



Steps to Good Digestion by Lorene Sauro, RHN

Do you understand what causes your digestive issues?

True or False:

Heartburn can be caused by eating too much in one sitting.

Gas and bloating can be caused by insufficient chewing.

Heartburn is usually caused by too much acid in the stomach.

The maximum amount of time to eat a meal should be 20 minutes.

Drinking water with your meal aids digestion.

Probiotic foods like yogurt and kefir can be helpful for gas and bloating.

Digestion starts in the mouth when you chew.

Stress helps food digest faster.

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Love is a Many Splendoured Thing...but is it Healthy? By Eleanor Healy, RHN

In honour of the arrival of Valentine's Day, this article will look briefly into research on the link between our physical health and love. Not too many people would argue that love can make us crazy... but does it make us healthier?

First of all, there is not much research on this topic period. Most of the qualitative studies focus on negative emotional states, such as depression and the presence of disease. As quoted by Barbara L. Fredrickson in her article *What Good are Positive Emotions?*, "Psychology sorely needs more studies on positive emotions, not simply to level the uneven knowledge bases between negative and positive emotions, but more critically, to guide

applications and interventions that might improve individual and collective functioning, psychological well-being and physical health" (1). Fredrickson has designed the 'broaden-and-build model of positive emotions'; this model emphasizes that there is an expansion of all areas of one's life, including physical health in direct relation to experiencing positive emotions such as joy, contentment and love. She hopes that this model will spark further study in this area.

Secondly, the studies that may offer to explore the link between emotions and health focus mostly on mental health, positive thoughts or social support status - not love.

CONTINUED ON PG 4 ...

Nutrition for Dry Skin by Emily Kennedy, RHN

Winter leaves us more prone to dry skin so let's look at what we can do to protect it. As an integumentary organ, our skin is our first line of defense against outside elements and pathogens. Regardless of climate changes, the epidermis or outermost layer of our 20 or so square feet of skin, continues to renew itself about every 27 days. The process is called *keratinization*, using the protein called keratin. This rapid renewal makes the appearance of a person's skin a good barometer of internal health. When a person's skin has a dry, cracked appearance, the following nutrients need to be considered:

Water – Dehydration is the first culprit when skin becomes rough and dry. It's well known that our skin is 70 to 80 percent water so drinking a minimum of two quarts per day of good quality water is recommended. Perspiration brought on by physical activity or a sauna also helps to keep the epidermis soft so long as the lost water is replaced. Water can also

be obtained from fruits and vegetables and low intake of these foods can result in brittle skin. With age, skin's ability to hold water decreases, making proper diet and hydration even more important.

Beta carotene and vitamin A – For the skin, the main benefit of these antioxidants is prevention of blemishes and protection from UV damage. Lack of beta carotene or vitamin A can encourage dryness as well as acne and even skin cancer. A severe deficiency in vitamin A can result in a build-up of keratin on the surface of the skin (*keratosis pilaris*) that gives it dry patches and bumps.

Essential Fatty Acids – Regular intake of good fats such as omega-3 EPA, gamma linolenic acid and the monounsaturated fatty acids are essential for soft, youthful looking skin. As a fluid membrane, skin cells require these fats as components of the phospholipids bi-layer; this layer allows nutrients and waste products in and out. **CONTINUED ON PG 3 ...**

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Steps to Good Digestion by Lorene Sauro, RHN

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Answers:

Heartburn can be caused by eating too much in one sitting:

True - While the stomach can stretch to accommodate more food to the point that we feel stuffed, it does not like to. The stomach works well with one bite at a time and time in between. That way muscle contractions in the stomach can evenly move the food to the intestines. When the stomach is too full, the muscle contraction can force the food up into the esophagus because there is too much in the stomach and the food has to go somewhere. The material in the stomach is mixed with stomach acid so it burns - hence the term heartburn.

Gas and bloating can be caused by insuffi-

cient chewing: True - Chewing is the key to good digestion. It allows for time between bites and breaks down fibres and tissues; this makes it easier for enzymes to break down the food in the intestinal tract.

Heartburn is always caused by too much acid in the stomach: False - There are several causes for heartburn and most of the time excess acid is not one of them. Some causes are too much food in the stomach, diluting the stomach acid with liquid and issues with specific foods that cause strong burping (forces stomach material into the esophagus).

The maximum amount of time to eat a meal should be 20 minutes: False - This is the minimum amount of time needed.

CONTINUED ON PG 3 ...

Supplements for Heart Health by Debby J. Raabel, RHN

CoQ10 also known as coenzyme Q, helps produce cellular energy in the form of ATP. Those organs with the highest energy requirements - such as the heart, liver and kidney - have the highest CoQ₁₀ concentrations. CoQ10 has recently acquired more attention in the reduced form Ubiquinol-as; an antioxidant that protects cell membranes and LDL (bad cholesterol) from oxidation (1). Oxidation of the circulating LDL is thought to play a key role in the development of atherosclerosis, which is the underlying disorder leading to heart attack and ischemic strokes (2). CoQ10 helps to maintain a healthy cardiovascular system and there is evidence of CoQ10 deficiency in heart failure (3,4,5). Meat and fish are the richest sources of dietary CoQ₁₀ (3). Cholesterol-lowering statins and many other OTC and prescription medications rob or block CoQ10 activity, so if you are on medication speak to your physician about what you need to do to compensate for this nutrient depletion. CoQ10 is contraindicated with blood thinners and blood pressure medication (6,7).

Vitamin C is especially plentiful in fresh fruit, in particular citrus fruit, and vegetables such as green peppers, broccoli, and green leafy vegetables. It is one of the most widely researched vitamins with overwhelming scientific evidence to support reduced incidence of coronary heart disease at high supplemental levels (2) (13) (14) (15). The recommended dietary allowance (RDA) set to prevent scurvy is probably not sufficient to optimally protect against cardiovascular disease

(15). Clinical trials suggest that an intake of 90 -100 mg vitamin C is required for optimum reduction of chronic disease risk in nonsmokers. This amount is about twice the amount of the current RDA for vitamin C-this suggests a new RDA of 120 mg vitamin C per day is needed (15). Like CoQ10, vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that can prevent the initiation and progress of early heart disease (13). Oxidative processes have been strongly implicated in atherosclerosis, myocardial infarction and stroke (15). High cholesterol is a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease (15). In one supplementation study, consumption of 1000 mg of vitamin C per day for 4 weeks resulted in a reduction of total serum cholesterol (15). Vitamin C reduced blood clots in heart disease patients who consumed 2000 - 3000 mg vitamin C per day for 1 - 6 weeks (15). Low blood concentrations of vitamin C have been associated with hypertension (15). A large study comprised of 6624 men and women showed 26% and 27% risk reductions for stroke and coronary artery disease, respectively, with saturating serum vitamin C concentrations of 63 - 153 mmol/L (15).

Smokers, the elderly, pregnant and lactating women require higher vitamin C intake. Smokers may require 2 - 3 times more vitamin C than non-smokers. Vitamin C requirements in persons with iron-overload conditions, such as hemochromatosis are complicated and beyond the scope of this article (15).

Healthy Heart



Healthy You

R-dihydro-lipoic acid (R-DHLA) is emerging as a supplement superstar and is now at the forefront of antioxidant research. It is a powerful antioxidant that is critically involved in cellular metabolism.

Recent studies suggest that R-DHLA may help prevent mitochondrial decay, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, atherosclerosis, and other disorders associated with aging. Researchers also discovered that alpha-lipoic acid is unique in being the only antioxidant known to work in both fat and water soluble tissues. This dual-acting ability allows alpha-lipoic acid to be easily transported across cellular membranes to neutralize free radicals in both interior and exterior cellular structures. Leading researchers refer to alpha-lipoic acid as the "universal antioxidant." Experiments have shown that R-DHLA counteract lipid peroxidation of LDL, a potential therapeutic effect for the early prevention of atherosclerosis. In the same study, R-DHLA was shown to readily reduce iron and scavenge free radicals in a model of atherosclerosis, demonstrating a potential therapeutic effect for the early prevention of inflammatory processes implicated in cardiovascular disease (16,24-26).

Magnesium helps with the transmission of nerve and muscle impulses, regulates the heartbeat and is a vital enzyme catalyst. Clinical trials suggest that magnesium supplementation can lower blood pressure in subjects with high blood pressure especially those already deficient in magnesium. Lower levels of dietary magnesium is related to elevated blood pressure (9,10). Magnesium deficiency is a factor in heart disease and along with calcium and potassium may help lower the risk of stroke. (11,12). It appears that dietary intake of magnesium is declining in developed countries (9) so lets increase the magnesium rich foods like bananas, apples, tuna, halibut, green leafy vegetables, nuts seeds and legumes.

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Nutrition for Dry Skin by Emily Kennedy, RHN

CONTINUED FROM PG 1 ...

Essential fats help give skin a youthful glow while preventing inflammation. Deficiency of omega-6 essential fats is linked to inflammatory skin conditions such as atopic eczema, a symptom of which is rough, itchy, dry skin.

Vitamin E – Natural emollients such as olive and almond oils owe their skin-softening properties to vitamin E. In addition to nourishing the skin from the inside out with a high intake of vitamin E rich foods (seeds, nuts, oils), pure vitamin E from supplement capsules can be applied directly to chapped lips and dry skin for effective relief. You can try this recipe for a vitamin E rich lotion overnight as well:

Homemade Moisturizer

2 tablespoons almond, olive or avocado oil, 1 tablespoon honey, 2 teaspoons glycerin, about 1 1/2 cups finely ground almonds or rolled oats. You will need a ceramic bowl, a spoon and a pair of washable cotton gloves. In the bowl, thoroughly mix the avocado oil, honey and glycerin. Stir in a sufficient amount

of almonds or oatmeal to form a thin paste. Rub the paste over your hands then put on the gloves and wear them overnight.

Hydration and vitamin status are not the only factors in skin health. Two important underlying causes of dry skin are insulin resistance and full blown type 2 diabetes. Though insulin resistance or pre-diabetes often has no symptoms, some people, particularly the obese, have marked dark patches of skin in folds around their neck, elbows, knees or armpits. This is called *acanthosis nigricans* and the only remedy is restoration of blood sugar control. If diabetes develops, high blood glucose levels increase the body's fluid losses, reducing the amount of water in the skin cells. Diabetics with nerve damage also perspire less, leading to dry skin on the feet, legs and underarms. Since dry skin can crack and become infected, it is very important for people with diabetes to manage dry skin by drinking enough water and increasing their intake of the above nutrients.

Steps to Good Digestion by Lorene Sauro, RHN

CONTINUED FROM PG 2 ...

It takes 20 minutes for your brain to receive the first messages that food is in the stomach. If a meal is eaten in less than 20 minutes, this is a recipe for gas, bloating, heartburn and overeating.

Drinking water with your meal aids digestion:

False - Drinking water aids elimination but too much liquid in the stomach dilutes stomach acid - It is a question of volume. Filling the stomach with too much liquid is no different than filling it with too much food. It is okay to sip during meals and the rule does not apply to snacks.

Probiotic foods like yogurt, kefir and other traditionally fermented foods can be helpful for gas and bloating:

True - If the gas and bloating is caused by insufficient good bacteria in the intestines, then consuming traditionally fermented foods can replenish good bacteria in the body. This good bacteria reduces symptoms like gas and bloating.

Digestion starts in the mouth with chewing:

True - Chewing is essential to good digestion. It creates time between bites, adds saliva with enzymes that start carbohydrate digestion and creates surfaces to aid other enzymes in the stomach and small intestines. Swallowing involves a muscle in the throat, so fast chewers may have trouble slowing it down as the muscle will contract automati-

cally based on how many chews occur per bite. Practice slows it down and eventually the muscle will adjust.

Stress helps food digest faster: False - Stress puts us in "fight or flight" which shuts off digestive juices to provide extra energy for the body to use as fuel. Since fight or flight is a mechanism the body uses to protect us from physical danger, the heart rate is increased and extra energy is directed to fuel the muscles to run or fight. As far as the body is concerned, digestion can wait until the "danger" is over. We seldom experience this type of physical danger but the body does not distinguish the difference between this and psychological stress. The same stress hormones are released and the body (and digestion accordingly) responds the same.

Following a few simple steps to good digestion can make a huge difference to how we feel after eating and how well we utilize the food we consume. Make time for your meals and chew thoroughly. Do not eat too much in one sitting or add to the volume in your stomach by drinking a lot of liquids. Avoid eating when stressed and develop deep breathing techniques or other relaxation methods so that you and your digestive system can enjoy your meal. If all this is not enough, probiotic foods or supplements and digestive enzymes can also be helpful.

Have You Ever Felt Sorry For Cauliflower?

Its mild tastes have often made it more of a favorite within the cruciferous vegetable family, but many people think it is of less nutritional value than its super star cousins, broccoli and kale. Well, feel sorry for it no more as cauliflower can stand on its own as a nutrient-rich vegetable high in antioxidants, fiber and numerous components that lower inflammation.

Creamy Lemon Cauliflower Serves 4

- 1 large head cauliflower, chopped into 1 inch small pieces
- 4 tsp olive oil or rice bran oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp. tahini or full-fat organic yogurt*
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp sea salt or Himalayan salt
- 1 tbsp parsley chopped
- Pepper to taste

*Mixing yogurt and tahini together is also tasty

Mix the oil, garlic, sea salt and cauliflower together in a shallow baking pan. Bake without covering for 15 to 18 minutes at 400 degrees F. Gently warm the tahini and/or yogurt with the lemon juice in a saucepan. Pour over the cauliflower and mix together.

Finish seasoning to taste with pepper and sprinkle on the parsley. Serve.



Vitamin K is a vitamin found in leafy green vegetables, broccoli, and brussels sprouts. In the body, vitamin K plays a major role in blood clotting. It is used to reverse the effects of "blood thinning" medications when too much is given. The accumulation of vitamin K is relatively high in the heart. The limited scientific data on this vitamin suggests that additional physiological functions for vitamin K are still to be found (8). There are interactions with CoQ10 as it is chemically similar to vitamin K and can promote blood clotting. This combination can be a problem for people who are taking warfarin to slow blood clotting. High dosages of vitamin A and vitamin E can make vitamin K less effective in clotting blood. As always, check with your physician or pharmacist before taking supplements if you are on medication.



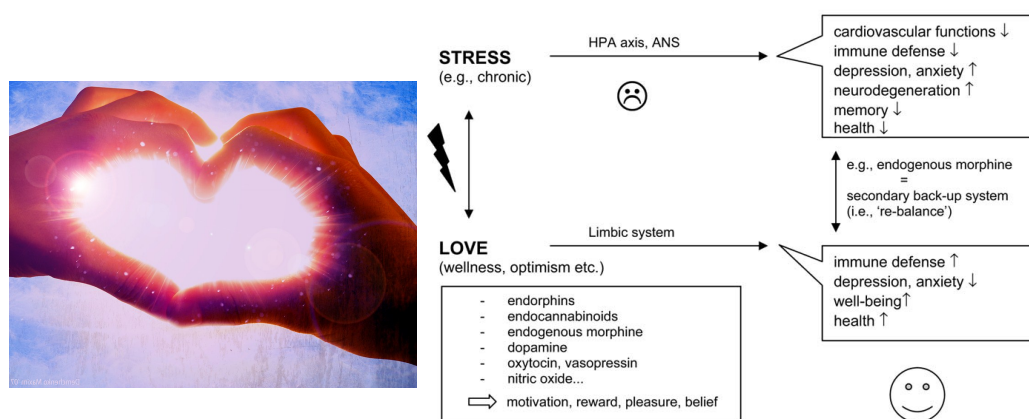
Love is a Many Splendoured Thing...but is it Healthy? By Eleanor Healy, RHN

CONTINUED FROM PG 1 ...

So, the research that remains is dated, mostly encompassing the mid to late 1990s and earlier.

The newest information found is the following: an essay published in New York in 2005, analyzing the studies on links between love and physical health state simply that "love has consequences for health and well-being" (2). While that may sound foreboding, the authors offer a positive viewpoint. Being in love may control the autonomic nervous system-tied to stress reduction and reducing anxiety. Further,

the studies suggest that love, compassion and joy help with our immune system functioning - i.e. disease fighting capabilities (2). To take it one step further, this review hypothesizes that love and pleasure increase one's trust in the body's own healing abilities. So, overall, love may help reduce negative emotions, strengthen our immune system and calm excitability in the brain. See below for the chart outlining the roles of love and stress in the body based on the limbic system and the HPA axis.



HPA – hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (axis); ANS – autonomic nervous system.

Figure 1. Love and Health. Stress and love act as counter players: Adrenal steroids, related to the HPA axis, are particularly responsive to social and environmental demands, e.g., stress (6,17,21,23). Under certain conditions, stressful experiences and HPA axis activity are followed by increased sexual, parental and social behaviors or the formation of social bonds, thereby possibly reducing stress, that is, chronic stress in particular.

Adrenal steroid - neuropeptide interactions, involving oxytocin and its receptors as well as other neuropeptides, may regulate the development of social attachments, while concurrently modulating the HPA axis (6). Positive social behaviors, mediated through these same signaling systems, modulate HPA and ANS activity, thereby accounting for health benefits that are attributed to love and attachment. Taken together, love counteracts chronic stress. However, love itself, i.e., falling in love, can induce stress, which may then promote a state of arousal necessary for approach and appetitive behaviors or the overcoming of neophobia leading to attachment

formation or social bonding. After all, love serves to enhance a sense of well-being and safety, using neurobiological means and physiological pathways for the support of social bonds, i.e., community.

In terms of love relationships, old data shows that people in intimate relationships are less susceptible to a long list of diseases and physically detrimental conditions than their single, widowed or divorced peers (3). A review of the correlation between love and physical/mental health (again quite dated from the 1970s and 80s) showed a positively significant correlation for women happy in their intimate relationship and their perception of their physical health (3).

Although some interesting concepts and ideas have been explored, mostly this subject of love and overall well-being (physically, emotionally and mentally) sits on the shelf ignored. In a span of 40 years of sporadic research, the scientific community seems to be stumped when it comes to love. Perhaps this subject is best left for songwriters and philosophers...

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