



Health & Nutrition Update May 2008

CHOOSING THE FOUR PILLARS OF OPTIMAL HEALTH

The more one reads, researches, and studies the voluminous and rapidly expanding information available about health and nutrition, the more one realizes that there are essentially four principal aspects of obtaining and maintaining optimal health. For the purpose of this update, we will simply call them **the four pillars of optimal health**, because without them everyone jeopardizes the realizable opportunity to achieve sustainable wellness. They are: (1) appropriate hydration, (2) an exercise regimen, (3) a proper diet, and (4) supplementation of vitamins, minerals, and glyconutrients.

Appropriate Hydration

When God made human beings, He included water as an essential element of our makeup. It comprises approximately 60% of a male's weight, and 50% of a female's weight. Next to oxygen, water is what our bodies need and crave because it allows them to function properly. Without proper hydration, our bodies operate inefficiently as water not only keeps our body temperatures consistent, but also acts to eliminate the waste building up in the urinary tract, digestive tract, and glandular/skin tracts. Here is a quote that generally establishes a formula for proper hydration for those engaged in athletic activity, but is recommended because of the importance of maintaining water equilibrium:

"There isn't a 'recommended daily allowance (RDA)' for daily water intake. Part of the reason is the difference in physical activity, age, present physical condition, living in a hot or dry climate, and diuretic medications all contribute to fluid loss and a greater need for water. In addition, a diet rich in fiber, high in protein, or taking a supplement such as creatine requires an increase in water consumption. **It's estimated that healthy adults require at least eight to ten cups of water each day.** The following formula will provide you with a more precise amount of water necessary for your daily needs.

"The formula (7) is .5 times your weight in pounds to get the number of ounces divided by 8 to get the number of glasses. Example: 115 lbs x .5 = 57.5 ounces. 57.5 divided by 8 equals 7.2 glasses. Often, we replace fluids by consuming beverages such as milk, fruit juices, coffee, tea, and sodas. Our bodies will extract the water from these sources through digestion and metabolism" (Rob Wilkens, "Proper Hydration," accessible at: femalemuscle.com/wilkins/hydration.html).

People should be constantly hydrating themselves throughout the course of each day. The recommendation is to choose properly filtered water, over the wide variety of other choices available, for the intake of liquids. The challenge is often reprogramming one's habits so that drinking water becomes a joy, as one eliminates the tendency to drink water in all of its altered, enhanced, and/or reconstituted forms. One of the great by-products of drinking sufficient water is the fact that it contributes significantly to weight loss and weight maintenance. For those who struggle with weight fluctuations, this should be a prime motivator to get in the habit of hydrating consistently.

Exercise Regimen

Most people recognize the need to have some type of exercise regimen, but for many, finding the time and the motivation is a challenge. However, attaining and/or maintain optimal health—including an exercise regimen for cardio, strength, and flexibility disciplines—is essential. Obviously, getting the heart pumping beyond the resting state is critical for maintaining a healthy heart and circulatory system. Walking, running, biking, rowing, hiking, and any other number of activities allow the heart to beat faster and it will strengthen the heart muscle. For the sake of avoiding the long term consequences of a sedentary lifestyle, choose to get up and move your body. At the same time, it is also essential to strengthen muscles in your arms, legs, and back by including some routines that will push these muscles beyond elementary use. Simple push ups and pull ups help the arms and back, while simply walking stairs or riding a bike will help the legs and increase strength if done consistently.

Additionally, maintaining flexibility via simple stretching before and after workouts will keep you limber.

Try touching your toes when you shower, or when you arise in the morning. Not only will this help with your flexibility, but it will also remind you of areas of your body that perhaps need some fine tuning.

A regular exercise regimen will allow your body to eliminate waste through the pores of your skin by generating a sweat. Perspiration will help cleanse your body of toxins that have a tendency to build up without being eliminated. As you do this, you will see why proper hydration, coupled with a good exercise regimen, will allow your body to flush elements that are not necessarily good for your optimal health.

Proper Diet

So much can be said about eating properly that any attempt that I make will barely scratch the surface, especially per the individual needs and taste preferences of each person. For those inclined toward following the instruction manual provided by God, the elimination of certain items that He has declared are unclean immediately begins to narrow down the choices of what should or should not be eaten. Margaret and I prescribe to a Biblically kosher diet, with an emphasis on choosing what we have determined are the “superfoods” best suited to naturally supply anti-oxidants and nutrition to our bodies. Eliminating the habit of eating foods that are processed or enhanced, with chemicals designed to lengthen shelf life or eye appeal, is critical. We have also chosen to eat organically grown vegetables and fruits whenever possible. Consuming foods that are alive, with the natural enzymes still actively doing what God intended them to do in our food chain, is our goal.

Thankfully, the proliferation of interest in health and nutrition is actually encouraging the food industry to begin to meet the market demands for organically and naturally grown produce, grains, and meats. The benefits of eating properly while consciously avoiding fast food, convenience store junk, carbohydrate saturated impulse foods, will go a long way toward optimizing your health. In fact, what we have discovered is that over time, your view of food will get to a place where you are seriously concerned about putting certain things that have been labeled “food” into your mouth and digestive tract. The benefits of eliminating a girth of built up chemicals around our mid sections is quite an incentive. As that extra ten, twenty, or even fifty pounds begins to “melt away”—a sense of accomplishment—knowing that you are becoming more and more healthy, is quite a reward for making good diet choices!

Supplementation

As noted multiple times in previous updates, the critical need for supplementing our diets is beyond academic discussion. It is almost universally agreed that the typical American diet does not have the nutritional needs that our bodies require. The depleted soils, and the substitution of natural vitamins and minerals by the “fortification” process, should stir one to concern. In a classic case, someone wanting to drink something they would consider good, often goes to the grocery store and buys a half gallon of orange juice with all “extra pulp” that is fortified with calcium. However, what you are often not told by the manufacturers is that when the orange juice was pasteurized, the heating process (to help maintain shelf life) killed all of the enzymes (living food) that were originally contained in the oranges when they were picked off the trees. Manipulating food for the sake of making money has significantly altered the quality of what God originally intended for the orange, with its enzymes intact, to do for natural human digestive functions.

In order to counterbalance the problem of not having the necessary vitamins, minerals, and glyconutrients in many of our foodstuffs (to maximize cell-to-cell communication in our immune system), we are always recommending you to supplement your diet. In our research, we have found some products that we highly recommend. Nevertheless, regardless of our choices, we encourage everyone to take at least something. As the old saying goes, “Something or anything is better than nothing!”

If you decide you are going to forego one of these pillars, you could be reduced to a three legged stool that will stand, but without the solidity of a four legged base. If you eliminate two, then your two legged balancing act will stand, but only if supported by something else that might be artificially produced. If you choose to eliminate three of these pillars, then you will be like a pogo stick, simply bouncing along trying to stay up. However, we know that through exhaustion, you will eventually have to lie down and suffer the consequences of choosing poorly when it came to your own health and nutrition. We recommend all four, **but the choice is yours**. Choose wisely....

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