



Nutrition Nibbles

Sugar, Salt, and Sitting Around: The Perfect Combo for Shortening Kids' Lives

by Dr. Debby Watkins, D.C.

I have been a longtime fan of local chiropractor, Dr. Debby Watkins. She puts out an awesome health e-tip every month and I couldn't wait to share this one with all of you. This article shows that the health of our nation's children is a staggering problem, facing all health disciplines.
--Mary

Think your kids don't eat that much sugar or salt, or that they eat enough healthful foods to make up for it? A sobering study about teen hearts hit me hard. If there are young people in your life, it may shock you, too. Today's teens are developing heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes at a younger age than any generation before them. After 40 years of improvements in America's heart health, they're likely to live shorter lives than their parents.

There's no way to sugarcoat this. More than 70% of teens studied already had one or more of these red flags: high blood pressure, high blood sugar, high triglycerides (a menacing blood fat), low levels of healthy HDL cholesterol, and lots of

excess pounds.

How did kids' health problems get so big? Blame the four S's:

SUGAR: About 30% of teens' daily calories now come from sugary drinks and snacks.

SALT: Kids eat more blood pressure-boosting sodium than any other age group.

SKIPPING THE GOOD STUFF: Only about 20% eat enough whole grains or five servings of fruit and veggies a day.

SITTING AROUND (USUALLY STARING AT SCREENS): Just 20% get an hour of physical activity per day, the minimum for good health.

What can you, as parents, do? Truth is, we know what really keeps kids' hearts healthy -- and it's not lectures and weigh-ins. Kids click with what you do, not with what you say. Don't shame them about their weight or waist size, ever. Focus on positives and their health. Walk the walk and start with the basics.

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College Corner: Where Do You Get Your Nutrition Info?

Where exactly does the American public find their nutrition and diet information? I often wonder that when working with clients. I have heard some really unbelievable things in my office: everything from carbs are a health hazard and should be avoided at all costs (completely false!) to sea salt is healthier to use in cooking because it contains less sodium than table salt (also false, they each have ~2300 mg sodium/teaspoon). Where do people turn when they have a diet, nutrition, or fitness question?

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' *Nutrition and You: Trends 2011* consumer survey, 67% of Americans polled rely on television to tell them how to eat. With consumers' expanding waistlines, largely in part from wasting so many hours in front of the boob tube, that does not seem to be the most reliable source of nutrition information!

If the public isn't getting their dietary advice from daytime TV, 41% report turning to magazines and 40% surf the

Questions or Comments? Email me at marymahoneyrd@gmail.com

Sugar, Salt, and Sitting Around cont...

Nutrition Info
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1. Get every kid's cholesterol checked (yours, too). Heart-health experts now recommend that all kids have a cholesterol test between age 9 and 11 and again between 17 and 21. Out-of-whack numbers (e.g., total cholesterol over 189, LDLs over 119, triglycerides over 114, healthy HDLs below 45) mean it's time for the whole family to eat smarter and move more. Few children need cholesterol-lowering medications.

2. Know your kid's blood pressure (your own, too). Healthy blood pressure numbers vary with a child's age. Your pediatrician can tell you if your child's are fine or need improvement. Though drugs are rarely needed, knowing your child's blood pressure can help you gauge whether it's time for a lifestyle YOU-turn at home. Teach your kids the skills they need to know, including how to deal with stress. Change your menu. Today. Don't wait for a test. Few teens get even half the cholesterol-lowering fiber they need. Serving up more fiber-rich fruit, veggies, and whole grains is a great place to start. Toss walnuts and raisins on oatmeal, and keep apples and oranges on the counter. Make sandwiches with 100% whole-wheat bread, sprinkle veggies with almonds at dinner, and buy whole-wheat pasta. Also serve water, nonfat milk, or iced tea instead of sugary soft drinks. Lead the way!

3. Downshift on pizza and other salt bombs. The single largest source of sodium in teen diets is pizza, so make it a once-a-month treat -- and start with a big salad so a couple of slices fills them

up. Cutting back on salt now will cut your teens' risk for high blood pressure later by 63%. Got a kid who loves to cook? Try making 100% whole-wheat pizza together. Just use low-salt sauce and tons of vegetables.

4. Turn off the TV and get moving. Play backyard soccer, hit the playground, go skating, or break out Wii Fit or a dance-along video (get ready to sweat!). Simply cutting in half your family's staring-at-TV time will help everyone burn calories and build muscle (and body confidence). It will also help all of you decrease your risk for colon and breast cancer. Sitting around has just been strongly linked to both.

Dr. Debby Watkins, D.C. is one of San Jose's finest Chiropractors servicing the San Jose Bay Area. "Dr. Debby" is known for her personalized one-on-one patient treatment care and strives to insure that YOU come first when it comes to getting your health back to its optimum condition. To contact Dr. Debby or to subscribe to her monthly newsletter, email her at drdebby@yahoo.com. www.drdebbywatkins.com

"Kids click with what you do, not with what you say."
-Dr. Debby

internet next. Unfortunately, television, magazines, and the internet's reliability can be spotty.

Thankfully, savvy consumers know to check out the source of their nutrition information by looking at the credentials of the author. Registered Dietitians (RDs) and Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs--the newest name for the true food and nutrition experts) should be the public's go-to source for anything and everything food and nutrition related. Fortunately, 71% of survey respondents listed RDs as "very credible" sources of nutrition info, followed by doctors at 64%, nurses at 54%, and personal trainers at 31%.

So while I work on my television infomercial, you can find credible nutrition from me (your very own registered dietitian nutritionist) in this newsletter or by following me on Facebook (Mary Mahoney, RD - Dietitian & Nutritionist) and Twitter (@marymahoney_rd). Join me in getting the real nutrition info out as I launch my social media presence!

