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Natural Health News

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EVERGREEN SPA & WELLNESS CENTER
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THE IMPORTANCE OF VITAMIN D

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(Closed Sundays)



*Listen to Sonja's
"Natural Health
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Following the advice to avoid excess sun exposure and to apply sunscreen when outdoors has left many of us with a vitamin D shortfall. As we head into the cold and flu season, you don't want to run low on vitamin D because it is an important and effective way to rev up your immune defenses and help prevent influenza. Sunlight and vitamin D are critical to all life forms. The principal function of vitamin D is to promote calcium absorption in the gut and calcium transfer across cell membranes, thus contributing to strong bones and a calm nervous system. Actually, vitamin D does not in itself promote healthy bones. Vitamin D controls the levels of calcium in the blood. If there is not enough calcium in the diet, then it will be drawn from the bones. High levels of vitamin D will actually de-mineralize bone if sufficient calcium is not present. Vitamin D will also enhance the uptake of toxic metals if calcium, magnesium and phosphorus are not present in adequate amounts. Therefore, vitamin D supplementation should never be suggested unless calcium intake is sufficient or supplemented at the same time. Receptors for vitamin D are found in most of the cells in the body and therefore, low vitamin D is associated with several autoimmune diseases, cancer, and a host of degenerative diseases and premature aging. High stress may increase the need for vitamin D or UV-B sunlight and calcium. Research also suggests that low levels of vitamin D may contribute to metabolic syndrome with associated hypertension, obesity, diabetes and heart disease. Did you ever wonder why some people can eat all they want and not get fat, while others are constantly battling extra pounds? The answer may have to do with vitamin D and calcium status. Sunlight, UV-B, and vitamin D normalize food intake and normalize blood sugar. When the diet lacks calcium, whether from D or calcium deficiency, there is an increase in the fatty acid *synthase*, an enzyme that converts calories into fat. The assimilation and utilization of vitamin D is influenced by the kinds of fats we consume. Increasing levels of both polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids in the diet decrease the binding of vitamin D to D-binding proteins. Saturated fats, the kind found in butter, lard and coconut oil, do not have this effect and nor do the omega-3 fats. D-binding proteins are key to all actions of vitamin D. This is an important point to consider since we have dramatically increased the intake of commercial vegetable oils and decreased the intake of saturated fats over the past 100 years. Trans-fatty acids, found in margarine and shortenings used in most commercial baked goods, should always be avoided. There is evidence that these fats can interfere with the enzyme system the body uses to convert vitamin D in the liver, along with creating many other problems. The most bio-available form of vitamin D comes from animal sources (vitamin D3 or cholecalciferol). Nutrient-rich foods include fish, cod liver oil, animal foods, and eggs (especially egg yolks). For food sources to provide us with D, the source must be sunlight - exposed....in other words, Vitamin D is produced from fat in the fur, feathers, and skin of animals and birds only when exposed to sunlight. This is another reason why it is important to consume free-range and grass-fed meats. In our own bodies, sun exposure converts adequate cholesterol levels into necessary stores of vitamin D. It is important to sunbathe frequently for short periods of time, when UV-B is present, rather than spend long hours in the sun at infrequent intervals. It also means that sunning must occur between the hours we have been told to avoid. Only sunbathing between 10 am and 2 pm during summer months (or winter months in southern latitudes) for 20 minutes or longer, depending on skin type and color, will form adequate vitamin D before burning occurs. Cholesterol-containing body oils are critical to this absorption process. Because the body needs 30-60 minutes to absorb these vitamin-D-containing oils, it is best to delay showering or bathing for one hour after exposure. The skin oils in which vitamin D is produced can also be removed by chlorine in swimming pools. If sunlight is not available because of latitude or season, sunlamps can be used to provide a natural balance of UV-B and UV-A. Used according to instructions, these lamps provide a safe equivalent of sunlight and will not cause burning. Tanning beds, on the other hand, are not acceptable as a means of getting your daily dose of vitamin D because they provide high levels of UV-A and very little UV-B. If you are unable to spend time in the sun, consider adding a whole food supplement of vitamin D3 such as CATAPLEX D by Standard process or use a concentrated supplement of high quality cod liver oil . Both are available at the Evergreen Cottage.....but most of all make sure to take advantage of the sun.

IMMUNE-BOOSTING FOODS

Let food be your medicine and stock up on these foods which will boost your immune system:

SUNFLOWER SEEDS contain a lot of vitamin E which helps you resist the flu and upper respiratory infections by boosting the production of T-cells, a type of white blood cells that fight infections. Sprinkle some on your salads, or consume Sunflower seed butter. **BRAZIL NUTS:** these tender, rich-tasting nuts contain cold-fighting selenium. Selenium is a vital antioxidant which acts with vitamin E to protect the immune system and maintains healthy heart function. A single brazil nut has nearly double the amount of selenium you need in a day. As you know, zinc is very important for your immune function. It is called the intelligence mineral and is required for mental development and for healthy reproductive organs (particularly the prostate gland). It also helps control blood sugar levels and proper levels of vitamin E in the blood. The inability to taste, smell, and loss of appetite are signs of zinc deficiency. The food that contains the highest amount of zinc is **OYSTERS**. Oysters are also high in protein, iron, and calcium. Six oysters provide 32 mg of zinc, which is four times the recommended amount. If you are not fond of oysters, make sure you eat grass-fed beef, fish, nuts such as cashews, seeds, and ginger which are also good sources for zinc. **SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS** have been cultivated for more than 1,000 years and have long served as both food and medicine in China. These mushrooms contain beta glucans which boost your body's immune response. **KIWI FRUITS** are packed with immune-boosting nutrients and vitamin C. **GARLIC** is regarded as one of the most potent cold and flu fighter, because it kills bacteria, fungi, parasites, and viruses due to it's sulfur compounds and allicin which lies dormant in a clove until it is cut. You should maximize garlic's health benefits by eating it raw, or mince a clove and let it sit for a few minutes before cooking. Make sure to add several cloves to your soups and stews during the winter or roast a whole bulb in the oven and use it as a spread on toast.

OCTOBER SPECIALS IN THE WHOLE FOODS PANTRY

EDEN—ORGANIC SAUERKRAUT, 32 OZ.	30% OFF
ANNIE'S—ORGANIC KETCHUP, 24 OZ.	30% OFF
GERBS—PUMPKIN SEEDS, SALTED, 3.5 OZ.	30% OFF
PACIFIC COAST—ORGANIC SOUP VARIETY 17.6 OZ.	30% OFF
CAFÉ ALTURA—ORGANIC GROUND COFFEE, CLASSIC 12 OZ..	30% OFF
ORGANIC DARK BLEND, GROUND, 12 OZ	30% OFF
NAPA VALLEY—ORGANIC OLIVE OIL, 25.4 OZ.	30% OFF
DIVINE—CHOCOLATE BAR VARIETY, 3.5 OZ.	30% OFF
JOCALAT—NUTRITIONAL BARS VARIETY, 1.7 OZ.	30% OFF
CULTURAL REVOLUTION—ORG. YOGURT VARIETY 6 OZ.	30% OFF
KISS MY FACE—DEODORANT STICK, ACTIVE ENZYME VARIETY	30% OFF
TERRA—EXOTIC VEGGIE CHIPS, 5 OZ.	25% OFF
NANCY'S—ORG. SOUR CREAM & CREAM CHEESE 8 OZ.	25% OFF
WILDWOOD—ORGANIC HUMMUS, 10 OZ.	20% OFF
BOB'S—ORGANIC FLOUR VARIETY, 5 LBS.	30% OFF
MAGGIE'S—HIKER, WOOL SOCKS, VARIETY & SIZES	30% OFF
AND MANY MORE ITEMS!	

BEEF SOUP

This easy soup brings out the exquisite sweet flavor of beets.

Peel **6 medium beets**. Chop them coarsely and sauté them very gently in **4 tbsp.** **butter** for 30 minutes until tender. Add 1 quart **filtered water**, bring to a boil and skim. Simmer about 15 minutes. Puree soup with a handheld blender. Season to taste, ladle into heated bowls and serve with cultured **sour cream** and finely chopped fresh **chives**. Enjoy with a slice of toasted whole grain bread with butter.



“THE WHITER THE BREAD, THE SOONER YOU’LL BE DEAD.”

From the book
“FOOD RULES”
by Michael Pollan

BENEFIT from MASSAGE THERAPY

In celebration of **NATIONAL MASSAGE AWARENESS WEEK (October 24—31, 2010)** we will be offering a **10% discount on massage treatments** booked during this week. Make sure you mention this offer when you book your appointment and call early to reserve your time-slot since space is very limited. We hope you will take advantage of the many therapeutic benefits massage therapy has to offer. Massage therapy is one of the oldest healing arts that stretches back thousands of years. Massage therapy promotes deep relaxation, relieves muscle tension and stiffness, reduces spasms, improves circulation, stimulates lymphatic flow and assists in detoxification, strengthens the immune system, speeds up the removal of metabolic waste products resulting from exercise or inactivity, and therefore allows more oxygen and nutrients to reach the cells and tissues. Sensory receptors in the skin and muscles “wake up” and bring new awareness to areas that have felt “cut off” by chronic tension patterns. In addition, massage stimulates the release of endorphins—the body’s natural pain killers—into the brain and nervous system, dampens harmful stress hormones and raises mood-elevating brain chemicals such as serotonin.