

Circleville City Schools Wellness Newsletter
January/February, 2008

By: Karen Borland, RN, BSN
Jackie VanArsdalen, Nurse's Secretary

A New Sip for Healthy Joints

Health, Jan/Feb. 2008, pg. 186

Stiff Joints? You've probably heard about glucosamine's ability to help ease this annoying symptom. But now you don't have to swallow a huge pill to get a daily dose. A new beverage called Elations promises healthier joints with its formula of glucosamine, calcium, and vitamin C. And, there's no medicinal taste either (though it is a little on the sweet side). If you have mild to moderate joint pain, Elations could be worth a try.



Shingles (not the ones on your roof)

Shingles is a painful skin rash, often with blisters. It is also called Herpes Zoster. The shingles rash usually appears on one side of the face or body and lasts 2 to 4 weeks. Its main symptom is pain, which can be severe. Other symptoms can include fever, headache, chills and an upset stomach. Shingles is caused by the Varicella Zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. **ONLY SOMEONE WHO HAS HAD A CASE OF CHICKENPOX – OR GOTTEN THE CHICKENPOX-VACCINE – CAN GET SHINGLES.** The virus stays in your body and can reappear many years later to cause shingles. You can't catch shingles from another person with shingles. **HOWEVER**, a person who has never had chickenpox or the chickenpox vaccine could get **CHICKENPOX** from someone with shingles. This is not very common. There is now a single-dose vaccine for adults over 60 years of age that can help prevent shingles and the pain associated with it. **Ask your MD about it!!**

When Bigger is NOT Better

Health, Jan/Feb. 2008, pg. 186

The next time you're in the produce aisle, try thinking small. The larger the produce, the fewer nutrients it packs per ounce, according to the Organic Center, a nonprofit research organization. Their new report examined several recent studies and revealed some interesting findings. For instance, they found that the more a tomato weighs, the lower its concentration of the antioxidant lycopene—even if it's organic. Researchers believe that high-yield farming, which often focuses on the quantity of crops, rather than the quality, may be to blame. Bottom line: Fill your cart with petite fruits and vegetables.



Wellness Tips

U.C. Berkeley Wellness Letter, February 2008

- ✓ For motivation to walk more, use a pedometer, a small step-counting device. A recent analysis of the 26 studies found that pedometer users walked about an extra mile a day, on average, and increased their overall physical activity by 27%.
- ✓ Don't assume that small food packages or individually wrapped items are single servings. Many muffins, bottles of soda, and snack bags contain two or more "servings," and thus you will get more calories than the label states if you eat the whole thing.
- ✓ Give celery a second look. A satisfyingly crunchy snack, it adds flavor to soups, salads, and stews. A large stalk has only 6 calories, plus small amounts of potassium, vitamin C, folate, and fiber.

Inflammation: 6 Ways to Fight It

Reader's Digest, March 2008, pg. 79

It's been blamed for just about everything: Alzheimer's, weight gain, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, infection, cancer, and more. These simple steps may help fight the destructive inflammatory process in your brain and body.

- ✓ Ask your doc about taking a daily baby aspirin to keep arteries open and help increase blood flow to the brain.
- ✓ Include omega-3 fatty acids, green tea, turmeric, rosemary, and plenty of cruciferous veggies in your diet. A bit of red wine or dark chocolate may also help.
- ✓ Floss daily.
- ✓ Cut back on sugar (high amounts of the sweet stuff can cause inflammation and weight gain).
- ✓ Walk for 30 minutes a day.
- ✓ Reduce stress.

Plant a Healing Garden—In Your House!

Health, Jan/Feb. 2008, pg. 82

Aloe Vera-Healing property: *Treats cuts.* Snip into the fleshy leaf of an aloe plant, and you'll discover a gel that speeds healing of minor cuts, soothes sunburned skin, and might lessen scarring. Before slathering it on your problem spots, test a small patch of skin for allergic reactions or irritation.

Best spot to plant: Near a sunny bathroom window.

Lavender-Healing property: *Brings the ZZZ's.* This herb's fragrance can calm your frazzled nerves and encourage deep, restorative sleep, studies show. Make sachets from its flowers or bundle a few stalks with raffia for instant aromatherapy.

Best spot to plant: On your nightstand or in a sunny bedroom window.

Gerbera daisy-Healing property: *Cleans the air.* This colorful plant helps purge your air of toxic pollutants like formaldehyde and benzene, which are found in many

household items and can cause dizziness and headaches. (and may lead to certain cancers).

Best spot to plant: In your home-office window.

Who Remembers What?

Reader's Digest, March 2008, pg. 100

Men may bemoan women's uncanny ability to remember every word and nuance of an argument weeks later, but there's a scientific basis for the gender gap. "Men and women are different in every system of the body, and nowhere is this more true than in the brain," says Marianne J. Legato, MD, founder of the Partnership for Gender-Specific Medicine at Columbia University. Because of a higher rate of blood flow to certain parts of the brain (including those that control language) as well as higher concentrations of estrogen, women's memories have been shown to be superior to men's in a couple key areas:



THE SPOKEN WORD: "This includes stories read aloud from books, as well as verbal arguments," says Dr. Legato, author of *Why Men Never Remember and Women Never Forget*. These things become more firmly fixed in women's memories, are better "packaged" and can be recalled more easily later, again thanks to enhanced blood flow to the brain.

UNPLEASANT, FRIGHTENING OR STRESSFUL EXPERIENCES: Estrogen activates a larger field of neurons in women's brains during an upsetting experience, explains Dr. Legato, so they experience the stress in greater and more precise detail. "Simply remembering an unpleasant incident can bring back the same terrible sadness and agitation to women that they experienced at the time," adds Dr. Legato. **On the plus side:** Women may be better eyewitnesses at crime and accident scenes.