

Family Living Focus
by
Katherine Wenzel
Mercer County



Living Longer

Older Americans are living longer and feeling better as the National Institute on Aging (NIA) reports that "an overwhelming majority rate their health as good or excellent. But large numbers of older people find their health threatened by memory impairments, depression, chronic conditions, and disability, especially at very advanced ages, which can substantially diminish quality of life."

Mental decline, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease do not have to be a normal part of aging. With the continual growth in the population of older adults much research is now being conducted regarding possible connections between nutrient intake and age-

related mental decline. Evidence now suggests that paying careful attention to your diet and lifestyle will help keep your mind sharp, and may even protect you from the devastating effects of Alzheimer's disease.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reported recently that "a diet rich in foods containing vitamin E may help protect some people against Alzheimer's disease." However, the study also found that vitamin E in the form of supplements was not associated with a reduction in the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Head of the Dementias of Aging Branch at the NIA, Neil Buckholtz, Ph.D. states, "It is not recommended, based on current evidence, that people take high-dose vitamin E supplements or other

antioxidant pills in an effort to prevent mental decline."

Studies are underway to determine why food sources seem to be a more beneficial form of vitamin E. Other studies indicate that high dietary sources of vitamin C may also help to protect against Alzheimer's disease in certain people.

A study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine earlier this year found people with elevated blood levels of the amino acid homocysteine are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia as those with normal levels. Adequate intakes of folic acid, B6, and B12 have been shown to keep homocysteine levels down, and to possibly help stave off mental decline.

The NIA plans to continue to fund research on the potential dietary components of antioxidants, B vitamins, and antioxidant-rich foods to prevent age-related mental decline or perhaps to even prevent Alzheimer's disease.

So what can you do now to help reduce your risk of Alzheimer's disease? Follow these suggestions from the Weill Medical College of Cornell University, Food & Fitness Advisor, (July 2002):

- Eat more foods rich in anti-

oxidants and B vitamins. B6 vitamin sources include chicken, fish, pork, bananas, eggs, oats, whole-wheat products, peanuts, and walnuts. B12 sources are red meat, fish, shellfish, poultry, fortified cereals, eggs, and dairy products. Vitamin C sources are citrus fruits, green leafy vegetables, potatoes. Vitamin E is found in vegetable oils, wheat germ, nuts, green leafy vegetables.

- Get at least 400 mcg of folic acid everyday. Good sources of folate include green leafy vegetables, broccoli, orange juice, dry beans, bananas, lima beans, and whole-wheat bread products.

- Stay physically active.
- Keep mentally active — read, do crossword puzzles, play cards.
- Stay socially active — invite friends over, dine together.

For more information on Alzheimer's disease contact the Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center at 1-800-438-4380 or at www.alzheimers.org.

More Than 150 Guests

(Continued from Page B2)

at least a day. Reheat and serve. She usually makes 500-600.

EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE CHICKEN STRIPS

Boneless, skinless chicken breasts — buy as many as needed. Place between sheets of waxed paper and pound. Cut into strips, about 1-inch wide. Dip lightly in flour, shake off, and lightly fry in a deep layer of olive oil. Keep doing this until all batches are finished. As you fry the chicken strips, start layering in a plastic-covered container, sprinkling each one with garlic salt. When finished, pour Italian salad dressing over all (not creamy type) and set in refrigerator at least a day until ready to serve. Reheat.

Many Reasons For Childhood Obesity

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Why is there such an explosion of childhood obesity these days?

Research has shown what common sense might tell you: There are a lot of reasons why so many children can be classified as obese today.

According to the American Obesity Association, more than 15 percent of children ages 6 through 12 are obese. That's up from 11 percent in 1988-1994 and 7 percent in 1976-1980. Type II diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure, orthopedic complications and other physical problems can result.

Why is this happening? Researchers have identified many risk factors.

If parents are obese, children are more likely to be, too. Genetics and common eating habits are both likely causes. As with adults, a poor diet and limited amount of physical activity often add up to extra weight.

Some researchers have pointed out changes in schools' food offerings as one reason for larger school kids. Students often have unlimited access to high-calorie, low-nutrition foods as a la carte items in the cafeteria line and in vending machines. In addition, required courses in physical education also have declined, decreasing the amount of activity and exercise students have as part of their school day.

Also, some research indicates that children in families who do not eat together at the dinner table are more likely to be overweight than those who do. Paying attention to what children eat seems to help.

Another problem: Eating too many chips, candy bars and other unhealthy snacks. Sugary soft drinks also fall into this category. In fact, 12 percent of preschool-age children, 33 percent of school-age children, and more than 50 percent of adolescents average 9 ounces of soft drinks or more a day.

Other reasons:

- An inability to determine proper portion sizes.
- Eating due to stress, boredom or other reasons besides hunger.
- Eating too much fast food.
- Not participating in enough activity or exercise.

Dietitians recommend that parents, educators and health-care providers work together to make healthful foods more available and decrease access to foods with little nutritional value. Parents can help by eating together as a family as often as possible, paying attention to what their children eat and encouraging children to engage in an hour of physical activity daily.

New Jersey Crowns New Dairy Promoters

BROADWAY, N.J. — Brynn Kirby of Somerset County was crowned the 2002-2003 New Jersey State Dairy Princess on Nov. 23, at the Broadway Grange in Broadway, N.J.

Angela Lulo was chosen to serve as the first alternate New Jersey state dairy princess.

"I thank all of you for coming to the pageant tonight," said Kirby after being crowned. "I am speechless; this is an honor and something I have dreamed of since I was a little girl."

The New Jersey dairy princess program is sponsored by the American Dairy Association and Dairy Council Inc., as well as the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association. Both associations will work with the dairy princesses at upcoming events, promoting milk and dairy products throughout New Jersey.

The girls will be asked to attend such events as state conventions, state fairs and shows, dairy princess pageants, and various other promotional events sponsored by ADADC, Inc. and Mid Atlantic.

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