

The question of insanity

As defined in the dictionary, insanity refers to, "extreme folly or unreasonableness, something utterly foolish or unreasonable." Anna Mae Brown defines insanity as, "doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result."

I was considering this when thinking about people who are afflicted by disease. If they choose to lead the same life after the ailment as they did prior, then what are their chances of a full, complete and lasting recovery? Doing the same thing over and over does not produce a different result. I have a close family friend who is now, thankfully, cancer free. She lives today much as she did before cancer, though a little older, a little slower, a little weaker and perhaps no wiser.

As I see it, in the most simplistic terms, there are four factors which may contribute in varying degrees to one's overall health and vulnerability — genetics, environment, lifestyle and nutrition. Some unique combination of these four factors spells an unfavourable diagnosis for some, while sparing others.

Upon cursory observation, we quickly realize that we can do nothing about our genetics. They are simply the cards we are dealt. We can do very little about our environment except attempt to minimize our exposure to fuel exhaust and second hand smoke. We can improve the quality of the water we drink but escaping the advances of urban industrialization is difficult and perhaps unappealing.

Lifestyle and nutrition are the areas over which we have much more con-

trol. These are the areas where the impact is potentially the greatest. Slowing down, meditating, relaxing, exercising, hydrating and detoxing the mind and body are all approaches proven to be helpful to on-going health. An element of joy in one's life along with positive thoughts yield more healthful results than a joyless existence filled with negativity.

continued on reverse

Veggie burger

I love this recipe from Rose Reisman because it does not pretend to be a beef burger. It really is a vegetable burger and proud of it. I have altered the recipe from the original so that it eliminates the foods which we find particularly related to allergies and intolerances.

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| 3 medium carrots | 1 cup chickpeas, rinsed, drained |
| 2 slices spelt or ezekeil bread | 1/3 cup goat cheese |
| 1/3 cup fresh coriander | 1/4 cup green onions |
| 1 egg | 2 tbsp lemon juice |
| 2 tsp soy sauce | 1 tsp garlic, minced |

Combine all the ingredients in a food processor. Pulse on and off until well mixed. In a large nonstick skillet sprayed with cooking spray, heat 2 tsp of oil. Cook burgers approximately 3 minutes per side until golden.

Weekday Wonders: Healthy Light Meals for Everyday, Penguin, Canada, 2004

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The question of insanity *continued*

Ensuring adequate and balanced nutrients in the form of protein, carbohydrates and the right kind of fats, as well as a good array of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants all work together to provide the body with the necessary raw materials for optimal everyday living.

Granted, life comes with no guarantee and a disease survivor certainly understands the lack of a life-time warranty. Perhaps my friend needs to alter her perspective and think of change as a new chance, exerting control toward an improved direction — one full of hope and health. Whatever was happening before the disease did not work well in the sense of allowing her body to maintain health and heal itself. It may not have been receiving the correct

balance of nutritional raw materials or it might have been reacting to a chosen lifestyle of hidden stress or more obvious avoidable abuses. Since cancer is thought to feed on sugar, it seems the reduction of the white stuff is an obvious and simple example of what one might want to alter after surviving the disease.

Since doing the same thing over and over, by definition, never leads to change, I counsel my clients in understanding that every step toward optimal health, no matter how small, is a good step. To heal or improve physically, change is imperative. Lifestyle choices, including improved nutrition based on one's unique biochemical make up, are an excellent place to start, a place of affirmative action.

The miracle of plastic

I am always trying to encourage people to take small steps along the road to improved health. This is one such step - easy with potentially big dividends.

The Walter Reed Army Medical Center recently circulated a warning about freezing water in plastic bottles. The process apparently causes the release of carcinogenic dioxins into the water. In addition, the Manager of the Wellness Program from Castle Hospital referred to a similar danger from microwaving foods in plastic containers or with a plastic covering.

Instead, transfer food to glass and consider using a paper product as a cover. Though this claim may or may not have validity, it is a simple step with no downside.

QUESTIONS

I often have a burning sensation after I eat. Tests have not detected an ulcer and I would prefer not to use medication. Do you have any suggestions?

The feeling of excessive acid or burning in the digestive tract is sometimes just the opposite of what you might think. If there is insufficient acid in the stomach, then it must work and churn vigorously to properly break down food. This process moves the acid into places ill-equipped to handle it.

The indicators for over and under active stomach are related so a practitioner can help determine which it is in your case. In the short term, however, consider cutting out caffeine and increasing water intake. As well, avoid spicy foods, alcohol and sugar.

Improved digestion might help since heartburn is related to a decrease in digestive juices and enzymes. Refer to the article section of my website for more information.

Keep in mind that there are no good or bad foods — only foods that make you feel good or bad.

**Please e-mail your questions related to nutrition and general health to me and I will choose one to answer in each issue.
Send to info@bitebybite.com**

DEFINITION

free radical (fre-rad'i-k'l)

Free radicals are negatively charged molecules which generally exist in small numbers in the body. They are seeking to complete their electron shell and therefore tend to bond with positively charged cells. Though they exist for only a fraction of a second, in larger numbers they can cause irreversible and excessive damage to cells and tissues. Free radicals are increased by exposure to radiation and environmental pollutants as well as a poor diet and excessive stress. They can be neutralized by antioxidants including vitamins A, C, E, selenium and zinc. Improving digestion and detoxing are also helpful in minimizing the negative effects.