

BEYOND HEALTH[®] *News*

May — June

2002

"Let no one suppose that the words doctor and patient can disguise from the parties the fact that they are employer and employee."

— *George Bernard Shaw*

An Ounce of Prevention

Now online...

The *Ounce of Prevention* show with host Raymond Francis is now available anywhere in the world — online. This cutting edge show is available on the Internet every Tuesday at 2 p.m., Eastern Time, at www.wnnhealthtalkradio.com. Readers living in Southeastern Florida can listen to the show live at the same 2 p.m. time on WNN out of Boca Raton at 1470 on the AM dial. Readers in the San Francisco Bay Area can listen to the show live at 9 a.m. every Sunday on KYCY, 1550 AM.

Fats Making Us Sick

The wrong fats that is...

Malnutrition is the leading cause of disease in America and one of the nutrients we do not get enough of is Omega-3 fats. This is why it is essential to supplement with these fats. A study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that about 90 percent of the polyunsaturated fats consumed by

Americans are Omega-6 fats, and that the ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 fats in our typical diet is between 20 to 1 and 50 to 1. Historically, the ratio was closer to one to one. However, since the start of the industrial revolution, there has been a huge shift in the ratio of Omega 3 and 6 fats in our diet. The result of this discrepancy is an epidemic of diseases of fatty degeneration including cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Meanwhile, the average person is clueless that this problem exists.

In order to prevent or reverse disease, it is imperative to improve your Omega-6 to Omega-3 ratio. To do this, begin by eliminating bad fats from your diet. This means eliminating all hydrogenated oils including margarine and all vegetable shortenings. Also eliminate canola, corn, soy, sunflower, and safflower oils from your diet; all of these are too high in Omega-6s. Be sure to check labels on foods you buy at the supermarket as many, if not most, contain hydrogenated oils.

For foods that supply Omega-3s, eat fresh fish (definitely not farmed fish), real eggs, and real meat (not available in supermarkets). Farmed fish are fed grains and their ratios are unhealthy. One of the reasons why eating beef causes so much disease is because grain-fed beef has the wrong fatty acid ratios. Make-believe, supermarket eggs have the wrong ratios and are unhealthy, whereas real organic eggs are healthy to eat. Real beef is also healthy; organic, grass-fed beef has an even better fatty acid ratio than fish.

To put good fats in your diet, substitute organic ghee as a fat (instead of

margarine or butter), and Bariani olive oil and organic flaxseed oil for oils. Good flaxseed products include Barleans' flaxseed oil and Udo's Choice. Also take high quality cod liver oil and Perque Triple EFA as supplements. Cod liver oil has the added advantage of supplying vitamins A and D. High quality fish oil is also an option. One thing that is not an option is continuing to eat a typical American diet that is so deficient in nutrients, it is guaranteed to make anyone sick.

Organic Foods More Nutritious

Safer too...

Organic foods are safer and better for you according to a report from the Soil Association of the United Kingdom. The report examined more than four hundred research papers on organic foods and concluded that organic foods were more nutritious and safer to consume.

Numerous studies are measuring an alarming decline in the vitamin and mineral content of our foods. Even though the average diet is now more varied than in the past, the lack of nutrition in the food is causing nutrient deficiencies and disease. Chemist and Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling believed that even if we eat what we think is a good diet, it is now impossible to obtain the nutrition we need for good health. This is why supplementing with high quality supplements is essential.

In addition to having poor nutrition, conventional foods expose the consumer to harmful pesticide residues, chemical additives, nitrates, and genetically modified contaminants. The best thing to do

THIS ISSUE...

News In Review

..... 1

Facts About Vitamin

Supplements 5

Questions & Answers

..... 6

Subscribe a Friend.... 8

is to shop at local farmer's markets and purchase from the organic farmers. The next best thing would be to buy organic foods from a health food store.

Modern Medicine Unsalvageable
"Not just a gap, but a chasm..."

It is no longer a secret! Modern medicine is one of our leading causes of disease, our leading cause of death, and it is in a state of economic meltdown. The cause of this crisis is that both disease and costs are increasing while medicine's archaic practices add to the problem and fail to provide any solutions. The medical establishment is so resistant to change, it has failed to incorporate the greatest scientific discoveries of the 20th century. Medicine remains mired in 17th century science, which is not applicable to 90 percent of today's health problems. With a few exceptions, having made themselves obsolete and almost irrelevant, most physicians are struggling to cope. As bad as things are getting, there are those who believe that with a little bit of tinkering, medicine can be brought into the 21st century. Not so, says the Institute of Medicine of the

National Academy of Sciences.

A report issued by the Institute of Medicine in March of 2001, titled *Crossing the Quality Chasm*, concluded that the difference between the care medicine *should* be delivering and what it *is* delivering is "not just a gap, but a chasm." The report stated that modern medicine has been unable "to translate knowledge into practice and to apply new technology safely and effectively," and that it "is even less prepared to respond to the extraordinary advances that surely will emerge during the coming decades." The report further concluded that merely making improvements to the current system *will not* suffice. It calls for a "sweeping redesign of the entire health system."

Why is medicine so resistant to change and progress? A study in the March 2002 *British Medical Journal* sheds some light. It found that physicians would rather continue to use technology that is outdated than to admit to their patients that what they were using was not as good as it could have been. Shortly after the study was published, a physician at a major medical meeting was quoted as saying that he "would not and could not" accept new findings showing that the drug he had been prescribing was dangerous. He believed that admitting to his patients he had been using an unsafe therapy would shame him in their eyes. In short, Physicians would rather continue to use an unsafe and ineffective therapy than to admit they were not perfect. This makes progress slow and difficult. Caveat emptor!

Nutrients Prevent Disease
Calcium prevents cancer...

As BHN has maintained since its inception, there is only one disease and only two causes of disease. Malnutrition is our leading cause of disease; so it is never surprising to read a new study finding that a lack of nutrition causes disease. New data in the March issue of the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* has found that adequate amounts of calcium significantly reduces the risk of colon cancer. People with calcium intakes of 700 to 800 mil-

ligrams per day had a 40 to 50 percent lower risk than those who consumed less than 500 milligrams per day. While this study measured only colon cancer, we suspect that adequate amounts of calcium would reduce the risk of almost all cancers since the mechanisms of calcium deficiency in cancer have been well researched.

Unfortunately, most Americans do not get adequate amounts of calcium in their diet. The biggest calcium source for most people is milk and dairy products, which are not good sources of calcium, plus having many other problems as well. As mentioned in the last issue of BHN, the amount of calcium in broccoli (a good source) has declined by 50 percent since 1975 due to our mineral-depleted soils. Readers are best advised to supplement with a high-quality calcium/magnesium formula like Perque Bone Guard. In addition, taking cod liver oil (call Beyond Health for high quality oil), which supplies natural vitamin D, also assists in the absorption of calcium from the diet.

Avoid Food Poisoning
The summer is coming...

About 80 million Americans are affected by food poisoning every year and about 9000 people die from it. New studies of food poisoning suggest the effects may be more serious than anyone has suspected. Far worse than just a case of diarrhea, every case of food poisoning will do at least some permanent damage. Some of that damage will manifest as arthritis, kidney, and neurological problems. One study found that 29 percent of those who were infected with *Salmonella* developed *reactive* arthritis (an inflammation of the joints that can last from several weeks to a lifetime) within one month of their food poisoning.

Salmonella is the most common problem and it causes the majority of food poisoning deaths. This bacteria lives in the intestines of animals, but particularly thrives in animals that have been fed antibiotics. This is one more reason to purchase only organic eggs,

BEYOND HEALTH *News*
 is published bi-monthly by Beyond Health Corp., which is dedicated to cutting through the confusion and bringing you high quality information, products, and services to enhance the quality of your life.

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meats, and fish. A typical Salmonella infection will develop anywhere from several to 36 hours after eating the contaminated food. Symptoms include diarrhea, cramps, nausea, vomiting, fever, and chills.

Campylobacter is another common pathogen found in our food supply. According to *Consumer Reports*, more than 70 percent of the chicken in our stores is contaminated with *Campylobacter*. This bacterium can cause Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a terrifying disease that can cause paralysis.

Another "bug" to watch out for is *E. coli*, 0157:H7. This particular strain of *E. coli* is mostly found in hamburger, but other meat as well. Since *E. coli* can be deadly, hamburger should not be eaten raw or rare. An *E. coli* infection may start with cramps and diarrhea that becomes bloody within 24 hours. The toxins produced by this strain of *E. coli* can cause kidney failure and death.

Summertime is the worst time of year for food poisoning because of higher temperatures, seasonal eating and travel habits. Keep foods refrigerated or frozen. When thawing frozen foods, defrost in the refrigerator, not on the counter top. *Cook meats thoroughly* (but not charred or burnt) and be careful not to let the juice from raw meat or poultry contaminate your hands or any other foods. Do not use the same cutting board for fruits and vegetables after it has been used for meat unless you have cleaned it thoroughly. With reasonable care, food poisoning can be avoided.

Explaining Chronic Disease

We created it...

The epidemic of chronic and degenerative disease that is maiming and killing most of us is a relatively new innovation. The question we must all ask is how have we created such an epidemic? Virtually every chronic disease is inflammatory in nature, and new information helps to explain how that happens. Recent research in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* has found that consuming refined carbohydrates (such as sugar, white rice, and white flour) and high glycemic foods

(such as white potatoes) produce high blood levels of C-reactive protein — a *powerful promoter of inflammation*.

These findings are extremely important to understanding our unprecedented epidemic of chronic, inflammatory diseases. The effects of C-reactive protein in causing inflammation present a powerful explanation of how we are causing this epidemic, as well as the answer to how to stop it. It is now known that inflammation of blood vessels initiates heart disease, and people with high levels of C-reactive protein are almost five times more likely to suffer a heart attack. Asthma, allergies, autoimmune disease, and arthritis are also common inflammatory diseases.

To prevent or reverse chronic diseases, keeping blood levels of C-reactive protein low would be a wise thing to do. Experiments have shown that both obesity and high levels of insulin cause an increase in C-reactive protein. To keep insulin levels and obesity down, do not consume refined carbohydrates or high glycemic foods. No one should be eating these "foods" anyway, but these new findings make it all the more imperative to stay away from them. Stay away from all refined sugar, white flour, white rice, and white potatoes. Many people are unaware that most breakfast cereals are loaded with sugar and white flour, and that most so-called whole grain breads are also mostly white flour. White potatoes have a high glycemic index, that is they cause blood sugar to rise, which increases C-reactive protein. (In addition, when white potatoes are consumed as french fries, they become one of the most dangerous foods we eat because of the added toxicity of the heated oils.)

Since we created this epidemic of chronic disease, we can stop it. A good place to begin is to cut sugar and white flour out of your life. Unfortunately, the average American now consumes about 160 pounds of sugar and 200 pounds of white flour per year. Some children consume as much as 50 percent of their calories from sugar. We consume hundreds of pounds of toxic, make-believe foods and then we wonder why we have

an epidemic of chronic disease, why our children are fat and sick, and why asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism.

Olive Oil Reduces Cholesterol

But it must be real olive oil...

New data in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* has found that adults who consumed two tablespoons of olive oil per day for a week had lower cholesterol levels and higher levels of antioxidant chemicals in their blood. Antioxidants help to protect cholesterol from oxidation and, indeed, the test subjects suffered from less oxidative damage to LDL cholesterol. The study concluded that these findings help to explain why countries such as Italy and Spain, which consume a lot of olive oil, have lower rates of heart disease.

Olive oil contains antioxidant phenols and these compounds were elevated in the blood of those taking olive oil. But here's the catch. Most of the olive oil on the market is low in phenols. Modern, high-speed production methods literally wash the phenols down the drain. This is why it is important to health to always eat unadulterated, real foods. It is the only way to get all the healthy nutrients that nature intended. The only real olive oil BHN has found in the U.S. is *Bariani* — available at Beyond Health.

PCBs and Cancer

Increased risk...

PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) are manmade chemicals that were banned two decades ago. However, these are very persistent in the environment and still represent a serious problem to health. New data in the April *American Journal of Epidemiology* indicates that certain PCBs, numbers 105, 118, and 156 were linked to a 60 to 80 percent greater risk of breast cancer. The researchers noted that these PCBs were chemically similar to the cancer-causing chemicals called dioxins.

PCBs mimic the action of hormones in the body. By altering hormone metabolism, they cause hormone-related cancers such as breast, prostate, and skin cancers. PCBs are fat-soluble chemi-

cals and they will store in the fatty tissue of animals. To avoid these chemicals, avoid meat and dairy products. Eat only organically produced eggs and meat. Avoid fresh water fish and fish caught off the coast of the U.S., eat only deep ocean fish.

Diabetes and Kidney Failure

Vitamins prevent failure...

Diabetes is one of our leading causes of death and one way it causes death is through kidney failure. Lower levels of albumin in the urine reduce the risk of failure. A study in a 2001 *Diabetes Medicine* has found that diabetics taking supplemental vitamins C and E had significantly lower urinary albumin excretion.

Reducing the albumin excretion rate reduces the risk of end-stage renal disease. To accomplish this with simple, risk-free vitamin supplementation is a major achievement. BHN recommends a minimum of 3000 mg of Perque vitamin C per day and 400 units of Unique E for every 40 pounds of body weight per day.

Personal Care Products Deadly

Safe ones are available...

Almost all personal care products, such as toothpaste, shampoo, skin cream, soap, deodorants, perfume, hair sprays, and makeup, contain toxic chemicals that are detrimental to health. Artificial colors, preservatives, detergents, and fragrances are among the many types of synthetic chemicals used in these dangerous products. People who may be concerned about environmental pollution are often completely unaware that what they put in and on their bodies on a daily basis can have far more devastating effects than the toxins out there in the environment. Many chemicals are quickly transported through the mucus membranes or skin and end up bioaccumulating in the body to dangerous levels. Absorbed into your body with every use, the combined effects of these toxins, accumulating over decades, can slowly alter cell structure, confuse hormone receptors, and lead to serious chronic diseases includ-

ing cancer and autoimmune disease. Most so-called "diseases of aging" are merely the result of the long-term impact of poor nutrition and such toxic damage.

Many of the chemicals found in personal care products have been shown to cause cancer in animals. Many of them are known to disrupt hormone chemistry, to lower immunity, and cause reproductive and neurological damage. This is allowed to happen because regulators think these toxins are less important than the toxins in foods and drugs, but they fail to take into account the long-term accumulation and impact of these chemicals when acting in combination. However, there are safe products available. BHN advises using only those products that have been approved by Raymond Francis. It took Raymond 18 months of intensive research to find and approve a safe and effective toothpaste and two years to approve a safe and effective deodorant. Safe and effective personal products are available at Beyond Health.

Dietary Fat and Cancer

Increases risk...

A study in *Primary Care and Cancer* has concluded that, "The growth rate of established tumors may be altered substantially by dietary modification." This is exactly what BHN has always maintained.

Poor diets contribute to causing disease and good diets contribute to wellness. Specifically, this study found that the amount and type of fat in the diet had a direct correlation with prostate cancer. The study was performed by Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. In doing cross-cultural studies, the researchers found that our Western lifestyle was associated with increased risk of prostate cancer.

Supporting these data, another study in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* found that mice fed a diet of 40 percent fat and given cancer had significantly lower tumor growth rates when their fat intake was cut to 21 percent.

Similarly, Dr. Dean Ornish at the University of California-San Francisco has found that, "low-fat eating, coupled with lifestyle changes, can stop or reverse the progression of the disease in its early stages." Consistent with Ornish's findings, last year, researchers at the University of California-San Diego concluded that a plant-based diet combined with stress reduction could slow the progression of prostate cancer.

The bottom line on all this is that modern research is proving what many of us have known for a long time—that both the incidence and growth rate of tumors can be substantially altered by dietary modification. Why not get on a good diet now?

More Than One in Ten Harmed

Hospitals are dangerous places...

About 11 percent of all hospital patients are harmed by "adverse events" while they are in the hospital, according to a study in the *British Medical Journal*. Six percent of these "events" end up with the patient dead and 20 percent experience a permanent decline in health. The researchers estimated that 50 percent of these events were easily preventable by the hospital staff.

The problem with this study is that only easily identifiable, adverse events were measured. In truth, almost every hospital patient is harmed. This is why modern medicine is in crisis, and why it has become the leading cause of death in the U.S. Modern medicine is obsolete, and for what it costs, we all deserve a lot better. Let the buyer beware.

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Facts About Vitamin Supplements

by Raymond Francis

Millions of Americans take vitamin supplements on a daily basis. Does it improve their health? No! Large-scale epidemiological studies have been unable to find health benefits in vitamin takers. Confused? There is a simple explanation. Most vitamin products are ineffective and even the best-selling brands contain toxins. The few decent brands are not taken by many people, while the harm done by top selling, toxic brands more than offset the good effects of the better brands, making it difficult to measure benefits.

After seeking help from 36 medical doctors and almost dying from their treatments, I took control of my own health. As I was struggling to restore my health, I knew I needed vitamins, but I had to learn the hard way about the differences between vitamin brands. I was chemically sensitive and contaminants in all of the brands I tried made me sick. The Perque brand was the first supplement I was able to tolerate, and only after taking Perque did my health improve. As a chemist, I began to wonder why one brand was so superior and the others so awful. Later I found out. Perques are safer because they are extraordinarily pure. They are more effective because they are bio-engineered; using the world's most advanced technology, to deliver nutrients at the cellular level. This combination gives Perque extraordinary biological activity at the cellular level. It was their purity that allowed me to tolerate them and their superior bioactivity that was instrumental in restoring my health.

The problems with vitamin supplements are legion. First of all, almost half (43%) of all vitamin brands are completely useless because they do not dissolve soon enough to be assimilated. This problem is so widespread, the FDA is talking about issuing regulations regarding the time it takes a vitamin pill to dissolve. Next, up to half of many formulations consists of fillers. These fillers can introduce toxins and allergens, interfere with solubility and/or absorption, and reduce the biological activity at the cellular level. Some manufacturers make a habit of purchasing, at tremendous discounts, outdated raw materials that have lost their potency. The most expensive vitamin pill in the world is one that doesn't work. Those cheap vitamins are more expensive than people think!

Even among brands that dissolve soon enough, most of them provide only the RDA of the nutrients they contain. Yet, thousands of studies have shown that it takes much more than the RDA to show beneficial effects. Many brands try to fool the customer into thinking they are getting a bargain by including too many ingredients, thereby having far too little of each to do any good. Often they try to hide this fact by listing ingredients in micrograms rather than milligrams. This makes the numbers look bigger when they are actually smaller. It

takes 1000 micrograms to equal one milligram.

Cheap raw materials, such as calcium carbonate, are often used as ingredients. Unfortunately, calcium carbonate does a poor job of supplying the body with biologically active calcium. Often, manufacturers try to fool the customer by including, along with the carbonate, a more biologically active form of calcium such as calcium citrate. The problem is they don't tell you how much of each, and the more expensive citrate may be only one percent while the cheap carbonate is 99 percent.

Then there is the question of synthetic versus naturally derived vitamins. Natural ingredients are more expensive and that is why most vitamin brands use synthetics. But synthetics are substantially less biologically active and can even have negative effects. The molecules of these synthetics often differ in shape from the natural molecules. The shape is important in how they react. For example, synthetic vitamin E and beta carotene are well known to be less biologically active than their natural forms. Taking synthetic beta-carotene can even cause a deficiency of other carotenes. In addition to the problems posed by synthetics, other considerations include the age and purity of the raw materials and how they are shipped, stored, handled, compounded, and packaged. All these can have a big effect on the quality of the finished product. Unfortunately, because of the many subtleties and complexities, it is almost impossible for the consumer to make an informed judgement about the quality of a vitamin supplement. There are, however, some clues anyone can look for such as the chemistry of the minerals. If you find carbonates, oxides, sulfates, phosphates, and chelates, you are most likely looking at an inferior formula. Put it down and save your money. A multivitamin containing iron, iodine, or copper is not well designed because these can cause loss of antioxidant nutrients in the formula. A formula that lists beta carotene, without listing the source, is most likely the inferior synthetic variety. Vitamin E with a "dl" in front of it is the less desirable synthetic version. For those who care about their health, the best solution is to purchase from a trusted source like Beyond Health. Beyond Health is a health solutions resource; it does the research for you and selects only the best of the best. That is why we selected Perque. Based on what your body actually gets for what you pay, Perque is the least expensive brand on the market.

Raymond Francis is an M.I.T.-trained scientist and an internationally recognized leader in the emerging field of optimal health maintenance.

Question: How can I avoid traveler's diarrhea?

C.P. — Thousand Oaks, CA

Answer: Travelers diarrhea is caused by exposure to local microorganisms that are unfamiliar to the normal flora in your digestive system. When I travel, I take olive leaf extract. This is a powerful natural antibiotic that protects against bacteria, viruses, yeasts, and parasites. For even more safety, take four to six Perque Dophilus per day for three or four weeks before traveling and continue for a couple of weeks after travel.

In addition to supplements, take care about what you eat and drink. Use bottled water, even for brushing your teeth. Seafood and meats should be thoroughly cooked and raw fruits and vegetables should be avoided, unless you have peeled them yourself. With some good supplementation and some moderate amount of caution, you should be able to enjoy your trip with no complications.

Question: I heard you say on the radio that canola oil was not a healthy oil. Could you please explain why?

E.C.. — Fort Lauderdale, FL

Answer: There are two major reasons why I do not recommend canola oil. First of all, it is deficient in omega-3 fatty acids, which are lacking in our diet. If you are going to use an oil in your diet, it should be supplying needed nutrients, without any toxins. Canola does not supply these nutrients. Secondly, it supplies toxins. Canola oil is highly refined and often partially hydrogenated. Such refining causes the creation of trans-fatty acids, which are toxic and unhealthy.

Question: My mother has a homocysteine level of 15. Could you tell me what the normal level should be and what can be done to lower it if it's too high?

L.A. — Oakland, CA

Answer: Homocysteine is an amino acid that is natural to the body. However, high levels of this amino acid have been associated with both cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's, and have just recently been linked to cervical cancer as well. When homocysteine levels get too high, this can damage blood vessels and lead to the buildup of plaque in the arteries. High homocysteine can also cause LDL cholesterol to oxidize as well as increasing the risk of blood clots.

Normally, homocysteine is changed into other amino acids that the body needs, however, if the body is unable to make this conversion, it can build up to toxic levels. Inability to make this conversion is most often linked to dietary deficiencies of folic acid, and vitamins B6 and B12. Most doctors believe that homocysteine levels of less than 12 are OK and some think that levels of up to 15 may pose only a modest risk.

I strongly disagree with this assessment. Epidemiological data indicate that any level above 6 sharply increases risk, and the higher it gets the higher the risk. The problem is doctors measure the population and take an average, thinking the average is healthy. The average American has a homocysteine level of 10; therefore 10 must be "safe." What is not realized is that we are measuring a sick population where 44 percent of us die of cardiovascular disease and the incidence of Alzheimer's disease is sharply increasing, so 10 is not safe.

Unless there are other factors causing the high homocysteine levels, such as inherited enzyme deficiencies or some prescription drug, the way to lower homocysteine is to eat a good diet of fresh, organic, whole, unprocessed foods. In addition, get on the "comprehensive" Perque vitamin program and take the following: folic acid, 800 to 5000 mcg per day; vitamin B6, 100 to 600 mg per day; vitamin B12, 1000 to 3000 mcg per day; zinc, 30 to 90 mg per day; choline, 500 to 5000 mg per day; and inositol, 250 to 1000 mg per day. Be sure to have your doctor measure homocysteine periodically to be sure you are taking the dosages that your body requires to lower the levels to 6 or below.

Question: I have been taking kava, but I have read recently that it has caused serious liver problems so I have stopped taking it. I wondered if you had any information on kava.

E.A. — Fairmont, CA

Answer: Kava is a mild tranquilizer that has been used for many hundreds of years by natives in the South Pacific, without any liver problems. Indeed, if one reads carefully the reports of liver damage coming out of Europe, it is difficult to make a solid connection between kava and liver disease. Dr. Donald Waller, a professor of pharmacology and toxicology at the University of Illinois, looked at these reports of liver damage and had this to say: "Kava when taken in appropriate doses...has no scientifically established potential for causing liver damage." The most plausible explanation for the liver damage being reported may be the interaction of kava with prescription drugs. It is possible for other substances, such as prescription drugs, to alter the toxicity of something, such as kava, that is normally safe. People who are taking prescription drugs (*and nobody should be taking prescription drugs*), who use alcohol excessively, or who have any pre-existing liver disease should probably not take kava. However, when used as directed, it appears to have no risk for most people. If I see any new data that changes this, BHN will let you know.

Question: I just read in the newspaper that frying and baking starchy foods such as potatoes can create chemicals in the food that are carcinogens. I was wondering if you thought this

was valid?

F.F. — San Rafael, CA

Answer: Yes, I think it is valid. I have written extensively in the past about the dangers of eating cooked food. (About 80 percent of my diet is consumed raw and most of the cooked portion is cooked at temperatures no higher than steam.) Nature did not intend for us to eat cooked food because cooking damages the nutritional content of food and also creates toxins; this contributes to deficiency and toxicity, the two causes of disease. The higher the temperature and the longer the cooking time, the more damage is done. Even protein, the most hearty of nutrients, is damaged by cooking. For example, dry oatmeal is about 14 percent protein, while cooked oatmeal is only 2 percent.

The news item you referred to came out of a study at the University of Stockholm. It began with an original study of industrial workers exposed to a toxic and carcinogenic chemical called *acrylamide*, which is used in the manufacture of plastics. The purpose was to measure the exposure of these workers so as to devise better ways to protect them from harm. As expected, high acrylamide levels were found in the blood of the workers, but surprisingly, high levels of acrylamide were also found in the control group who had no work exposure to acrylamide. Perplexed, the researchers decided to find out why ordinary people had high levels of such a dangerous chemical.

The answer to this mystery was found in the food supply. Acrylamide is formed when heating starches. Especially high levels were found in crackers, potato chips, cereal products, and french fries. In fact, it was found that one bag of potato chips contained as much as 500 times the maximum amount of acrylamide that is allowed in drinking water by the World Health Organization.

BHN has long advised against eating unhealthy processed foods such as breads, breakfast cereals, and french fries. Cooking meats at high temperatures also produces powerful carcinogens called heterocyclic amines.

The solution is to minimize consumption of cooked foods to no more than 20 percent of the diet and always eat some raw foods along with cooked foods. Stay away from the worst cooked foods like barbecued meat and fried potatoes. If you must cook, boil or steam the food so as to avoid exposure to higher temperatures.

Question: I was wondering if I should be taking a vitamin B12 supplement along with my other Perques. I am 65 and I have digestive problems, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, and suffer from low thyroid.

M.J. — Belmont, CA

Answer: I would highly recommend extra B12. First off, research indicates that up to 40 percent of our population is short vitamin B12. Next, people with low thyroid and autoimmune diseases such as Hashimoto's have significantly higher risk of B12 deficiency. Finally, as we get older, we absorb B12 less efficiently.

Vitamin B12 (cobalamin) is an extremely important vitamin. It is critical to cell replication and division, and the production of DNA and RNA as well as production of serotonin and dopamine, which have major roles in preventing depression and regulating mood. B12 also helps to produce important metabolites such as choline and methionine. Healthy nervous function depends on B12. A deficiency can cause dementia similar to Alzheimer's, as well as numbness, burning feet, and pins-and-needles. Indeed, B12 deficiency can cause everything from incontinence to anemia, fatigue, dizziness, heart attacks, strokes, memory loss, depression, poor balance, and digestive problems.

Most of the people who are short B12 are experiencing absorption problems. The body needs only 3 to 4 micrograms of B12 per day, but we need to consume a lot more because normal absorption is not efficient. Then as we age and develop low stomach acid, damaged gut tissue, and other digestive problems, absorption becomes impaired. Autoimmune diseases, such as Hashimoto's thyroiditis and multiple sclerosis appear to further complicate B12 absorption. So if you have low stomach acid, as many older Americans do, plus low thyroid, your risk of B12 deficiency is high.

B12 is produced by stomach bacteria, but most Americans have abnormal stomach bacteria due to our poor diets and having taken antibiotics. The best food source is animal protein, which is why vegans are often short B12. B12 supplementation is available as an intramuscular injection, pills and sublingual tablets. Perque supplies a high quality sublingual and that is my personal choice. I would recommend one a day, but for preexisting problems such as yours, two per day is a better choice.

Readers are invited to ask questions.
 Answers will be provided by Raymond Francis on a space available basis.
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