

WALLACE INTEGRATED HEALTH CENTRE

NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2008

New Developments

- With the publishing of this newsletter, we at the Wallace Integrated Health Centre celebrate our one year anniversary. Thank you to everyone who has made this year such a success. We look forward to another great year in 2008!
- We are pleased that Sara Inch, R.M.T. will be returning to the Wallace Integrated Health Centre after her maternity leave. Sara will be available on Wednesdays and Fridays, beginning Wednesday, January 9th.
- We wish to thank Yasmin Gergi, R.M.T. and Kathy Willis, R.M.T. for their excellent work and assistance during Sara's maternity leave and wish them both success in their own practices.
- Kelly Wallace, N.D. will be offering a pair of workshops in the New Year 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. The workshops will take place on Monday, February 25th, and Monday, March 3rd. For complete information, please go to www.wallacehealth.com, or 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 protein.

Protein has been in the news a lot lately, with a variety of high protein diets that claim everything from weight loss to the cure for diabetes and all sorts of other miracles. With all this press about protein, it's hard to know where to begin. Let's start with the basics and go from there.

Protein is very important for our health. When most people think of protein, they think of building muscle, but protein is also used an important part of our immune system, our hormones and enzymes, our bones and skin, and even in our blood to help it clot after an injury.

Proteins are made up of small units, called amino acids, which are joined together into larger units, or proteins. There are 20 of these amino acids, which

we need in various amounts in order to stay healthy. Some of these amino acids can be made by our bodies, and they are called non-essential amino acids. However, 8 to 10 of the amino acids cannot be made by our bodies and must be obtained from our diet. A food that is called a complete protein contains all of the essential amino acids and some of the non-essential ones as well. Most animal foods like meat, eggs and dairy products, are complete proteins, and some vegetable foods such as soy, are also complete proteins. Other vegetable foods can be combined to form complete proteins, like eating grains such as rice, with legumes or beans.

Because of the need to combine some vegetable foods in order to get complete proteins, people are often concerned about vegetarian or vegan diets. In truth, if someone is aware of this limitation of vegetable foods and eats a good variety of whole grains, legumes, soy, nuts, seeds and vegetables, adequate protein intake is not usually a problem. The key is to eat a good variety of different foods. In fact, many sources of vegetable protein are of better quality than animal sources. Many animals are raised with antibiotics, hormones and other chemicals in order to make them grow bigger, faster and produce more milk. These chemicals are passed through our food and into our bodies when we consume these meats and dairy products. They then contribute to a wide variety of conditions including cancers, hormonal imbalances and liver problems. Animal foods are also very acidic in the body, which is thought to contribute to osteoporosis, among other things. By eating a good variety of vegetable proteins, we may be able to prevent some of these chronic conditions.

So I hope I've emphasized how important protein is for health. In fact, if someone is not eating enough protein they may start to show signs and symptoms of protein deficiency. They may get more colds and infections, their nails and hair may be brittle. They may be tired and cold. In extreme cases, you will see wasting of the arms and legs, while the belly swells up. This is often visible in photographs of malnourished children from countries in the developing world. So should we all rush out and eat more protein to avoid this fate?

Not necessarily. While adequate protein intake is certainly essential for health, it is possible to have too much.

In fact, most people in Canada already get 2-3x the amount of protein they really need in a day. How much protein do we need? Well of course it depends on your age, your activity level and your own personal health. Children need more protein than adults, athletes need more protein than people who are sedentary, and people with certain chronic health conditions like cancer or HIV, need more protein than others. The general recommendation is between 0.8-1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight, for a normal healthy adult. So if you are a 150 lb female, this works out to about 50-60 grams of protein per day. This is about 6-7 oz. of meat, or 7 cups of milk or 2 ½ cups of chickpeas. Which is not really so much over a whole day, is it?

So what happens if you overdo it and consume much more protein than you really need? Well, our bodies are pretty good at dealing with whatever we put in them, so usually our kidneys step up to the task of breaking down all that protein and get rid of the excess. However, it does increase their work load quite a bit. If you have kidney problems, you certainly need to be aware of just how much protein you are consuming.

In addition to putting stress on the kidneys, there have been some correlations to high protein diets and cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis.

Now, I promised to talk about high protein diets and weight loss. What's going on there? Well they certainly work for some people, however, I have a few reasons why I believe that a balanced diet may be a better option in the long run, rather than a high protein, low carbohydrate diet.

Foods that are high in protein, like meat and dairy products, are often high in saturated fats as well. This definitely increases the risk of heart disease, high cholesterol, and cancer. In addition, diets that focus on protein foods often neglect fruits, vegetables and whole grains, which set someone up for other nutrient deficiencies.

What I recommend to most people for weight loss is a diet that includes adequate amounts of protein, with a focus on vegetable proteins, as well as healthy fats, from fish, nuts and seeds, complex carbohydrates from whole grains, as well as plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits. Exercise is also absolutely critical for lasting weight loss.

Kelly Wallace, N.D.