodopsin, a photoreceptor protein in rod cells that is critical for vision.¹³

Age-related macular degeneration is estimated to affect up to 30 to 50 million people worldwide, and is considered to be the leading cause of blindness in the ageing population. The good news, however, is that many of the risk factors are modifiable. Risk factors include smoking, alcohol intake, UV exposure, obesity, and a high glycaemic index diet.¹⁴

So hopefully all those following our healthy ageing program will be able to find their way to our clinic for many years to come.

Tips for Improving Sleep

Getting a peaceful and refreshing sleep is one of the keys to lasting good health.

Here are some tips to improve sleep.

- Go to bed around the same time each night, around 10pm seems to work well for most people.
- Eat a high protein snack 2-3 hours before you go to bed – the objective is to provide more of the amino acid L-tryptophan, a precursor to melatonin and serotonin
- Avoid exercise near bedtime although plenty of exercise throughout the day improves sleep
- Avoid mental stimulation just before bedtime
- Avoid snacking just before bedtime, particularly grains and sugars
- Avoid caffeine for at least 4 hours before bedtime
- Keep your vitamin D levels up with sun exposure during the day or supplementation as this is also important for hormone production
- Try to keep noise levels low, inside and outside the room

If you are still having trouble sleeping, then contact one of our practitioners and we will organise a review of your health as well as supplements and herbal medicines targeted at improving sleep.

Keto bars – Turn snacks into a health boost

Most of you will know that getting enough protein is a key focus for becoming or staying healthy.

Because we operate a CBD clinic we know how hard it is to get time during the working day to obtain healthy food or to get time to bring it with you to work. That's why we researched the market for healthy quick snacks and selected the Keto bars as the healthiest source of protein in a quick snack.

The regular keto bars are available in choc mint, vanilla nougat, cherry coconut, hazelnut & caramel. We also stock the Keto Crunch Bar which is a Cranberry & Almond flavour.

A box of 10 bars retails for \$49 – our price is only \$39 – we can also supply a box of mixed flavours – phone our reception on (07) 3218 2799 or email info@perpetualwellbeing.com.au to place an order



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