

# The Natural Pharmacy Newsletter

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## *In The News*

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### **Back to school**

As the days of summer quickly come to an end, it means one thing: school. With so little time in the day to get the kids ready for school, many parents aren't sure whether to pack a lunch or have their kids eat whatever is served by the lunch ladies. It has been shown that when compared to kids who never packed a lunch, lunch packers tend to eat more fruits and veggies and less sodas, fried foods, and high sugar foods. Also, by packing lunches, you can tailor the food to what your kids like while encouraging healthy food choices. So what should you pack in the school lunches? Here's a quick little list for the most essentials kids need in a lunch:



1. **Veggies, veggies, and more veggies.** Try sending your child with some baby carrots, celery sticks, or sliced green peppers. They'll pack in some antioxidants with loads of vitamins needed for a healthy body and mind.

2. **Healthy fruit.** Berries such as raspberries or blueberries are good sources of antioxidants and vitamin C (essential to keep the immune system healthy)

3. **Grain.** Instead of using that Wonder bread for your child's sandwich, try and use a multigrain,

wheat bread. This will add a lot more fiber to your child's diet.

4. **Lower the fat.** Instead of regular bologna, try tuna packed in water. If your child refuses to eat tuna, at least switch to a low fat version of lunchmeat (usually packaged as "light"). Also, substitute that mayonnaise for some mustard or no fat mayonnaise.

5. **What about dessert.** We all know kids love their sweets, whether it is cookies, cake, cupcakes, or candy. However, instead of those high sugar foods, pack some low fat yogurt or cottage cheese with strawberries. You can even make your own trail mix with some almonds, pecans, low fat pretzels, dried cranberries, and a few chocolate bits. The trail mix contains healthy fats and protein, while keeping your child satisfied.

### **In the News**

#### **Warding Off Diabetes**

Did you know that almost 79 million people in the US have what is known as "pre-diabetes"? "Pre-diabetes" is a condition with fluctuating blood sugar levels not quite meeting the diagnosis of diabetes, and, more often than not, "pre-diabetes" will lead to diabetes. Do you know the best way to keep from becoming diabetic? One word – exercise! A recent study has shown that by not exercising, your blood sugar levels drastically fluctuate after eating meals. These varying levels can cause your body to become de-sensitized to insulin (key hormone for

regulating blood sugar) and eventually cause diabetes. It is best that we exercise most days of the week for at least 30 minutes. This may prove to be a deciding factor for whether or not you develop diabetes.

### **How to Mend a Broken Heart**

We've all been there – in love one minute, then heartbroken the next. But were you aware that there may be something in your pharmacy that can help with that? It's called 5-Hydroxytryptophan or 5-HTP. It is an amino acid that is essential in the pathway to make serotonin (a key "feel good" chemical in the brain). A new study shows that by supplementing with 5-HTP, you can drastically increase your serotonin levels in just six short weeks. Also, by increasing serotonin, the symptoms of a "broken heart" (depression, sadness, loneliness, etc) radically improve. Thus, 5-HTP can mend a broken heart.

### **Fish Oil – One More Reason to Keep a Bottle of it Around**

Have you ever heard from your doctor, nurse, or even pharmacist that you should be taking fish oil daily? The answer is probably most everyone has heard this, and for good reasons! Fish oil has shown to not only help support your heart and vessels, but newer data show that it can even help inflammation and anxiety! A new study from OSU reveals that taking fish oil high in EPA and DHA (about 4-5 times the amount you'd get from eating salmon) drastically reduced anxiety levels among highly stressed medical students. Also, markers for inflammation that are found in the blood were also decreased; thus indicating that fish oil reduces inflammation. If healthy, younger individuals found such benefits from taking fish oil daily, imagine what someone a bit older and maybe with some chronic conditions may benefit from fish oil!

### **All About Tai Chi**

Tai chi, a traditional Chinese form of meditation exercise, may not be what comes to mind when you think about exercise. Before you dismiss tai chi, here are all the benefits associated with it. When combined with green tea consumption (around 4-5

cups of tea a day), tai chi has shown to decrease inflammation and prevent osteoporosis in postmenopausal women. Recent studies have also shown tai chi is beneficial in heart failure patients. More than half of the heart failure patients had improved quality of life, increased daily activities, and overall better mood. Lastly, a new review of tai chi reveals there is improved mental health among the elderly. Also, tai chi improves balance and decreases the risk of falling in the elderly, which is a common cause of bone fractures.

### **Magnesium – Are You Getting Enough?**

Magnesium, a mineral found in bone and essential for muscle, nerve, and immune health, has been linked to life expectancy. It appears that lower magnesium levels in individuals may actually lead to heart problems (enlarged heart) and may decrease length of life by several years. What can you do to increase your magnesium levels? You can supplement with magnesium or you can eat foods that contain magnesium, such as: almonds, cashews, spinach, oatmeal, and yogurt. As most of these foods are sources for many other vitamins and minerals, make sure you are eating plenty of these good-for-you foods.

### **Benefits of Using Cumin**

Cumin is a common spice used in many households that is well known for treating diarrhea, respiratory conditions, and gas. However, this spice does much more than this, according to new studies. Using cumin may increase memory and decrease stress if used daily. Also, cumin may decrease blood sugar in diabetic individuals. It is thought that cumin makes the body more sensitive to the insulin released and helps balance the blood sugar levels after eating.

### **Quote of the Day**

Concentrated power has always been the enemy of liberty....

**Ronald Reagan**



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