

The Natural Pharmacy Newsletter

Wellspring Custom Pharmacy

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In The News

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Increasing Your Metabolism

I get many inquiries from patients that want to “increase their metabolism”. I usually read this question more properly stated as “I want to lose some weight and as I’ve gotten older, it seems as though my metabolism has slowed”. In other words, the main goal is to lose or maintain their weight. If you’ve struggled to maintain your weight, let me suggest some things to consider that might do that and increase metabolism.

Although there are genetic variations among patients when it comes to metabolism, maintaining lean body mass (muscle) is the best way to promote metabolism. Metabolism slows about five percent per year after the age of 40. This is due in large part to the loss of muscle that accompanies aging. The good news is that you can counteract this muscle loss and speed metabolism with weight training. Studies have shown that lifting weights for 12 weeks will build enough lean muscle to result in a ten percent increase in metabolism. To maintain this lean muscle mass two total



body strength workouts per week will help stave off muscle loss.

The simple fact of the matter is that a pound of muscle burns 35 calories per day while a pound of fat burns 2 calories per day. Also, metabolism is increased for hours after your workout increasing the number of calories burned in the short term. If you are new to weights or strength training, make sure to consult your physician and a trainer prior to starting a program.

Other things that can make a difference include: making sure your thyroid is functioning properly, make sure you’re taking in enough daily calories, make sure you’re not skipping meals, and consider your caffeine and spicy food intake.

An “ideal” TSH (a measure of thyroid function) is between 1 and 2. Most physicians don’t treat TSH’s unless they are over 5.5 but, if symptoms are present, it may be appropriate to treat TSH’s over 2.5 if symptoms are present.

Not taking in enough calories will cause you to lose muscle and retain fat because your body will read your cues that you are in starvation mode.

Skipping meals will lead to erratic blood sugars and cause you to crave more carbohydrates and sugars. Studies have also shown that those that skip breakfast are more likely to be overweight and eat more at lunch and dinner. Breakfast also increases a resting metabolism. Spicy foods and caffeine in moderation can also boost metabolism.

Armed with these ideas and a variety of supplements to help curb appetite, stimulate thyroid, and balance blood sugar, you should be able to find the combination that will help you lose and maintain your desired weight.

Are Dietary Supplements Safe?

Almost half of all Americans take nutritional supplements every day. That's 145 million doses daily and over 53 billion doses annually. According to a 2003 report by the American Association of Poison Control Centers (*American Journal of Emergency Medicine*, Vo. 22, No. 5, September 2004) there have only been two deaths allegedly caused by vitamins. This is a truly unbelievable statistic. Basically, you're more likely to die from a bee sting or a lightning strike than from taking a dietary supplement.

These statistics are very much in contrast to traditional pharmaceutical medications. The Leape study (*Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1994, 272:23 at 1851 and *JAMA*, 2000 Jul, 5:284:95) looked at prescription medications that were taken as properly prescribed. The results were quite revealing in that it estimated that these medications resulted in about 106,000 deaths per year-that's over 2,000 deaths per year.



These are different times. When I worked for Eli Lilly (a large traditional drug firm) in the mid 1970's, there

was no doubt in my mind that our goal was to develop and sell medications to treat patients in the safest and most effective way possible. If we did that, we would make money-and we did. My feeling now is that it is more about making money for the company and returning shareholder equity. Don't misunderstand me, I don't think that making money is a bad thing but I don't think that we should sacrifice patient safety to make money. There should always be a place for traditional pharmaceuticals but only after consideration has been given as to whether nutritional supplements (that have a better safety profile) might be appropriate for achieving the desired outcomes.

Zinc's Importance in Lung Health

Zinc is an essential mineral required for over 100 enzymes in the body. It plays a major role in immune function, cell division, normal growth and development, thyroid function, taste and smell. A recently published article also shows the importance of zinc for lung health in children.

Researchers looked at 25 patients between the ages of 0 and 24 months with lower respiratory health. Ten healthy children with normal lung function were used as the control group. The children were evaluated for breast milk intake, white blood cell count, serum iron and zinc, and total protein level. The children with suboptimal lung function were shown to have a shorter duration of breast feeding and a higher white blood cell count. The children in the control group were shown to have a significantly higher level of serum iron and zinc as well as a higher total protein level. The researchers concluded that suboptimal lung function may develop among children with low serum zinc levels.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The Staff at Wellspring Custom Pharmacy wish you a very happy and healthy new year!

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