

WALLACE INTEGRATED HEALTH CENTRE

NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2007

New Developments

- We are pleased to welcome Yasmin Nowin-Gergi, R.M.T. who will be assisting Sara Inch during her maternity leave. Yasmin is available at the WIHC on Monday, Wednesday and Friday's, and does relaxation, therapeutic and athletic massage.
- As mentioned above, Sara Inch, R.M.T. will be on maternity leave, starting July 17th, 2007. All the best to Sara and Tobel, in this new adventure!
- Kelly Wallace, N.D., recently participated in a medicinal herb walk near Orillia, and looks forward to incorporating this new knowledge into her practice.
- Reiki master Karen Sarlo has been welcoming more and more children and teens for reiki and energy medicine treatments. Young people can draw many benefits from these therapies, including better sleep, concentration, school performance and more stable moods.
- Our lending library now includes over 200 donated books, on a variety of health-related topics. Thanks to everyone who donated books. The library is open to anyone, we just ask for a refundable deposit to be held while you have a book on loan. The book list will soon be available on our website, www.wallacehealth.com
- Reflexologist Suzanne Peterson has left the WIHC to continue treatments out of her own home. We wish Suzanne success and happiness.

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 carbohydrates. It was followed by shows on the other major nutrients: protein and fats. We will be featuring information from those episodes in upcoming newsletters.

It seems that everyone is following a low-carb diet these days, in order to lose weight and look great for the beach. There are certainly some benefits to decreasing your carbohydrate intake, but because carbohydrates are so important for energy, if you eliminate them completely, you'll feel pretty rotten.

The key is not to think of all carbohydrates as evil, but rather to learn which are helpful to your body and which can be harmful. Let's start with the basics.

Carbohydrates can be divided into two major categories, sugars and starches. The sugars are also called simple carbohydrates and the most common ones are glucose, fructose, sucrose and lactose. Glucose is the most basic unit of a carbohydrate and this is what our body prefers. Our brains especially need a lot of glucose, but all of our cells and organs use it for fuel. Glucose is the sugar that is measured in the blood, and is what becomes elevated in diabetics. The other major sugars are: fructose, which is found in fruit and honey; sucrose, which is table sugar; and lactose, the sugar in milk. These other sugars are all converted into glucose by our body. Some people do not have the right genetics to do this conversion with lactose, and as a result, they are called lactose-intolerant.

Because sugars are already in their simplest form, they taste sweet and they can be absorbed from the intestines very quickly. In some situations this can be a good thing, like a diabetic going into insulin shock, or an athlete who needs a quick boost of energy. However the quick absorption of sugars can cause a lot of health problems. Our bodies are designed to have a fairly constant level of glucose in our blood at all times. After a meal, when there is more glucose available, our bodies very quickly put the extra away in storage for later, keeping the blood level fairly low. The hormone insulin helps with this process. In diabetics, this storage process becomes faulty and too much glucose stays in the blood. This can happen if there isn't enough insulin, but the more common problem results from a lifetime of poor eating habits. Our bodies get so used to the huge amounts of sugar we eat and all the insulin they need to deal with it, that eventually they just don't respond as well to it. The insulin is there, but our bodies don't recognize it. The problem with high levels of glucose in the blood is that they can damage the eyes, kidneys, nerves and blood vessels. This may lead to blindness, kidney failure or heart disease.

The best way to avoid these problems is to keep our consumption of simple carbohydrates low. Add a little sugar or honey for taste, but don't overdo it!

The starches, which are also called complex carbohydrates, are found in many plant products, because this is how plants store energy. Starches are a long row of sugars all attached together. When you eat starchy plant products, such as breads, potatoes, rice and beans, your body slowly breaks down the starches into glucose, which you can then use for energy. Because many of these foods are broken down quite slowly, they don't cause that surge in blood glucose the same way that the simple carbohydrates do. Not only do these foods help prevent diabetes, they can also provide energy, without adding to weight gain.

The key is that not all complex carbohydrates are the same. The more refined and processed they are, the quicker they break down into glucose and the less fibre they have. (We'll get to fibre later on.) This means that carbohydrates like white bread, pastas, white rice and any baking made with white flour will break

down quite quickly and give you a spike in your blood glucose level. However, the less refined carbohydrates like whole wheat, brown rice, oats, vegetables, beans and peas will provide a very important energy source for you and help keep your blood glucose stable. The reason that it is so important to keep your blood sugar steady is that once it starts going up and down like a yo-yo, your body starts to think it is having periods of starvation and goes into “conservation mode” where it stores any extra food it can get. This doesn't really help if you are trying to lose weight. Episodes of low blood glucose can also trigger cravings for carbohydrates, and depression, which can interfere with even the best plans.

So for most people I recommend a diet with moderate amounts of complex carbohydrates, good fats and protein, along with adequate fibre. The more active you are, the more carbohydrates you need.

Fibre is another type of complex carbohydrate, but it is a little different from the starches. Fibre comes from the structural part of plants, kind of like our bones. Because it must support the whole plant, it is very strong and we cannot break it down very well. However, it is still very important to our health. Fibre can be classified as soluble and insoluble, and both types have important roles to play in health. Soluble fibre, like the kind found in fruit, oats, psyllium, beans and peas, slows down the rate at which we absorb glucose from our food, therefore keeping the blood sugar more stable. Soluble fibre also grabs on to cholesterol and carries it out of the body.

Insoluble fibre, like the kind found in bran, whole grains and vegetables, speeds up the passage of food through the digestive system and promotes bowel movements. This is the type of fibre to be used for constipation. Insoluble fibre also has a stabilizing effect on blood glucose. Flax seeds are one of my favourite sources of fibre, because they contain a mix of both the soluble and insoluble types of fibre. Adding one tablespoon of ground flax seeds to your food every day can have some huge health benefits.

I hope that clears up some of the mysteries surrounding low-carb diets. They can be beneficial for some people, but I find most people have more success with weight loss and health by changing the type of carbohydrates that they are eating, rather than just cutting them out.

Kelly Wallace, N.D.