



# Dr. Bea's Newsletter

November 2003

## Random Samplings

### **The Importance of Vitamin D:**

Winter's a'comin and I hope that we have all adequately replenished our Vitamin D stores by lying out in the sun-naked-for at least ½ hour 3 times a week from June through September. Oh, didn't do that, huh? Well then, you really should get some lab work done as we surely won't be getting our "sun" vitamin D in the cold, sun challenged months ahead.

I am recommending that all of us, esp. post-menopausal women, have their blood levels of D measured via a relatively inexpensive test – 25(OH) vitamin D - which I can order for you.

Spring for the lab work. It's only about 50 bucks. I really don't think it is wise to play guessing games with such an important hormone (yes, vitamin D is actually a hormone). We will not know exactly how deficient you are until we see the numbers and only then can we take the appropriate action to correct this. If you are low in D, you will not be able to absorb all the calcium you are taking and you will be prone to osteomalacia (soft bones), osteopenia, osteoporosis and bone fractures; rickets, stunted growth and "growing pains" in children. (eg. OJ Simpson's very bowed legs are a result of vitamin D malnutrition in his childhood.)

Since we can't rely only on sunlight exposure in the winter in our latitude to maintain our stores of vitamin D, we will need extra supplementation either by cod liver oil or vitamin D supplements. Other places to food source vitamin D are any

D-fortified foods, fatty fish, egg yolks, organ meat and mushrooms.

If, for whatever reason, you don't want to or can't get the blood test, I can almost assume that most of us living at this latitude are at least mildly D deficient and will become more so as we head into deep winter. Therefore I could probably safely recommend that the very least we could all do for our D status is a teaspoon of cod liver oil for every 50 lbs of body weight. Take it right before a meal to prevent the burp factor. I recommend Nordic Natural's brand – orange flavored and I guarantee that it is quite bearable.

Here are a few stats for you – gleaned from random studies on D: 1) Men needed 1,000 IU's per day during Nebraska winters to keep their vitamin D levels from dropping. 2) A study of 2,600 healthy Britons given 800 iu's a day of D saw their risk of bone fractures drop 33% 3) Vitamin D can help prevent colorectal cancer and some autoimmune diseases.

**Bigger is better:** A lot is going on with cholesterol these days. Some of it bad like the overuse of statin drugs, but some of it very interesting and very promising. Seems that the ubiquitous they – the nameless, faceless researchers toiling in their small laboratories, pronouncing their usual dire warnings about what is going to kill us right this very minute – have taken a walk on wild side of optimism announcing that big fluffy particles of LDL and HDL may in fact

be good and that small, dense ones may be bad.

Eighty percent of all centenarians tend to have an unusual proportion of larger than average cholesterol carrying molecules. "Large particle size seems to give people an extra 20 years of life with very little disability to go along with it." (*JAMA*, 10/19/03)

The lucky people who have large particle LDL/HDL also have less heart disease, diabetes and other diseases of aging. Seems that the dreaded small particles are better at digging into the walls of blood vessels and creating plaques while the large fluffy ones just dance healthily through the blood vessels.

How can I have my very own large LDL/HDL particles, you may be asking? Well, for one thing, you could be fortunate enough to have the right gene for it. Secondly, regular exercise not only makes your muscles bigger, but yes, your LDL/HDL particles, too. "For years, scientists had known that exercise helped prevent heart disease. But we didn't know how it could be beneficial, because it didn't affect cholesterol levels. Now we know that exercise makes small, dense LDL particles larger and fluffier."

My cranky question is this? How many people on statin drugs have actually been harmed or at least put in danger because not only have they lowered their overall cholesterol levels, but all the good, big and fluffy guys along with it? Have your particle size measured. I am.

(continued on page 2)

**The Deadly Blue Packets:** Bad stuff, this Nutrasweet. I can't imagine how much Monsanto must produce in order to satisfy the thousands upon thousands of non-sugar products on the shelves today. Did you know that people have been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinsons, Epilepsy, Chronic Fatigue, Fibromyalgia, Brain Tumors and Diabetes when all they had was a Diet Coke habit? They gave up their Nutrasweet and all the symptoms disappeared. I had a patient with a severe anxiety disorder who was drinking 6 Diet Cokes per day. It was very painful for her to give up her addiction, but her anxiety went away and her overall health improved dramatically.

This is what happens: You drink your Diet Coke. The aspartame/Nutrasweet becomes unstable and breaks down into three chemicals that are known to have harmful effects: Aspartic acid, phenylalanine and methanol. Methanol breaks down further into formaldehyde which every funeral director embalms corpses with and every medical and chiropractic student has inhaled in massive amounts in cadaver lab.

Aspartic acid, which is aspartame, which is Nutrasweet causes a significant rise the blood levels of aspartate. Aspartate is an excitatory amino acid which makes a beeline for the brain and creates havoc there in the form of neurodegenerative disorders eg, Alzheimers, epilepsy, Parkinsons etc.

Phenylalanine is also an amino acid and is quickly absorbed into the blood stream where, again, it goes straight to the brain and causes serotonin levels to plummet leading to depression, anxiety, craving for carbohydrates and other "Prozac deficiencies." The breakdown of phenylalanine (DKP) is implicated in the development of brain tumors.

Methanol and the resultant breakdown product of formaldehyde is a neurotoxin,

a carcinogen, can damage the retina and interfere with DNA replication resulting in birth defects.

Give it up, O.K?

**Low Calorie Diet Study:** Many of you know that for the past 4 years I have been following the advice of Dr. Roy Walford, a gerontologist who espouses the CRON diet: Calorie Restriction with Optimum Nutrition. Since November of 2000 I have lost about 17 lbs just by following the principles of CRON and by having the patience to deal with a 5 year plan to slowly, slowly lose weight. My goal is about 106 by November of 2005 which will put me at a mild underweight. (I have 7 lbs. to go.) Just to put it simply, remember this simple statement: The skinny underweight rats always outlive the fat overweight rats.

Good news and bad news from scientists experimenting with fruit flies: The old good news is that dietary restriction can prolong life. The new good news is that it doesn't matter when you start that diet. The life-prolonging effects kick in within 48 hours – whether you are 25 when you start or 55 – and continues as long as you keep up the CRON diet.

The new bad news is that as soon as you stop the CRON, you immediately revert back to the fat rat category. (*New York Times*, 9/19/03)

**Regarding Microwaving and Dioxins:** Unfortunately, the microwave is a fact of life, but here are a few tips on how to do it safely, but this is probably an oxymoron, ie. "safe microwaving."

1) Do not heat your foods in plastic containers. The combination of high heat, fat and plastics releases a dangerous chemical – dioxin – into the food and ultimately into your body. where they will wreak havoc and cause cancer, esp. breast cancer. Please use glass, like Corning Ware or some other safe ceramic.

2) Quick foods like TV dinners, ramen and soups, etc, should be removed from the plastic container and heated in glass. Paper isn't quite as bad as plastic, but you really don't know what chemicals are in the paper either. Best to use glass.

3) Don't put saran wrap over your food when you nuke them. With the high heat, the poisonous toxins actually drip onto your foods. Use paper towels to cover foods to be nuked.

4) More dioxin bad news: Don't freeze your soft plastic water bottles with water as this also releases the dioxins in the plastic. Nalgene – or hard plastic – would be OK.

#### **How to Reduce Premature Births:**

Wish I had known this when I was giving birth to my two children – both of whom came 3 and 4 weeks too early. It's a form of progesterone called 17-alpha-hydroxy-progesterone or 17P. Docs start injecting 17P weekly in the second trimester to at-risk moms and so far the results show a significant increase in full term births to those women receiving the shots. More research is being done now. (*Science News*, June 14, 2003)

#### **Allergy Capitals of the United States:**

Fifty cities were ranked by the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America based on the following factors:

- 1) Average recorded pollen levels over the past 7 years
- 2) Length of the peak season for the most offensive pollen types
- 3) Number of antihistamine prescriptions written per capita in the last year and
- 4) Number of board certified allergists per capita.

First and winner of the booby prize as being the Allergy Capital of the US of A is Louisville, Kentucky. Then randomly: Austin, TX. is second worst, St. Louis, Mo. is third Albuquerque-Santa Fe is 11th. Phoenix is 24th, Denver is 48th, San Francisco is 49th and the winner – number 50 – and least allergy prone is...

Los Angeles, Ca. The winner, LA, shocked me. What about the smog? According to the rankings, we aren't so bad off here in the Denver area. But try convincing my allergy patients...

**In Vino Veritas and Vitalis:** As far as aging and life extension is concerned, polyphenols is where it's at, folks. Lab rats fed a diet of polyphenols in the form of resveratrol, found in grapes and red wine, or quercetin, found in apples and tea plus another polyphenol called piceatannol increased life span and reduced cancerous growths. This could further explain the elusive French Paradox or the French custom of eating high fat diets yet suffering 40% less cardiovascular disease than expected: Most of the French drink moderate and daily amounts of red wine. The speculation is this: The resveratrol blunts the activity of the tumor-suppressor gene, p53, blocking programmed cell death. (*Science*, 8/29/03)

**Speaking of Apples:** You lucky people out there with the J-Lo booties and tiny waists are in much better "predictive" health than us flatties with a propensity for round tummies. Individuals with an apple-shaped figure resulting from increased abdominal fat are at significantly greater risk for diabetes, insulin resistance, cardiovascular disease, and certain cancers compared with others who are just as overweight but with their excess going to their butt and thighs. I guess if you are born to the Apple Tribe you have to try harder to maintain a lower weight while the Pear Tribe can happily and healthily gorge on chocolate and chips. (*Science*, 9/5/03)

**The Attack of the Bladder Pods:** Some of you ladies – 8 million of you – know how hard it is to get rid of bladder infections. These little spawns of satan become chronic before you know it, no matter how carefully you use preventive measures. Just when you think you have your chronic infections under control, you feel that familiar discomfort above your pubic bone and whammo, "They're Ba-aaak." Bladder infections are the unwanted gift that keeps on giving for some of you.

Sometimes bladder infections become more than an uncomfortable annoyance; repeated infections can cause a chronic disruption of the bladder lining and a very painful and difficult to manage condition called interstitial cystitis which has most urologists throwing up their arms, suggesting that you are really in for it and that you need to take 5 kinds of pills to manage your IC, one of which turns your pee green. I can assist you if you have been diagnosed with IC.

But, I digress: Now we know why bladder infections are tenacious and chronic. Like some rinky-dink sci-fi movie from the 50's, "sticky pods" cover the colonies of bacteria – usually *e.coli* – which cause UTI's. The sticky pods cleverly render the *e.coli* invisible to our immune systems and the pods just live

there happily ever after waiting for a chance to explode into your bladder again - doubling you over with pain and running you to the bathroom where you may urinate 2 drops if you're lucky.

One researcher looked at infected mouse bladder epithelial cells under a scanning electron microscope and found bumps (bladder pods) all over the surface of the infected bladder. Our very excited bladder scientist then exclaimed, "It was spectacular! They looked just like fried eggs on the surface of the bladder!" (*Science News*, 7/4/03)

These evil pods are all filled with *e.coli* which are in turn coated with slimy projections called pili and suspended in a network of fibers, building quite the old fortress there complete with moats, catapults and knights at the ready to defend the infected castle of the bladder. Very clever little devils, these pod people...

**Recommendation:** If you suffer from chronic bladder infections, you must stay on a natural product called D-mannose. It's a natural sugar which seems to detach the pods of *e.coli* from the walls of the bladder without upsetting the balance of the friendly bacteria necessary for good health. "After being loosened from the bladder walls, the bacteria are rinsed away by normal urination. The *e.coli* aren't killed; they are simply relocated from the inside to the outside and the infection is gone." (Jonathan Wright, M.D. *Nutrition and Healing Newsletter*, 9/11/03). A half teaspoon per day should be enough for prevention. If you get a full blown bladder infection, try upping your dose of D-mannose to 2 t./3X day and add a product called Uristatin (Thorne) 2 every hour until you feel your symptoms abate.

**NSAID warning:** For those of you still taking your daily baby aspirin for the prevention of a heart attack: Do not take a daily preventive baby aspirin if you are taking any other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug such as ibuprofen or the COX II inhibitors like Celebrex or Vioxx. It will significantly increase your risk of heart attack and/or stroke.

I don't think that the daily baby aspirin is necessary or healthy; there are just too many risks involved to cavalierly recommend it to every person over 45. The risks include liver and kidney damage, GI bleeding and ulcers and the increased risk of hypertension in women. Why not just eat right? Lots of veggies and fruits will reduce your risk of heart attack by 70%. (*U. of Athens Research Study*, 9/1/03) Here's an easy way to do it: An apple, a banana, a pear, a peach and a mid-sized salad each day will make your daily aspirin obsolete. Add to this a couple of fish oil caps per day for an extra anti-inflammatory effect, reasonable daily exercise and you will probably not die of a heart attack or stroke.

## Recipes

**Fat Pets:** Not only are we two-legged creatures surfing the tide of unprecedented obesity, but our pets are becoming porky, too. About 25% of cats and dogs are now too fat, according to a report released this month by the National Research Council and “pet obesity tracks the trend in human obesity pretty well...with heavier people having heavier pets ...often for the same reason (between -meal snacks.)”

To begin with, my Welsh Corgi, Duncan, was bred (by the kennel I bought him from 7 years ago) to be bigger and huskier than most Corgis, reflecting more the Corgi-Basset ancestry, so he will naturally be heavier and huskier than other Corgis which can look more like Jack Russells. He’s a gorgeous dog with beautiful red and white fur, a foxy face and huge fox-like ears. (Corgi’s are now being trained to be hearing impaired companions...)

But, after his 4th year he started getting noticeably fat and since hip dysplasia is common in Corgis due to their uncommonly short legs, I knew he had to lose weight in order to reduce the stress on the hip joints. I tried everything – restricting snacks and making him miserable, buying low fat dog food and creating irritable bowel, giving him less for dinner and getting the guilt-provoking stare after he wolfed it down in one inhale. But nothing worked.

Except this secret dog recipe I am going to share with you: In this last year, he went from about 43 pounds to 34 and glory be, he even has a waist now! It also cleared up his irritable bowel. (I’m convinced he is reactive to wheat, just like his mother.) I want to thank my patient Alice for sharing this recipe with me and shaming me into going the extra mile (It’s more expensive and more work) for my two dogs. Poppy, the cockapoo has no weight or health problems, but thrives on this diet as well.

Here is the recipe:

- 1) Bake 3 very large **yams or sweet potatoes** until done.
- 2) Cut in chunks, then pulverize in your heavy duty blender (I have a Vita-Mix) about 6-8 large **raw carrots**. Add enough water to the mix to assist in pulverizing the hard carrots and so you won’t blow out your blender motor.
- 3) Put the pulverized carrots into a large glass container, enough for a week for two smallish dogs, and add the peeled yams in chunks. Grind about 1/2 to 1 cup of **flax seeds** and add to the mixture to sop up the extra liquid.

Mix it all up.

This carrot-yam mixture will take place of the usual base of kibble. I give Duncan 1 brimming cup of this carrot-yam

mixture, then add about 5 large chunks of **raw stew beef**. (I get it at Costco). Poppy gets a bit less since she weighs about 15 lbs. I divide 1 scoop of **Nupro dog vitamins** diluted with water between the two dog’s bowls then for a treat I add just a few wheat-free, corn-free **buffalo kibble** “croutons” on top. (Get the Nupro and the buffalo kibble at **Pet Pantry** on 30th Street)

They seem to love and crave all the beta carotene. When I am making the carrot-yam mixture for the week, both of them sit and beg for a piece of yam. The buffalo kibble also serves as the usual snack du jour and a scant handful each serves as breakfast.

**Red Hot Chicken Soup:** This is a great soup anytime but esp. when you’re sick. It’s hot and spicy and feels like pampering and Mom and hot baths – all those really good things you want to do for yourself when you have a head cold and want to open those sinuses up.

- 1 head garlic, unpeeled
  - olive oil
  - 1 large onion
  - 2 green bell peppers, chopped
  - 2 red bell peppers, chopped
  - 2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and minced. More if you’re so inclined.
  - 3 T. grated fresh ginger root
  - 8 cups (or two boxes) of organic chicken broth
  - 1 bunch cilantro
  - 1 whole chicken
- Seasonings like S and P. Lemon juice is also very good.

What I do is throw the whole, skinned, organic chicken into the crock pot and cook it for a few hours with about 3 cups of water. If you are in a hurry, just throw it in a pot on the stove with some water and cook until tender. I defat the chicken stock and use that for my liquid, adding enough of the boxed stock to make 8 cups. When your chicken is done, pick it off the bones and reserve it for the soup.

Spread the separate cloves of unpeeled garlic on a baking sheet. Roast the cloves for about 20 minutes or until soft at about 350 degrees. When they are cool, press the cloves out of their skins into a small bowl and mash.

Heat the olive oil and add the chopped onion, cooking for about 10 minutes. Then add the green, red and jalapeno peppers, mashed garlic, grated ginger root and cook stirring for about one minute. Add the chicken stock and simmer for about 3 minutes. Add the chicken pieces, chopped cilantro and cook a minute more. Add seasonings to taste. Just before serving, add the lemon juice.

Please check out my website at [www.drbea.com](http://www.drbea.com)

I add new information every 2–3 weeks in a section called Hot News. Stay current with all the latest information!

Dr Bea’s Newsletter is published quarterly. It is researched and written by  
Dr. Bea Knight-Johnson, D.C. • 948 North Street, Suite 1 • Boulder, CO 80304 • 303-440-6526

No statement in this newsletter shall be construed as offering diagnosis, cure, mitigation or prevention of any disease. Anyone having questions regarding the content of this newsletter should contact their own health care provider for verification.