

BEYOND HEALTH[®] *News*

July — August

2004

"There are no...supernatural phenomena, only very large gaps on our knowledge of what is natural..."

— Edgar Mitchell

Appolo XIV Astronaut

Candy Is Poison

Sugar plus lead...

Almost all candy consists mainly of the deadly metabolic poison known as refined sugar. Raymond Francis calls eating sugar "death by installment" as it throws vitamin, mineral, and hormone chemistry into chaos. Sugar depresses immunity, causes colds, flu, diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's, tooth decay, and cancer, among other "side effects." Adding to this list, new research shows that eating sugar can cause chemical changes in nerves, impairing their ability to transmit messages; blood vessels that carry nutrients to the nerves can also be damaged. As if all this isn't bad enough, now there is a new risk factor—lead.

In April it was reported that more than 100 brands of candy sold in the United States (especially those imported from Mexico) have tested positive for dangerously high levels of lead over the

last ten years. Tests conducted by the *Orange County Register* on 180 samples of candy purchased in Southern California stores found that 32 percent of them tested high for lead contamination. The candy was purchased at large supermarket chains, such as Ralphs and Vons, as well as at small mom-and-pop stores. "Children are eating poison," said Leticia Ayala of the Environmental Health Coalition in San Diego.

Unfortunately, in almost every instance, candy testing high for lead was allowed to remain on the shelves, the public was not informed, and no action was taken against the manufacturers. Lead deactivates enzymes, generates free radicals, and causes a variety of disease problems, most especially irreversible brain and nervous system damage. This damage manifests as behavioral problems and lowered intelligence. A study by Professor Richard Canfield of Cornell University found an average IQ drop of 7.4 among children exposed to even relatively low levels of lead.

Parents should not allow children to eat candy, or anything else containing sugar, as sugar has a devastating effect on health. Adding lead to the equation is just one more reason to keep candy away from children, not to mention adults.

Expensive Prescription Drugs

The perfect solution...

Nearly a third of Americans say that paying for prescription drugs is a problem for their families, according to a recent Associated Press poll. This should not be a surprise as drug prices have been increasing much faster than

the rate of inflation. Since 2000, drug prices have increased 28 percent. One emphysema drug went up 20 percent in one year. Of those expressing problems paying for drugs, three-fourths say their solution is to cut dosages. Some people reported they are skipping meals to afford their medicine. Fortunately this problem has an easy solution.

BHN believes that the solution to the drug-cost problem is education. Most people are unaware that prescription drugs are dangerous toxins and almost completely unnecessary. Drug takers need to be told there are far safer, less expensive, and more-effective natural alternatives to virtually every drug. It is hard to think of a drug that is necessary. In fact, a good diet, high-quality supplements, detoxification, and exercise will both prevent and solve most medical problems.

We must keep in mind that *properly prescribed prescription drugs are our third leading cause of death*. Prescription drugs are sub-lethal toxins that in combination frequently become lethal. These drugs are one of our leading causes of disease, and these diseases add hundreds of billions to our health costs. Clearly, health costs could be instantly reduced, lives could be saved, and the health of our population improved if most people got off their toxic drugs. We could save billions of dollars in health costs. Meanwhile millions of people would live higher quality lives.

Take a minute and think about it. What if it was possible to wave a magic wand and instantly eliminate one of our leading causes of disease and our third

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leading cause of death; wouldn't that be a miracle? Who wouldn't want to do it? Yet this is not wishful thinking. It is a reality, and we have the power to do it right now. All we have to do is say "no" to prescription drugs. What a concept! Pass this concept on to your doctor.

Global Obesity Epidemic

Getting international attention...

The epidemic of obesity sweeping the globe is finally getting some international attention. In May, a report titled *Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity, and Health* was presented to the World Health Organization. Representatives from Europe and the United States met in Brussels last February to discuss food policy and strategies to address this deadly epidemic. This new report advises a reduction in dietary sugar, salt, and trans-fatty acids. It also recommends tax and subsidy policies in individual countries to provide incentives for healthy dietary habits

It is encouraging that something is finally happening to address this out-of-control epidemic of what is a serious

and fatal disease. People who are even a few pounds overweight already exhibit significant biochemical abnormalities and are on their way to more serious problems. However, we cannot wait for government action, which may be a long time in coming. Each of us can act now to achieve normal weight. Most importantly, get off the Big Four: sugar, white flour, processed oils, and milk products. Keeping these deadly "foods" from our children is critical.

Parents and Cancer

Closeness counts...

A strong relationship with your parents can help to prevent cancer in later life. All disease has a psychological component, but it is easy to forget that as we focus on toxins, nutrition, and lifestyle. A study reported in the *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* helps to remind us that the psychological pathway (one of the six pathways to disease) is always a factor in the disease equation. The question is how large a factor it is in any particular situation. Looking at cancer, a group of more than 1500 were studied for more than a quarter century. The study found a strong relationship between the incidence of cancer and the perceived lack of closeness to parents. Among males, a good father-son relationship was most important in preventing cancer.

Male Infertility and Toxins

Sperm count dropping...

A recent UK study in the *New Scientist* confirmed something that has been known for some time: average sperm count has been dropping. The average sperm count for men may have dropped by as much as 29 percent over the last 12 years. This helps to explain why up to one out of four of our young people have trouble reproducing.

In attempting to understand why this is happening, it appears that environmental toxins are the culprit. In May of 2003, a study in *Epidemiology* found that a class of chemicals called *phthalates* caused a reduction in sperm count. In addition, phthalates cause a reduction in sperm motility. What is particularly

significant about this study is that it confirms in humans what had already been observed in animals. Animal studies showed that phthalates lowered sperm count, but industry sources argued that the results could not be translated to humans. This new study with humans by scientists from the Centers for Disease Control, Harvard School of Public Health, the Dana Farber Cancer Institute and Harvard Medical School, showed dramatically that men with higher phthalate levels have reduced sperm counts, lower sperm motility and more deformed sperm. Men with the highest concentrations had the lowest count, and those with the lowest phthalate levels had the highest count.

Phthalates are a class of chemicals that are widely used in consumer products to soften plastics, as solvents, and as carriers for fragrances. They are most commonly found in soft vinyl plastic toys, in medical tubing and fluid bags, plastic food packaging, flooring, shower curtains, that new car smell, and in a variety of cosmetics including perfume, nail polish, and hair spray. It has been estimated that food packaging alone contributes 0.8 to 1.6 mg of phthalates per person per day in the U.S. This is an enormous amount of toxic chemicals to be ingesting every day; most of it coming from meat, cheese, and other foods directly in contact with plastic wrapping. These chemicals interfere with the body's production of sex hormones so it should not be a surprise that they are causing measurable reproductive problems.

Yet another culprit in lower sperm count appears to be aspartame. Aspartame, marketed as Equal and Nutrasweet is found in a number of low-calorie foods and drinks. According to Japanese researchers, rats fed aspartame had significantly lower sperm counts. Even small doses of less than one-thousandth of accepted safety levels had adverse effects on sperm levels, according to researchers.

These adverse effects on sperm count should not be taken lightly. What we are seeing is significant disturbances to normal human biochemistry. This is always

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a serious matter as it is causing cells to malfunction and cellular malfunction is the essence of disease. These chemicals are causing disease—period! Avoid toxic products made from aspartame, use only those personal care products approved by Beyond Health, and avoid packaged food.

Body Temperature and Toxicity

Temperature dropping...

There has been talk in the medical literature about lowering normal body temperature from 98.6 to 98. It seems that physicians are seeing many more people with low temperatures from 96.5 to 97.5 without showing any sign of hypothyroidism. Their response to these observations is they want to lower what we consider normal. A better approach might be to ask why we are seeing these low temperatures.

One explanation for the observed low body temperatures just emanated from the National Health and Environmental Research Laboratory at the Environmental Protection Agency. Researchers there have found that lower temperatures may be the body's natural response to increased environmental toxicity. Animal studies have found that body temperature drops to protect against damage by environmental toxins. In one truly disturbing finding, a researcher measured lower body temperature using a dose of pesticide that was 15 times lower than the "safe" dose. While lower body temperature does help to protect against toxic damage, which is good, it also does something else. Lower temperature slows the removal of toxins from the body thereby prolonging the time when a toxin is in contact with the body's tissues.

It is important that each of us lower our exposure to toxins. Fortunately, about 80 percent of the toxins we are exposed to are under our personal control. Anyone can learn to lower their toxic exposure substantially. Purchase only organic foods and use products found to be safe by Beyond Health. Lower your intake of toxins and increase the excretion. A good diet, high-quality supplements, and exercise

are critical to detoxification and toxin removal. Rebounding is also a good detoxifier. In addition, use a Beyond Health approved far-infrared sauna regularly. Toxicity is one of the two causes of disease and more and more we are discovering the extent to which environmental toxins are affecting us—and *it's not good.*

X-rays Damage Health

Linked to low birth weight...

Anyone who has read *Never Be Sick Again* knows that medical x-rays are one of our leading causes of disease and death. So it is not a surprise to find disturbing new evidence in a May issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Researchers at the University of Washington have discovered that women who have dental x-rays while pregnant are at greater risk for delivering low birth weight babies. In fact, the chances increase by a factor of three.

BHN is not surprised at these findings since there is no safe level of this type of radiation. The UW researchers, however, were greatly surprised. Dental x-rays target the head, and the radiation dose is considered to be very small. No one anticipated such an effect. It becomes obvious that the body responds in ways we don't yet understand when assaulted with something as damaging as x-rays.

It is important to understand that low birth weight is a major public health problem in the United States, contributing substantially both to infant mortality and to childhood handicap. Low birth weight babies are more likely than babies of normal weight to have health problems. Many of these babies require specialized care in intensive-care nurseries to help them survive. A low birth-weight, premature baby is at greater risk of developing breathing problems. Up to fifty percent of very low birthweight infants develop bleeding in the brain. Some have a dangerous heart problem called patent ductus arteriosus. Some low birth weight babies have a dangerous intestinal problem called necrotizing enterocolitis, which leads to feeding

difficulties, abdominal swelling and other complications. Babies with this problem are usually treated with intravenous fluids and antibiotics, and in some cases, surgery is necessary to remove damaged sections of intestine. Some suffer from respiratory distress syndrome (RDS). Babies with RDS lack a substance that keeps small air sacs in the lungs from collapsing. Retinopathy of prematurity, caused by an abnormal growth of blood vessels in the eye that can lead to vision loss. Many premature, low birth weight babies lack enough body fat to maintain a normal body temperature. Low body temperature can slow growth and contribute to breathing problems and other complications. These babies are placed in an incubator or warmer right after birth to help them maintain a normal body temperature. These are not problems to be ignored and they all contribute to our runaway health costs. Meanwhile, the cases caused by x-rays are almost entirely preventable.

Since about 90 percent of all x-rays are not medically justified, a sensible policy is to politely decline most all medical x-rays, especially if you are pregnant. On rare occasion, in a medical emergency, there may be a compelling reason to have them. Should you decide to have them, be sure to cover as much of your body as possible with lead shielding. In fact double up on the shielding, and cover as much of your body as possible. We know that X-rays cause cancer as well as other diseases, and now low birth weight as well. Remember that x-rays are dangerous. Children especially need to be protected as growing bodies are more susceptible to radiation damage.

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Air Pollution

by Raymond Francis

The average American breathes in about two heaping tablespoons of airborne particles each day. The smallest of these particles can lodge deep in the lungs where they remain and cause serious problems. Now there are shocking new findings regarding such particles. In mid-May, Canadian researchers reported in the journal *Science* that fine airborne particles can cause genetic mutations that are passed on to future generations. Most of these fine particles emanate from industrial plants, power plants, incinerators, and diesel-burning vehicles.

In 1999, a study in Los Angeles indicated that 71 percent of the cancer risk from air contaminants came from diesel emissions; now we know why. The fine particles from these emissions cause DNA damage, and such damage is the first step in the development of cancer. The researchers said they didn't know if it was the particles themselves or toxic chemicals carried by the particles that were causing the damage. The only good news coming out of this report is that using a HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter to clean the air prevents the damage.

Air pollution has been long recognized as a cause of disease. It causes ailments from allergies to cancer, and inhaling particles is known to disrupt the heart's beat-to-beat variations. It is estimated that 64,000 Americans die prematurely each year from heart and lung disease caused by particulate pollution. However, you don't have to live downwind of a power plant or drive behind a truck to be poisoned by air pollution. Some of the most polluted air you can breathe is found right in your own home. Most people are aware that driving in traffic puts a toxic chemical load on the body. However, most are unaware that our biggest pollution load can be found in our homes and offices.

Not only does polluted outside air, with all its particles and chemicals, get into our homes, but then we add to the pollution once inside. Sources of toxic chemicals such as building materials, furnishings, gas appliances, furnaces, cleaning and consumer products, and tobacco smoke all contribute to an unhealthy indoor environment. Data from the Environmental Protection Agency indicate unprecedented amounts of indoor air pollution. Most indoor air is two to five times more polluted than outdoors, but it can easily reach a hundred times more polluted. The combination of indoor pollution and the fact that most Americans spend 90 percent of their time indoors creates a serious health problem, a challenge that must be addressed.

Where is this indoor pollution coming from, and what can be done about it? One important source is the building materials themselves. Plywood, particleboard, and paints off-gas formaldehyde, a common indoor pollutant and carcinogen.

Formaldehyde causes serious damage to DNA, and the damage is accumulative as exposure continues. Most especially, do not live in a house or buy furniture made of particleboard, as it off-gasses the most.

Another important source of indoor pollution is carpets. Carpets made of synthetic fibers will off-gas dozens of toxic chemicals, some of them for decades. New carpets are especially toxic. Chemicals come not only from the fibers, but from the adhesives, backing, and padding. Consider using carpets made of natural fiber or hardwood floors with area rugs.

Dangerous gasses and particles are generated by household appliances such as gas stoves, water heaters, furnaces, space heaters, and fireplaces. These can release toxins such as nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane, and other gasses along with fine particles into the indoor air. Furnaces and gas water heaters should be kept outside the living space, such as in a shed or unattached garage. If this is not possible consider switching to an electric water heater; this is what I had to do. Gas stoves should be used only with good ventilation, an electric stove is preferable. Use fireplaces sparingly and never use artificial logs as they put a heavy hydrocarbon load into the living space.

Even tap water is dangerous. Tap water contains toxins such as chlorine and chlorinated hydrocarbons. Exposure by breathing these chemicals can rival or exceed exposure from drinking the water. Particularly bad is breathing the fumes from dishwashers, clothes washers, bathtubs, and showers. Bleaches and detergents used in washing add to the toxic load. Good ventilation is essential, as is using a water filter for drinking and showering.

Paradichlorobenzene, found in mothballs and deodorizers, is another common indoor pollutant and also a carcinogen. Cedar chips are a more benign alternative to mothballs.

Attached garages are another problem. Exhaust fumes as well as hydrocarbon vapors coming from the engine can enter the living space. Whenever possible, I leave my garage door open so as to ventilate that space.

Never use pesticides in or around the home. If such is necessary, use a safe Beyond Health approved pesticide. Tobacco smoke, perfume, cosmetics, cleaning products, aerosol products, and all manner of scented products are toxic and should be avoided. There are safe alternatives for most things. Beyond Health even has a safe and extraordinarily effective carpet-cleaning product. Other biological contaminants include mold, animal dander, dust mites, and cockroaches.

The negative health effects of air pollution may be felt immediately, years later, or as has now been discovered, even in the next generation. Immediate effects can be felt after a

single exposure, but most effects are more insidious, causing damage to health without your knowing it. Even colds, flu, and asthma can result from the damage to immunity caused by breathing polluted air.

Numerous studies have proven that breathing clean air is healthier. Every American needs to reduce their toxic load, and to be aware of the health risks posed by air pollution. To protect ourselves, we must begin with our personal environment and stop introducing pollutants. Be aware of the problems with carpets, paints, cleaning materials, deodorizers, mattresses, gas appliances, perfume, dry cleaning chemicals, and so forth.

After reducing the amount of new pollutants we introduce into our environments, we need to reduce the existing toxic load. Toward this end, filters are what we need: shower, water, and air filters. Even in the above study of genetic damage caused by fine particles, the damage was prevented by filtering the air with a HEPA filter. Due to the unprecedented levels of air pollution we are now exposed to, air filters have become a virtual necessity.

Two years ago, I set out to find an air filter suitable for homes and offices that would meet my exacting standards for quality, safety, and effectiveness—a filter I could recommend to the public. The first units I looked at were the heavily-advertised "ionic" air filters. I rejected these devices. The February 2002 *Consumer Reports* rated them at the bottom for removing air particles and they do not remove chemicals. Worse, they are ozone generators. Ionic air filters are capable of generating worrisome levels of ozone that have actually been measured to exceed safety standards. This is especially bad if you sleep in a small bedroom with the door closed.

Ozone is a powerful oxidizing agent that will deplete the body's stores of precious antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E. Even low levels of ozone can irritate the nose and airways, increasing the symptoms of allergies and asthma. Low-level exposures to ozone have been shown to cause significant temporary decreases in lung capacity, and people with lung disease or asthma would be particularly at risk. Population studies on humans showed that long-term exposures to low-level ozone can lead to permanent reduction in lung capacity. Humans exposed to 0.5 ppm for three hours a day, six days a week, for twelve weeks showed significant changes in lung function. Animals exposed to 1 ppm for just two days suffered lung damage.

The U.S. National Ambient Air Quality Standard is an hourly average of 0.12 ppm (parts per million). I think this standard is too high. My rule of thumb is this: if you can smell it, it's too much. The odor of ozone becomes obvious at about 0.05 ppm. Short-term exposures to little more than this can cause increased sensitivity to airborne allergens and irritants. In one study, increased bronchial response was measured following seven hours of exposure to just 0.08 ppm of ozone, and the effects lasted for 18 hours. Given that the effects at 0.08 ppm are not far above the 0.05 ppm detection threshold, one

could easily be exposed to these amounts without being aware. To make matters worse, you can't always trust odor as a reliable indicator. Ozone will initially produce a sharp odor, but after a brief period of exposure, it dulls the sense of smell. Ozone concentrations could increase and you would not be able to detect it.

Ozone toxicity is bad enough, but ozone can react with other pollutants in household air to create even more harmful chemicals. For example, in May, researchers at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency warned that ozone can react with the chemicals in the air fresheners people often use in their kitchens and bathrooms, producing unhealthy levels of formaldehyde-related compounds. It is a bad idea to pollute the air in your home with these toxic air fresheners in the first place, but when these chemicals react with ozone, it becomes even more toxic.

Indoor air pollution is a serious health problem, and I highly recommend filtering. After carefully researching available filters, I have selected an air filter that earns the Beyond Health seal of approval. It is designed and built to superior standards, and offers the highest levels of protection and reliability. These units are quiet, economical, and safe for continuous operation. They filter both chemicals and particles, and the HEPA filter media is good for up to five years without replacement (other designs require frequent filter replacement). To obtain a "best buy" Beyond Health approved air filter for your home or office, call 800-250-3063.

Raymond Francis is an M.I.T.-trained scientist, a registered nutrition consultant, author of Never Be Sick Again, host of the Beyond Health Show, and an internationally recognized leader in the emerging field of optimal health maintenance.



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Question: Is it safe to drink wine when you are pregnant?
U.G. — San Diego, CA

Answer: Pregnancy is a very special situation. It may be safe to drink one glass of wine with a meal, but no one can guarantee it is safe. Therefore, it is best to avoid alcohol completely. Even if you are not pregnant but trying to become pregnant, alcohol should be avoided. In this case, an ounce of prevention is worth far more than a pound of cure because alcohol damage to the fetus is irreversible. This is why the surgeon general and most professional medical organizations recommend that pregnant women play it safe and stay away from alcohol.

The hazards of fetal exposure to alcohol have been known since antiquity, including a reference in the Bible. What we call "fetal alcohol syndrome" (FAS) was first described in the medical literature in 1973. Fetal alcohol syndrome is a serious condition causing mental retardation, growth deficiency, and even life-threatening congenital pathology. It can also cause a host of less obvious problems such as neuromotor delay, learning disabilities, hyperactivity, attention deficits, and psychosocial difficulties. Among women who abuse alcohol, the incidence of FAS is 25 per 1000 births. Most children with this condition are born to mothers who consumed at least four alcoholic drinks a day. Alcohol is easily and quickly distributed to all the fetal tissues. It has an affinity for tissues with high water content. The brain is such a tissue and this is one reason why alcohol does so much brain damage. The more alcohol the mother drinks the longer the alcohol content of her blood stays high, and the more damage is done. High levels of alcohol cause genetic disturbances as well as interfering with protein synthesis, membrane composition, and cellular communications, among a host of other effects. Significant impairment is possible.

However, there is something far more insidious and that is a group of subtle disorders called "fetal alcohol effects" (FAE). Fetal alcohol effects occur much more frequently than 25 per 1000. There is no way of knowing the real number because the effects can be so subtle. We now know that FAE may be responsible for a broad range of developmental and behavioral abnormalities, far more than anyone ever suspected. Mothers who drink as few as two alcoholic drinks per day may produce children with mild mental retardation, behavioral abnormalities, and delayed physical growth. Children with FAE can exhibit a wide range of problems including learning disabilities, hyperactivity, and psychosocial difficulties. They often become socially withdrawn. They exhibit inappropriate emotional responses, fail to consider the consequences of actions, experience excessive unhappiness, and have problems with conduct such as cheating, lying, and stealing.

Given the potential negative effects of fetal alcohol exposure during pregnancy, it is simply not worth the risk of consuming any alcohol during this period of life. There is no way

of knowing if even one drink is dangerous or how dangerous it is. In addition, the effects will differ from person to person depending on how rapidly they are able to detoxify the alcohol in their system. In our society, alcohol is a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood. Many young women drink for this reason. However, it is vitally important that they stop drinking *before* they get pregnant for much damage can be done before they realize they are pregnant.

Question: Are there alternatives to drugs for treating seizures?

F.F. — Menlo Park, CA

Answer: There is almost always an alternative to drugs. Prescription drugs are toxins; they harm and kill people; they do not help people other than to suppress symptoms, at great cost. Alternative approaches should always be pursued, and there are some very sound approaches for eliminating seizures.

Seizures can be triggered by a variety of causes including head trauma, infection, emotional stress, metabolic abnormalities, exposure to neurotoxins, and nutritional deficiencies. In my experience, nutritional deficiencies almost always play a roll, regardless of the other factors. This is why paying attention to nutrition should be a primary approach to controlling or eliminating seizures.

Historically, before the advent of anticonvulsant drugs, dietary fats were used very effectively to control seizures, and modern research confirms this. High fat diets work "better than any other regimen" according to Dr. John Freeman, director of the Pediatric Epilepsy Clinic at Children's Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland. Freeman estimates that a diet free of refined carbohydrates and high in good fats will prevent up to 70 percent of seizures, *which is more effective than any drug on the market.*

Years ago, when I was in the midst of my own health crisis, I suffered seizures. The "best" doctors and "top" nerve specialists spent a lot of money to do a lot of testing, and it was all useless—the seizures continued. If I was sitting in a chair when one hit, I would end up on the floor. The seizures stopped and never came back after I went on Perque vitamins and obtained adequate amounts of B vitamins and magnesium.

Supplementing with B vitamins and magnesium is critical to preventing seizures. These have strong anti-seizure properties and have been found to be effective even after other therapies have failed. Both B6 and B1 appear to play especially important roles in seizures, but B vitamins work as a team and they are all needed. B6 helps to control glutamate concentrations in the brain. Glutamate concentrations are higher in seizure patients, and during seizures can increase to levels causing cell death. Sometimes B6 doses as high as 700 mg per day are required to end seizures (two Perque 2s contain 200 mg). Vitamin E has also been effective in controlling drug-

resistant seizures, although some researchers believe E is effective because it compensates for vitamin E deficiencies produced by anticonvulsant drugs (another example of drugs causing more problems than they solve).

Here is how B6 works. A brain neurotransmitter, which acts as an inhibitor of seizures, is called GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid). Seizure-prone people have lower than normal GABA levels. GABA levels depend on adequate supplies of vitamin B6 and zinc. Once again, nutrition plays a critical role. Selenium supplementation can also be helpful; in one study, children given selenium experienced a reduction in seizures.

Before anti-seizure drugs came on the market, seizures were commonly treated with fatty acids such as DHA. DHA is found in fish oil and is essential to brain and nervous system function. Impaired cell communication caused by essential fatty acid deficiency is a known cause of a variety of nervous system diseases. Since up to 90 percent of the population is deficient in essential fatty acids, this is a significant contributor to seizure problems.

Getting the right nutrients is an important part of the battle; avoiding excitotoxins is another. Certain chemicals, contained in common food products such as MSG, hydrolyzed proteins, textured protein, aspartic acid, natural flavoring, sodium or calcium caseinate, yeast extract, and aspartame (Nutrasweet) are all capable of exciting neurons in the brain and causing seizures as well as permanent brain damage.

Finally, sensitivity to gluten is known to cause a variety of neurological problems, including seizures. Gluten should be entirely eliminated from the diet. Gluten is found in foods such as wheat, barley, and rye. Avoiding gluten means the elimination of virtually all processed foods from the diet. Up to half the population is sensitive to gluten, and while avoiding it is a challenge, it is good advice for anyone with health problems, not just those with seizures.

Question: Is there any particular weight-loss diet that you think is better than the others?

S.B. — Sausalito, CA

Answer: Two out of three Americans are overweight, so it is not unusual to be seeking a weight-loss diet. Of the many available diets such as the Atkin's, South Beach, and Zone, I don't favor any of them. They are most likely dangerous to health if pursued for a long period. In fact, problems with low-carb/high-protein diets have been surfacing, including kidney impairment, bone loss, heart arrhythmias, low energy, constipation, and problems with concentration. The British government's Medical Research Council has condemned low-carb diets because they are known to cause kidney damage.

I look on all of these diets as fads. They sell lots of books and products and make lots of money, but do little lasting good. In 2002, Americans spent over \$30 billion trying to lose weight, and they obviously didn't succeed. A study by

the National Institutes of Health found that 98 percent of the people who lose weight on these diets gain it back within five years. All these diets have one important thing in common—they reduce your caloric intake. A diet that reduces calories will obviously help because when you eat more calories than you burn, you add weight. That's why these diets work in the short term, but people don't stick to them. The reason Americans are so fat is they consume enormous amounts of calories and don't exercise sufficiently to burn them off. What is needed is a fundamental change in our understanding of what food is. Food is *not* the toxic, nutritionally-deficient, make-believe foods found in supermarkets. These will make you fat, while it is almost impossible to get fat eating real food.

If you want to lose weight and keep it off, you have to change your diet and lifestyle. Read my book *Never Be Sick Again*; many people have lost weight simply by following its overall guidelines. Maintaining healthy weight is the easiest thing in the world. Here's how to do it: First and foremost, get off the Big Four (sugar, white flour, processed oils, and milk products). Health is not possible if you are eating the Big Four. Eat fresh, organic whole vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, lean protein, and high-fiber grains. This traditional "human" diet will not only reduce calories and give you more nutrition, it will also help your appetite mechanism to rebalance and control your craving for food. Fast one day a week; it's good for you. In addition, get on the Beyond Health Comprehensive supplement program, and get on a regular exercise program. Daily rebounding and frequent saunas in an infrared sauna will also help. Do these thing and you are virtually guaranteed to lose weight *and* to gain health and vitality.

Question: I just recently read your book *Never Be Sick Again* and I had a question about juicing. Is it healthy to juice your food (fruits & vegetables) or should you eat them raw? Does juicing change or affect the overall nutrition content of food, or is it good for you?

C.V. — by email

Answer: Juicing is absolutely healthy. It actually helps to break down the plant cell walls, thus releasing the nutrients. Alternatively, this is why we say to chew your food thoroughly, especially when eating raw food. So both are good ideas!

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

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