

Bite Size Bits

a practical approach to optimal health from
Beth Gorbet of Bite by Bite
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Mighty, miraculous machines

The automobile is a miraculous machine. It is made up of many systems — the ignition system, the cooling system, the starting system, the lubrication system and on and on. The story of the car engine is something like this: the piston starts at the top of a cylinder and moves down to intake air and gas. When it moves up again, it compresses the mixture. A spark plug emits a spark which ignites the gas which then explodes, causing the piston to fall. Then the process starts again. This sequence happens hundreds of times per minute — the engine roars!

A similar story applies to the eleven amazing systems of the human body. Each one is unique and intricate but one cannot run without the support of the others.

The simple story of the digestive system is that food enters the mouth where enzymes start to break it down. Then it moves through the esophagus into the stomach. There it is worked on by another set of enzymes and hydrochloric acid. The small intestine extracts and absorbs nutrients and finally the leftovers move

into the colon and out. The story, of course, is much more complex since there are hormones involved and the correct enzymes and raw materials must be present, the integrity of the internal epithelial tissue needs to be in good shape and a whole slew of other factors must come into play.

They all happen, though, without much thought on your part. Like breathing, the beating of your heart or the pumping of your blood, the body works on “auto pilot” for many

of its important functions. At least it seems that way.

Like the systems in the car, the body systems are interrelated. They work together in a kind of priority sequence. If, for instance, your blood calcium level is not high enough, your body, sensing that maintaining the pH level of your blood is more important than maintaining the integrity of your bones, will pull needed calcium from your skeleton. In doing so, this

continued on reverse

RECIPE

Spinach Pesto Pasta

What a great way to get an additional vegetable onto your plate and into your family. Instead of traditional basil pesto, this one substitutes spinach and it's as easy as one-two-three!

4 cups of baby spinach

1/4 cup toasted almond slivers

1-2 cloves of garlic (to taste)

1 tablespoon lemon juice

olive oil (to consistency)

1/2 cup shiitake mushrooms

4 servings of spelt or rice pasta of your choice

Place the spinach in a food processor along with the garlic and almonds. Process until the spinach breaks down. Add the lemon juice and, while you continue to process, slowly add the olive oil until it is of a pasty consistency. Meanwhile, boil the pasta until *al dente* and then drain. Slice the mushrooms and sauté them in a little olive oil until they are crisp. In a pasta bowl, mix the cooked pasta with the pesto and serve topped with the mushrooms.

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Miraculous machines *continued*

lone process involves the circulatory, digestive, hormonal (or endocrine) and structural systems.

It is my opinion that any given concern will not adequately be dealt with if changes are made solely to a single body system. In the case of osteoporosis, for instance, there are many systems which might be explored before simply downing more sources of calcium.

The activeness of the stomach enzymes and hydrochloric acid production is a factor related to the need for alkalizing products. The integrity of the intestinal bacteria aid in determining how well calcium is ultimately bro-

ken down and absorbed. These very functions are tied to a number of other factors including, not surprisingly, stress. So, you can see how, in this simple example, the digestive and endocrine systems must work together for optimal health.

The incredible automobile, if tuned regularly and fed with oil and gas when needed, will provide you with freedom in the form of transportation. The miraculous body, if provided with the proper raw materials, nurtured and cared for, will provide you with a lifetime of good health.

So treat your body well. Unlike a vehicle, it is not easily replaceable.

The big fat story

It certainly is one of the more complicated and controversial facets of the nutritional world. There are, however, a few things that are crystal clear.

Trans fats, a result of polyunsaturated oils being hydrogenated, are to be avoided. These are the ones that you frequently find in processed foods and deep fried items. They provide the body with a double whammy. They not only cause the “bad” cholesterol to go up, but they also cause the “good” cholesterol to go down. Besides, they add no nutritional value to a product.

We also seem to agree that most bodies can benefit from an increased intake of essential fatty acids, particularly omega 3. There is quite a list of benefits to adding this good fat to your diet, including skin and hair improvement, and an increase of the good prostaglandins which help to regulate body processes. They are required to build cell membranes and hormones and have been noted to help with a large number of health ailments.

QUESTIONS

I just seem to be tired all the time. My blood and other medical tests all seem normal. Is there anything nutritionally I can do to fight the fatigue?

My first question is the obvious one — are you getting enough sleep? Take a hard look at your bedtime routine and do what you can to ensure a smooth and soothing transition into sleep. The second obvious place to look is at exercise. Are you getting enough and doing it at an appropriate time of the day, preferably well before bedtime?

The next place to look for the root cause of ongoing fatigue is the area of hidden allergies or energy robbers. You may be ingesting a food that requires a tremendous amount of energy from your system. Energy robbers include caffeine and sugar, both of which create a nutritional deficiency. If your cells are starving for the appropriate raw materials, you are bound to feel tired.

A psychological basis is the final place to look. Tiredness can be a sign of depression or excessive stress.

**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

essential fatty acids (e-sen'shel fa'-tē as'id s)

These are the “good fats” that are required by your body every day. They cannot be made by the body and must be provided in the diet. They are commonly referred to as EFAs or omega 3 and omega 6 predominately. They are very fragile. They need refrigeration, should be kept away from light, and cannot be heated.

Good sources of EFAs include cold water fatty fish like salmon and halibut, avocado oil, macadamia nut oil and the naturally occurring fats found in fresh walnuts, sunflower seeds and pecans. Flaxseed oil is a good choice as a supplementation.