

Poor Habits Take Toll on Health

A disturbing study¹ has just been published in the June 2009 edition of the prestigious *American Journal of Medicine*. Contrary to what I, and probably a lot of other people thought, the number of middle-aged and older Americans who are eating right, exercising regularly and keeping their weight under control has actually declined substantially over the past two decades. Based on data derived from a large government health survey, researchers involved with the study noted that in 2006 only 26% of Americans between the ages of 40 and 74 years old consumed five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day compared to 42% back in 1988. It was found that in 2006, 43% of people in this age group worked out at least twelve times a month, although back in 1988, the number was 53%.

As you would expect with these types of behavior, the rate of having an unhealthy weight has not been good, going from 28% in 1988 to 36% in 2006. The lead researcher, Dr. Dana King, indicated that this decline in healthy lifestyle habits was disturbing because it may translate into increased incidence of poor blood sugar and cardiovascular health. When researchers looked at five healthy lifestyle factors, including maintaining a normal weight, getting regular exercise, eating enough fruits and vegetables, not smoking and drinking moderate amounts of alcohol, only 8% of Americans adhered to all five recommendations. Back in 1988, 15% of Americans followed these healthy guidelines. Dr. King indicated that it is uncertain why these healthy lifestyle habits have diminished, although it would seem that people's increasingly hectic lives may be making it hard to fit in regular exercise, or sit down to healthier, home cooked meals rather than eating take out. Dr. King did stress "it's never too late" for middle aged and older adults to make lifestyle changes for the better.

One of the unhealthiest things many Americans consume is soda, including cola. One 20 ounce soda contains 17 teaspoons of sugar and 250 calories. An article² recently appeared in the newspaper the *Birmingham Post* that noted drinking large quantities of cola may lead to concerns related poor muscle, heart, and bone health. Another thing that doctors are seeing is that large cola intake can lead to decreased levels of potassium in the blood which may also lead to issues concerning poor muscle and heart health. One case cited in the article concerned a 21 year old pregnant woman who was admitted to the hospital suffering with tiredness, loss of appetite and repeated vomiting. It turned out that this individual consumed more than 3 liters a day of cola for the last six years and was found to be suffering with severely low levels of potassium in the blood, along with poor heart health. They did note positively that once she was taken off the cola and given potassium replacement, she made a full recovery.

Numerous studies prove the overconsumption of soda causes poor dental, bone, weight and blood sugar health. The very sad fact is that soda consumption has doubled since 1971, and the average teenage boy drinks 700 cans per year. There is a new natural zero calorie soda called Zevia™ and it is sweetened with a safe and natural sweetener called stevia. In fact, we have them in the company vending machines and recommend their consumption versus high sugar (high fructose corn syrup) traditional sodas. Vitacost has recently added Zevia

natural sodas for your convenience as they are very hard to find. I would like to warn you, there are numerous so-called "natural" sodas sold at health food stores that contain as much sugar, around 40 grams per 12 ounces, as compared to the traditional harmful sodas. Buyers beware. Please read the nutritional facts label and look at the sugar content. Anything more than about 15 grams is probably a bad idea, less is better.

To review all flavors of Zevia all natural sodas [click here](#).

Now on the positive side, an article³ published in the June 2009 edition of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* cited the benefits of multi-vitamin supplementation. The cause of aging and mortality is uncertain, although one of the theories concerns telomeres which make up the end portion of the chromosomes. Over time, as these chromosomes replicate, telomere segments become shorter and shorter, and with that, the cells age and eventually die. Dr. Chen and his co-workers noted that telomere length may be a marker of biological aging. They did report that the telomeres of those individuals consuming a daily multi-vitamin on average were 5.1% longer than individuals who did not consume multi-vitamins. They noted that the study provides the first epidemiologic evidence that multi-vitamin use was associated with longer telomere length among women. Dr. Chen did note that "regular multi-vitamin users tend to follow a healthy lifestyle and have a higher intake of micro-nutrients which sometimes makes it difficult to interpret epidemiologic observations on multi-vitamin use."

I strongly recommend a high quality multi-vitamin for everyone, and my #1 recommendation for the last 14 years has been and continues to be our Nutraceutical Sciences Institute® (NSI®) Synergy multi-vitamins. They are far superior to others when you consider the forms and levels of the most important nutrients. They contain at least 2,000 IU per day of vitamin D3, 100 – 400 mg per day of coenzyme Q10, excellent levels of B vitamins, antioxidants and numerous other nutrients. Most multi-vitamins have near worthless levels of vitamin D, B vitamins, lutein and coenzyme Q10.

To review all NSI Synergy products [click here](#).

In the June 2009 edition of the *Annals of Oncology*, researchers from Italy did a case-controlled study⁴ examining the relationship between dietary vitamin D intake and abnormal cellular growth of the esophagus and oral cavity. The researchers noted that there was an inverse association between dietary vitamin D intake and these abnormal cellular growths. Study after study has confirmed optimal levels of vitamin D are required for good immunity and cellular health, not to mention bone health. I recommend 2,000 – 4,000 IU of D3 per day.

Finally, I would like to mention a favorable report that came out on the nutrient Epicor. Following a safety and toxicology review by a group of independent panel of scientists, it was found that Epicor was given GRAS (generally regarded as safe) assessment at a level of 3 grams (3,000 mg) per day. It has been shown that Epicor at a dose of 500 mg a day can help build and maintain healthy immune function. Previous studies have noted that it can increase the activity of natural killer cells by up to 400% Natural killer cells are a very

important part of your innate immune system and kill cells infected with viruses. I have personally been taking Epicor 500 mg every morning for many months now and I am pleased to report I have maintained excellent overall and immune health.

I would hope that if you're reading this weekly newsletter, you are not in that category of Americans who are not eating right, consuming large quantities of cola, not exercising regularly and so on. What makes the Vitacost.com site so special is that we just don't sell vitamins, we educate, promote and provide the tools for a healthy lifestyle. As just one small example, we recently started offering a line of healthy natural and/or organic food products called Best of All™ which includes organic walnuts, almonds, ginger slices, pumpkin seeds and a whole host of tasty and very healthy nuts, trail mixes, seeds, fruits and vegetables.

Instead of reaching for that soda that has nothing but toxic empty calories and can produce multiple medical problems, reach for an acai berry juice blend, a natural Zevia soda, organic teas and other healthy beverages. We also offer healthy Walker Diet Shakes, as well as a wonderful selection of teas which are so good for detoxifying and helping to build healthy immune system. We offer literally thousands of food and beverage items on Vitacost which can help you to achieve a healthier lifestyle. If you have not searched for your favorite natural and organic items at Vitacost, I recommend you try and compare prices to the high price retail health food stores. Vitacost has over 22,000 products to choose from now, more than 4-5 times the selection of the typical health food store at far lower prices.

Dr. Allen S. Josephs