

# WALLACE INTEGRATED HEALTH CENTRE

## NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2008

### New Developments

- We at the WIHC are pleased to welcome Francine Charland, M.Ed., Life Coach and Shamanic Coach. Francine is available by appointment throughout the week and on Saturdays.
- Congratulations to Karen Sarlo, who has completed her teaching certificate and is now certified by the Canadian Reiki Association as a teacher. She will be holding Level 1 Reiki courses on April 19<sup>th</sup> and April 26<sup>th</sup>. There are still spots available in the course on the 26<sup>th</sup>, and more dates will be offered throughout the year. Call 474-2727 for more information.
- Registered Massage Therapist, Sara Inch, is using a new treatment called **Thermal Palms**. This therapy is similar to hot rocks, only gentler, and appropriate for more sensitive clients. The Thermal Palms are oatmeal-based and use mild heat to relax muscles and stimulate lymphatic flow. Ask to try them out at your next massage!

### Upcoming Events

- In celebration of **Naturopathic Medicine Week**, we will be holding an Open House at the WIHC. This event will take place Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, from 4-6 p.m. There will be lots of excitement, draw prizes and Rocky Mountain Analytical will be offering a Food Allergy Test at ½ price for one individual. This is a great opportunity to see the clinic, meet our various practitioners and get some information about what natural health care has to offer for you. Please join us on May 8<sup>th</sup> at 374 Fraser St.
- The pregnancy and prenatal workshops offered by Kelly Wallace, N.D. have been postponed to Monday May 5<sup>th</sup>, and Monday May 12<sup>th</sup>, which corresponds with Naturopathic Medicine Week across Canada. These workshops are designed for expecting or soon to be expecting parents, or anyone else interested in learning more about naturopathic care during pregnancy, labour and delivery and for newborns. For complete information, please go to [www.wallacehealth.com](http://www.wallacehealth.com), or call 474-2727.
- We are pleased to announce that we will be holding a course titled “**8 Weeks to Healthy Breasts**,” led by Certified Healthy Breast Teacher Bianca Church. This course was designed by a Naturopathic Doctor in Owen Sound, Dr. Sat Dharam Kaur, and teaches women about risk factors, prevention strategies and how to maintain good breast health. It is appropriate for breast cancer survivors and anyone who wants to prevent breast cancer. This course will start in the late spring and the dates are still being determined. For more information, call 474-2727.

## Articles

*The following article is an excerpt from “The Health Show,” which ran on JOCO radio in Sturgeon Falls, through the summer of 2005. This particular episode was a show that Kelly Wallace, N.D., did on the digestive system..*

The digestive system is one of the most important parts of our body, because it processes everything that we put into our body, including food, drinks, and medications, turning these things into energy for life. It also provides us with essential vitamins and minerals and plays a major role in immune function. In fact, if your digestive system is not working properly you can suffer from a huge variety of complaints, from obvious things like diarrhea, indigestion or ulcers to other serious conditions like autoimmune disease or cancer.

I want to talk a little bit about this important system, and help you to understand why the old saying, “you are what you eat” is so true.

The major function of the digestive system is to break down food from bite-sized pieces, into small absorbable nutrients. Let’s follow one mouthful of food as it travels through the digestive system.

First you put the food into your mouth and start to chew. Chewing provides the initial physical breakdown, so adequate chewing is very important. In addition to chewing, there are special enzymes in saliva that begin to digest carbohydrates.

As the food becomes moist and mashed up, it passes through the esophagus and into the stomach. In the stomach, physical breakdown continues, as the stomach contracts and churns things up. The stomach also releases acid and other enzymes to break down protein and help absorb certain nutrients like vitamin B12.

An improper balance of acid in the stomach can lead to indigestion, heartburn and reflux, ulcers and malabsorption. However, the general assumption that any of these conditions are always the result of too much acid is not true. In reality, many more people suffer from low stomach acid, or hypochlorhydria. This condition becomes more common as we age and can certainly contribute to reflux and ulcers. It may seem counterintuitive that you can have acid reflux and not have enough acid in your stomach, but it can happen. If you don’t have enough stomach acid, the signal for the little muscle at the top of your stomach to seal off the esophagus doesn’t work properly, so the passage stays open, allowing the stomach contents and any acid that is present, to “reflux” back into the esophagus, creating that burning feeling. If you suffer from heartburn, reflux or a gastric ulcer, don’t just assume that you have too much acid and treat it with antacids (which do soothe the pain temporarily, but also perpetuate the problem). Consult your health care professional and ask about hypochlorhydria and if it is a possibility in your case.

Once the food passes out of the stomach and into to small intestine, more enzymes are released from the pancreas, as well as bile from the gall bladder and liver. The bile helps to break down fat, while the pancreatic enzymes help digest carbohydrates. Once these major food groups are broken into small enough parts, they are absorbed through the walls of the small intestine and into the blood. So as you can imagine, the wall of the small intestine must be able to allow these small nutrients through, while still keeping out

large particles and other waste material. If the lining of the small intestine becomes unhealthy, it can “leak” or let in much bigger food particles. This can become a problem because our body isn’t used to having large chunks of undigested food floating around in our blood vessels. It will respond to these particles by mounting an immune response and trying to destroy them. Unfortunately, if this happens often, our immune system can become oversensitive and start to attack other parts of our body. This can lead to autoimmune diseases, in addition to digestive problems.

After leaving the small intestine, what remains of the food passes into the large intestine, or colon. In the colon, water and a few other vitamins are taken out of the food. There are many bacteria living in our colon. Most of these bacteria are friendly and they actually help us to digest things like fibre and to make certain vitamins, like vitamin K. However, sometimes we can get other bacteria living in our colon, like E. coli, or yeasts, and these organisms can cause infections and imbalances. This often happens if we are under stress or eating poorly.

Probiotics, including acidophilus, can help to replace the friendly bacteria in our colons. After an acute infection, like food poisoning, you should always replace these “friends”. Although some of these friendly bacteria are found in yogurt, I find that yogurt is not usually the best way to replace these healthy bacteria. Any yogurt that has been pasteurized no longer contains probiotics, unless it has been added again after pasteurization. It is more difficult to find unpasteurized yogurt at a store because of government health regulations. So I generally recommend a probiotic supplement for people who need to replace their gut bacteria. It is usually the quickest and most effective way to restore these organisms, as probiotic supplements are widely available, inexpensive and quite safe. Do consult with your health care practitioner before starting one, and be sure to read the label, as most of these products need to be refrigerated.

After the remains of the food are processed in the colon, they are excreted. It is normal to have 2-3 bowel movements in a day. Anything less than that can lead to serious health problems.

So how do you ensure that your digestive system is healthy? Here are some simple things that you can do. The first step is to chew your food well. The second, and most important thing that you can do, is to eat a healthy diet, drink plenty of water, eat lots of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes. Avoid large amounts of alcohol, sugar, caffeine, processed foods and red meat.

Your digestive system is truly one of the most critical functions in your body. Treat yours well and you will enjoy good health.