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Health Notes Winter Newsletter

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In This Issue

Vitamin Deficiency Epidemic in the US

Is Stress KILLING you?

Price and Policy Updates for 2009

Healthy Recipe #1

Healthy Recipe #2

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Quick Links

[Eastern Body Therapy](#)

Dear Lisa,

Welcome to Eastern Body Therapy's Winter newsletter!

This edition contains articles on Vitamin D deficiency, stress management, price updates for 2009, and not one but TWO healthy winter recipes for your enjoyment.

I'm always looking for feedback on the articles, topics you'd like to see covered, and other suggestions. Please send your comments and suggestions to lnicholson@ebtherapy.com.

Feel free to forward this letter to anyone you think would benefit from it.

I'm here to be your partner in well-being. If there is anything I can do to help your winter be more healthy, please let me know.

Peace and health,
Lisa Nicholson, L.Ac.



Vitamin Deficiency Epidemic in the US



Vitamin Deficiency Epidemic in the US

In the 21st century, in one of the most developed nations in the world, we have a vitamin deficiency of epidemic proportions. How is this possible, you may ask. We are extremely well fed, many of us take multi-vitamins, we drink our milk and eat our vegetables (most of the time). Furthermore, the US government has recommended daily allowances for vitamins that many of us try to get every day. How could we possibly be deficient in a vitamin?

Despite the efforts of the government and food science industries to make sure we have plenty of everything, studies show that 40-60% of the entire US population is deficient in vitamin D.

Historically, vitamin D deficiency resulted in rickets. Scientists determined the minimum amount of vitamin D and the government set the US Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA). Vitamin D was added to milk so the average child drinking the amount of milk recommended by the average pediatrician was guaranteed to get enough of the vitamin to prevent rickets, and we all were to live happily ever after.

It turns out Vitamin D is a critical nutrient for preventive maintenance of all of our body tissues, and recent research has shown the amount needed is far higher than the current US RDA.** Allowing your body to be deficient in vitamin D is like never changing the oil in your car. It runs just fine for a while, and then things simply begin to break down. Research has linked low levels of vitamin D to colorectal cancer, ovarian cancer, breast cancer, kidney cancer, type I and II diabetes, metabolic syndrome, melanoma, cardiovascular diseases (including heart attack, stroke and high blood pressure), periodontal disease, all autoimmune disorders, pre-eclampsia, difficult birthing, autism, and other diseases.** Let's be clear: low vitamin D does not CAUSE these diseases, but studies overwhelmingly show that people with these diseases have low serum (blood) levels of vitamin D, and that when the vitamin D level is brought into a normal range the prognosis is often 50% (or more) better than when the vitamin D level remains low.

How did we get so deficient? There are few dietary sources of vitamin D, including cod liver oil, egg yolks, butter, liver, oily fish, some fortified breakfast cereals, and milk. We tend to avoid strongly-flavored fishy foods in this culture, and we tend to minimize consumption of eggs and butter to lower our cholesterol. Vitamin D is manufactured in the skin from cholesterol, and requires Ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation for its synthesis. With the increased use of high SPF sunscreens (which completely block UVB radiation) and the increased use of cholesterol-lowering medication, we have severely limited our ability to manufacture vitamin D. Even without sunscreen, most of the US is far enough north of the equator that we receive limited amounts of UVB during most of the year. It is virtually impossible to get enough UVB to make vitamin D during the winter if you are north of the 35th parallel (think Atlanta or San Diego).

The US RDA for vitamin D is 400IU/day. Remember, the RDA for any nutrient is the MINIMUM amount required to prevent known deficiency disease, NOT the optimal amount needed for health. For years, the only known vitamin D deficiency disease has been rickets, and this amount of vitamin D is sufficient to prevent rickets. However, the latest research shows that for the disease prevention effect of vitamin D to be present, the blood level needs to be in the 60-80ng/ml range, more than double the current low end of the "normal" laboratory range for this nutrient.** To keep your blood vitamin D at this level requires 2000-2400IU/day from all sources for adults, 2000IU/day for children under 12, and 1000-1800IU/day for infants less than 1 year.

Vitamin D is fat soluble, so can't you get too much of it? The answer is yes, but you need a lot. Studies have demonstrated no toxicity with supplementation of vitamin D at levels as high as 20,000IU per day, so the levels recommended are well below the toxic dose for this vitamin.**

So, how do you get 2000IU of vitamin D per day? Most milk in the US has vitamin D added to it, so if you drink milk you are getting some vitamin D. 10-15 minutes of sun exposure on the arms and legs during the peak hours for UVB radiation (10am-2pm), without sunscreen, allows your body to make about half the vitamin D it needs. However, if you live north of the 35th parallel you will be unable to get enough UVB exposure to make enough vitamin D during much of the year. The good news is that vitamin D supplements exist and are relatively inexpensive. I recommend starting with 1000IU per day in a supplement for most people. If you don't drink milk and rarely get out in the sun, 2000-2500IU per day would be appropriate. Therapeutic doses can be much higher, and require periodic monitoring of your blood levels to make sure you don't overdose.

It is easy to test for vitamin D deficiency with a simple blood test. I can order the test for you, (at a cost of \$39), and I stock vitamin D in both a tasty liquid form and easy to swallow capsules. Please call me at (619)772-4002 to discuss your vitamin D needs or to arrange to pick up a supplement.

**The list of research references for this article is almost 3 pages long, so it is not included in the

newsletter. It can be accessed by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Is Stress KILLING you?

Seems these days that everyone is feeling stressed. The economy stinks, we're still at war, we've survived the holidays and all the family and social dynamics that go with them, and now we're trying to make resolutions for the New Year. Yikes!

Stress is known to be a contributing factor in hypertension, migraines, heart attacks, strokes, chronic pain, diabetes, frequent minor illnesses, depression, anxiety, and other serious medical conditions. However, signs of increasing stress appear long before the medical conditions, and stress can easily be managed once you recognize it is an issue.



People experience stress in different ways, some more physical and others more emotional. Physical signs of stress include headaches, upset stomach (anything from heartburn to irritable bowel syndrome can be signs of stress), difficulty falling or staying asleep, feelings of "butterflies" in the stomach, palpitations, and increase in chronic pain symptoms. Emotional signs of stress include crying easily for no apparent reason, becoming angry more easily than usual, confused thinking, reduced short-term memory, and difficulty focusing on the tasks at hand. If you are someone who prides herself in being able to multi-task, but lately you've gotten in the middle of three tasks and realized that you have no idea what you're doing with one or more of them, chances are your stress level has become too high.

SO, you and your family are stressed out. So what?

If you are easily angered, you are more likely to be short-tempered with your partner or children. It is harder to plan meals, keep the house clean, keep up at work, get the kids to all the places they need to go, pay (and not lose on the desk) bills, etc. when you are stressed out. Errors in these things can affect your reputation and your family's bottom line as well as your health and well-being.

What's a stressed out person to do? Here are a few quick and easy ways to help you and your family to reduce stress and manage the effects of the stress you can't get rid of...

- 1.) Balance your blood sugar. Insulin spikes are a huge effect of stress, leading to a host of physical and emotional problems. Whether you tend towards low blood sugar or high, keeping the level relatively even throughout the day is a big step towards managing the physiological effects of stress. Make sure you eat a protein-based breakfast of at least 300 calories, then don't allow yourself to get hungry. Snack every few hours on a handful of nuts and dried fruit, a yogurt or an ounce of cheese, a few slices of turkey, or whatever "healthy" foods you prefer. Make sure your snacks are 150-200 calories of whole foods, minimally processed, with some protein and little or no simple sugar.
- 2.) Stop multi-tasking. Make a list of what you need to accomplish for the day, week, month, year, and break this list down into single tasks which can become small goals. Prioritize these tasks, and finish them one at a time. Make sure you check the box as tasks are completed so you can see your progress.
- 3.) Play!!! Make sure there is something which nurtures you and nourishes your soul to look forward to at the end of each day.
- 4.) Seek the services of a professional. Acupuncture has been shown to be profoundly relaxing, and there are a number of herbal supplements which can help to manage the effects of stress. Don't be afraid to reach out for help if you need it!

Price and Policy Update for 2009

As of March 1, 2009, the following prices will be in effect:

New Patient Evaluation	\$50
Functional Nutrition or Herbal Consultation	\$80/hour, \$50 minimum
Acupuncture	\$65
Acupuncture with electro stimulation	\$75
Cupping	\$40 (free if done with acupuncture)
Moxibustion	\$40 (free if done with acupuncture)
Massage	\$80/hour
Missed appointment/late cancellation	\$35

The first missed appointment or cancellation with less than 24 hours notice will receive a gentle warning, repeats will be charged the fee noted above.

You'll notice that while most of my fees are staying the same, a few are going up a little. I do recognize that we are all squeezed by the current economy, and am doing my best to find the balance where I can continue to meet my ever-increasing overhead while not raising prices too much. Thank you for understanding!

Healthy Recipe #1

Well, I try to give you one good seasonal recipe per newsletter, but this time I simply couldn't choose between two. Your gain, you get an extra to try!

Lamb & Fenugreek Stew

This dish from Yemen is adapted from a recipe in the book *Flatbreads and Flavors* by Naomi Duguid and Jeffrey Alford. Lamb is strongly warming, and helps to boost the blood. It is especially beneficial to women as they are finishing their monthly cycles. Fenugreek warms the interior, and is traditionally used in Chinese medicine to benefit digestion and boost the qi of the kidneys. It has a slightly bitter, pungent flavor which pairs beautifully with the richness of the lamb. Mung beans are cooling, and balance the extreme warmth of the rest of the dish.



Fenugreek Sauce

¼ cup fenugreek
 1 cup boiling water
 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 ½ cup finely chopped onion
 2 large tomatoes, chopped
 ½ tsp. cayenne
 ½ tsp. salt
 Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Grind the fenugreek to a powder in a spice or coffee grinder (or buy powdered fenugreek, available in San Diego at North Park Produce). Transfer to a small bowl and cover with the boiling water. Let it sit for 2-3 hours.

Add the remaining ingredients and stir until well blended.

The Stew

1 ½ tsp vegetable oil
 2 medium onions, diced

1 ¼ lb boneless lamb, trimmed of fat
 8 cups water
 ½ cup mung dal (split mung beans)
 ¼ cup farro or hulled barley
 ½ lb potatoes, cut into ½ inch cubes
 1 Tbsp. salt
 2 Tbsp. fresh cilantro leaves (or more, to taste)
 1 recipe Fenugreek Sauce (above)

Heat the oil in a large pot, and gently sauté the onions over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add the lamb and sauté until lightly browned on all sides. Add the water, turn the heat to high, and bring to a boil. Add the dal and farro, and bring back to a boil. Lower the heat, partially cover, and let simmer for 1 hour, or until the meat is tender and the dal is cooked.

Add the potatoes, increase the heat to high, and bring to a boil. Then lower the heat and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes more. Remove from the heat.

Remove the lamb from the broth and shred into bite-sized pieces. Return the lamb to the broth, add the salt and cilantro leaves, and bring back to a boil. Whisk the Fenugreek Sauce to a froth and add it to the stew. Serve immediately, with whole wheat pita bread and a salad for a simple, warming meal.

****If you truly hate lamb, you can try this dish with chicken. Use boneless thighs for a richer flavor. The dish will not be as warming, but will still be delicious!**

*****Split mung beans are available at Ranch 99, North Park Produce, and most Indian or Middle Eastern grocery stores. Farro (also called Emmer) is an ancient wheat variant which is available at some health food stores, and from bluebirdgrainfarms.com.**

Healthy Recipe #2

Bonus Recipe (because I couldn't resist!!)

Groundnut Stew



This South African recipe is adapted from *Sundays at the Moosewood Restaurant*, by the Moosewood Collective. The finished dish is sweet and spicy, and pleasingly rich. It takes advantage of winter vegetables, and derives its warmth from a healthy amount of ginger, garlic and cayenne.

Sweet potatoes are neutral in temperature and Chinese medical practitioners recommend them for nourishing the stomach and spleen. Okra is high in vitamins A, B6, folic acid, and calcium. Due to its high fiber content, okra has been shown to help with blood sugar regulation and to stimulate sluggish bowels. Peanuts are sweet and neutral in temperature. They help to moisten the lungs and harmonize the stomach, and provide a source of protein for this vegetarian dish. If you prefer less "bite" to your warmth, reduce or eliminate the cayenne. Makes 6 generous servings.

2 cups chopped onions
 2 Tbsp. peanut or vegetable oil
 ½ tsp cayenne
 2 cloves of garlic, pressed
 2 cups chopped cabbage
 3 cups cubed sweet potatoes (1 inch cubes)
 1 15 oz can organic tomato sauce
 1½ cups water
 1 cup apple juice

1 tsp salt
1 1-inch piece of fresh ginger, grated or finely chopped
1 Tbsp. fresh cilantro or parsley
2 chopped tomatoes
1½ -2 cups chopped okra
2/3 cup peanut butter

Sauté the onions in the oil for about 10 minutes. Stir in the cayenne and garlic and sauté for a couple more minutes. Add the cabbage and sweet potatoes and sauté, covered, for a few minutes. Mix in the tomato sauce, water, apple juice, salt, ginger, cilantro, and tomatoes. Cover and simmer for about 15 minutes, until the sweet potatoes are tender. Add the okra and simmer for 5 minutes more. Stir in the peanut butter, and simmer gently until ready to serve. Add more water or juice if the stew is too thick.

Serve this over steamed rice or millet, with chopped peanuts, sliced banana, and additional cilantro or parsley sprinkled to taste on each portion.

**If you have a food processor, making freshly ground peanut butter is easy. Just dump in a pound of peanuts, turn on the machine (it will make horrible noises for about 2 minutes), and let it go for about 5-6 minutes until the texture is how you like it. If grinding your own is too ambitious, buy an all-natural peanut butter for this recipe. Trader Joe's makes a particularly nice one. They also carry pre-chopped okra in the freezer section.

I hope you have enjoyed this second edition of Health News! Look for the next one in your in-box in 2-3 months, and please call or e-mail if you would like to see articles on specific topics in future editions.

Peace and Health,

Lisa
Eastern Body Therapy

**Save
10%**

Winter is a great time to consider supplementing Vitamin D. Call to order a vitamin D test, and receive 10% off on Ultra D (liquid supplement) or D 1000 (capsules) with this coupon!

Coupon cannot be combined with other discounts or specials. Limit 4 bottles per customer.

Offer Expires: February 28, 2009

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