The McDougall Newsletter

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In This Issue

Marketing Milk and Disease

The Dairy Industry is really big business – with sales of over $11 billion for milk and $16 billion for cheese annually in the USA alone – so you might expect hard line marketing from them – but would you expect them to aggressively sell their products if they were known to be harmful to people – especially to women and children?

The Dairy Management Inc.™, whose purpose is to build demand for dairy products on behalf of America's 80,000-plus dairy producers, has just released the **Dairy Checkoff 2003 Unified Marketing Plan (UMP)** with a budget of $165.7 million.[1] The United Marketing Plan explains, "This ongoing program area (referring to the section *Dairy Image/Confidence*) aims to protect and enhance consumer confidence in dairy products and the dairy industry. A major component involves conducting and communicating the results of dairy nutrition research showing the healthfulness of dairy products, as well as issues and crisis management."[1] (Most likely, I fall under the heading of "issues and crisis management.")

A significant portion of the money from the 2003 Unified Marketing Plan is specifically targeted to children ages 6 to 12 and their mothers. The goal is "to guide school-age children to become life-long consumers of dairy products, 2003 activities will target students, parents, educators and school foodservice professionals."[1] (Similar words and intentions have been attributed to the tobacco industry.) see page 2

Understanding the New Atkins Research

Two studies on the Atkins diet – the Samaha[1] and the Foster[2] studies – were published this week (May 22, 2003) in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Both showed a greater weight loss (13 pounds at 6 months[1] and 10 pounds at 12 months[2]) on the low-carbohydrate diet compared to the low-fat diet (4 and 6 pounds). The diets labeled as "low-fat," were designed to be 30% and 25% of the calories as fat, respectively – which, at best, could be considered "moderate-fat." In the Samaha study, prior to the intervention, the participants were eating 33% of their calories as fat. So how does decreasing the fat by 3% make this a low-fat diet? See page 12

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All this marketing is working, too: annual fluid milk consumption among kids 6 to 12 increased to 28 gallons per capita – the highest level in 10 years. Children under 18 drink 46% of the milk consumed in the USA.

Realize that when I say milk in this article, I'm also implicating all dairy products that are made from milk: non-fat milk, low-fat milk, buttermilk, cheeses, cottage cheese, yogurt, ice cream, whey, kefir, and butter. All of them share a similar nutritional profile (plus or minus the fat, protein, and sugar), and as a result, all of them contribute to a wide range of health problems.

Will the UMP Inform You of the Contamination? E. Coli, AIDS and Leukemia Viruses?

Last month I left you with some very disturbing facts about the contamination of milk with loads of bacteria and millions of white blood cells (pus cells) which are there to help fight off the infections found in cows and milk (see the April 2003 Newsletter found at www.drmcdougall.com). Will the 2003 Unified Marketing Plan specify money to inform you of this upsetting information? You will never see an advertisement with a famous movie star proudly wearing a white mustache, properly labeled as containing 300,000 white blood cells and 25,000 bacteria.

Dairy products were the foods most often recalled by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from the period October 1, 1993 through September 30, 1998 because of contamination with infectious agents, mostly bacteria.[2] They are commonly tainted with disease-causing bacteria, such as salmonella, staphylococci, listeria, deadly E. coli O157[3] and Mycobacterium paratuberculosis[4] (possibly one of the agents causing Crohn's disease; a form of life-threatening chronic colitis) – as well as viruses known to cause lymphoma and leukemia-like diseases, and immune deficiency in cattle.

AIDS and Leukemia Viruses

Dairy cattle are infected with bovine immunodeficiency viruses (BIV) and bovine leukemia viruses (BLV), worldwide. (Bovine immunodeficiency viruses can also be properly referred to as bovine AIDS viruses.)

- In the United States, results show an average 40% of beef herds and 64% of dairy herds are infected with BIV.[5]
- In Canada[6-7], the infection rate is 70% and in Argentina[8] the rate is 84% for BLV.
- Herds infected with the BIV are usually infected with the leukemia virus (BLV) also.[5]
- Both viruses can cross species lines thus infecting other animals, like sheep, goats, and chimpanzees – and they develop disease.[5]
- Nationwide and worldwide, leukemia is more common in the higher dairy consuming populations.[9,10]
- An increased incidence of leukemia has been found among dairy farmers in multiple studies.[11-14]
- BIV infection has been reported in a person.[15]
- The bovine leukemia virus has been classified in the same group as the Human T-cell Leukemia/Lymphotropic virus type 1 (HTLV-1), which is known to cause leukemia and lymphomas in humans (Adult T-cell leukemia/lymphoma).[16]
- BIV is structurally and genetically closely related to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) type-1 (the virus causing human AIDS).[17]
- Pasteurization kills many types of microorganisms, but it is not foolproof. There is also concern that pasteurization may break the viruses into fragments that may become even more dangerous.[18]

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Has it been shown that the bovine AIDS and/or leukemia viruses will infect you and cause disease? No. Nor has it been proved that they will not. Compared to the efforts to try to convince you of the bone-building benefits of milk, almost nothing has been spent to establish whether or not it is safe to feed your family dairy products teeming with bovine immunodeficiency and bovine leukemia viruses (and/or viral fragments). Some countries take this matter very seriously. For example, in many European countries, health officials have conducted programs to eradicate infected herds – Finland's program has successfully eradicated BLV from its cattle.[19]

If you live in a region with a high incidence of herd infection with these viruses you can be pretty sure you will be consuming dairy products containing whole viruses or fragments of these viruses, since the milk from many dairy farms is mixed in large vats at the dairy factory before processing and packaging. Since the industry will not act responsibly in many countries, consumers are left with one choice – eliminate all dairy products from their diet. If eliminating dairy products would prevent even a small risk of human disease, it would be well worthwhile, especially since, as you learned in the April 2003 McDougall Newsletter, they are completely unnecessary for excellent health.

Will the UMP Market the Pain and Suffering Caused Children?

The Dairy Management Inc.™ has specifically targeted children in their campaign.[1] This will raise no public concern, because most people consider cow's milk the healthiest of all food choices, especially when it comes to children. Over 25% of children are overweight in Western countries and cow's milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, butter, and sour cream, with all their fat and calories, contribute greatly to this deadly epidemic. Many of these overweight children are now developing type-2 diabetes. However, the most common variety of diabetes found in children is still *type-1 or insulin dependent diabetes (IDDM)*.

Type-1 Diabetes

The evidence incriminating cow's milk consumption in the cause of type-1 diabetes is sufficient to cause the American Academy of Pediatrics to issue these warnings, "Early exposure of infants to cow's milk protein may be an important factor in the initiation of the beta cell (insulin-producing cells of the pancreas) destructive process in some individuals."[20] "The avoidance of cow's milk protein for the first several months of life may reduce the later development of IDDM or delay its onset in susceptible people."[20]

Exposure to cow's milk protein early in life, when the intestinal tract is immature, sometimes results in the milk protein entering the blood stream where antibodies to this foreign substance, cow's milk, are made by the immune system. Unfortunately, these same antibodies also attack the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. By glassful of milk after spoonful of ice cream, over a period of about 5 to 7 years, the child destroys his or her own pancreas – and is left with a lifelong, life-threatening, handicap: diabetes. The pancreas is forever destroyed and the child will have to take insulin shots daily. Complications, such as blindness, kidney failure, and heart disease will be a real threat during his or her shortened lifespan. (See my July 2002 McDougall Newsletter for a discussion of type-1 diabetes). See page 4

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Constipation

Not as life-threatening as diabetes, but for some as mentally and physically distressing, is chronic constipation. As a doctor who has cared for hundreds of children, I can tell you they suffer with pain, bleeding, hemorrhoids, and embarrassment. The causal effects of cow's milk were clearly demonstrated in a study of 65 severely constipated children published in the *New England Journal of Medicine.*[21] *These boys and girls complained of only one bowel movement every 3 to 15 days and many didn't even respond to strong laxatives (lactulose and mineral oil). Forty-four of the 65 (68%) found relief of their constipation when taken off the cow's milk. Evidence of inflammation of the bowel was found on biopsy, and anal fissures and pain were commonly associated with the constipation – elimination of the cow's milk solved these problems. When cow's milk was reintroduced into their diet 8 to 12 months later, all of the children developed constipation within 5 to 10 days. For constipation alone cow's milk should be banned from the School Milk Programs, worldwide.*

Rhinitis and Otitis Media

The multitude of snotty-nosed kids frequently visiting the pediatrician's office for ear infections is much more obvious than the constipated crowd, and these problems less devastating than type-1 diabetes, but these complaints also can be due to consuming the foreign proteins intended for calves.[22-25] In addition, these same children are likely to suffer from gastroesophageal reflux, asthma and/or eczema from their unnatural habit of drinking cow's milk.

Diseases of Foreign Protein

Many conditions can be traced back to reactions to cow's milk. Milk contains more than 25 different proteins that can induce adverse reactions in humans.[26] Our immune system perceives these foreign proteins as alien invaders, like a virus or bacteria, and launches an attack in response, as in the case of type-1 diabetes discussed above and many other allergic and autoimmune diseases (see chart on next page).

Even with all of this disease in children the **American School Food Service Association** and the dairy industry have developed a *School Milk Pilot Test* to demonstrate that kids will drink more milk in school if certain product enhancements are made.[27] The result was milk sales increased by an average of 18 percent and consumption increased by 35 percent when schools provided flavored milks and other package enhancements.[28]

The UMP Will Try to Deceive You about the Fattening Nature of Dairy Foods

"Independent research confirming dairy's role in weight reduction is mounting," said Dr. Greg Miller, senior vice president of nutrition and scientific affairs for the Dairy Checkoff.[29] "This helps to position dairy foods as part of the solution to America's growing obesity epidemic." And Miller added, "Informing the public about dairy's role in the fight against obesity will help increase consumption of milk, cheese and yogurt, among other dairy products."

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DISEASES CAUSED BY, OR LINKED TO, DAIRY PROTEINS	
General:	Loss of appetite, growth retardation.
Upper Gastrointestinal:	Canker sores (aphthous stomatitis), irritation of tongue, lips and mouth, tonsil enlargement, vomiting, gastroesophageal reflux (GERD), Sandifer's syndrome, peptic ulcer disease, colic, stomach cramps, abdominal distention, intestinal obstruction, type-1 diabetes.
Lower Gastrointestinal:	Bloody stools, colitis, malabsorption, diarrhea, painful defecation, fecal soiling, infantile colic, chronic constipation, infantile food protein-induced enterocolitis syndrome (FPIES), Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis.
Respiratory:	Nasal stuffiness, runny nose, otitis media (inner ear trouble), sinusitis, wheezing, asthma, and pulmonary infiltrates.
Bone and joint:	Rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, Behçet's disease, (possibly psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis).
Skin:	Rashes, atopic dermatitis, eczema, seborrhea, hives (urticaria)
Nervous System (Behavioral):	Multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, autism, schizophrenia, irritability, restlessness, hyper-activity, headache, lethargy, fatigue, "allergic-tension fatigue syndrome," muscle pain, mental depression, enuresis (bed-wetting).
Blood:	Abnormal blood clotting, iron deficiency anemia, low serum proteins, thrombocytopenia, and eosinophilia.
Other:	Nephrotic syndrome, glomerulonephritis, anaphylactic shock and death, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS or crib or cot death), injury to the arteries causing arteritis, and eventually, atherosclerosis.
References are available through the National Library of Medicine, www.nlm.nih.gov. Search "cow's milk" and any of the diseases listed above. All dairy products contain milk proteins, including skim milk, yogurt, cheese, and butter, and many butter substitutes. Milk proteins are listed in packaged food products with a variety of names, such as milk solids, skim milk powder, casein, caseinates, whey, and albumin. Milk is also often put into packaged foods and not declared on the label – this is illegal and punishable by FDA action.	

Shouldn't the idea of milk acting as an "antiobesity" food strike you as fundamentally contradictory? – After all, the biologic purpose of cow's milk is to provide large amounts of energy and nutrients to grow the young animal from 60 to 600 pounds. So how does milk become a weight loss product in the 21st century? This idea began with the observation that underprivileged people, who have poor diets in general, are often obese, and also consume few dairy products.[30] Some experiments that followed showed people and animals on *calorie-restricted diets* lost a small amount of extra weight when calcium or dairy foods were part of their diet. The "antiobesity" effects of dairy are difficult to explain, but may be due to calcium binding fat in the intestine, preventing its absorption.[30]

A thorough search of the literature for properly designed studies shows only one of 17 see page 6

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randomized studies found weight loss in people taking calcium pills, and of the nine randomized studies where fluid milk was added, two showed significant *weight gain,* and none showed significant loss.[31] In one study funded by a grant from the International Dairy Foods Association, 204 healthy men and women were asked to increase their intake of skim or 1% milk by three cups a day for 12 weeks; those consuming the extra milk gained an average of 1.32 pounds (0.6 Kg).[32] Can you imagine what their weight gain would have been if they had been asked to add whole milk, cheese, butter, and ice cream to their diet, instead of skim and low-fat 1% milk? The result of all this research was well summed up by one of the dairy industry's frequent spokespersons at the Dairy Management Inc. sponsored Symposium: Dairy Product Components and Weight Regulation, held April 21, 2002 in New Orleans, with this statement, "In conclusion, the data available from randomized trials of dairy product or calcium supplementation provide little support for an effect in reducing body weight or fat mass."[31] Yet the consumer will hear from Dr. Miller and the rest of the industry, "eat more dairy products and you will lose weight."

Dairy products are loaded with fats that are easily stored under your skin as "body fat." The fats in the cold glass of milk, the little bite of cheese, and that small bowl of ice cream will move from your lips to your hips effortlessly. In fact, it moves with so little effort that the chemical structure of the fat isn't even changed. Cow's milk contains a unique kind of fat with double bonds located at the C-15 and C-17 position on the fat's carbon chain. Examination of a person's fatty (adipose) tissues following a biopsy will show the amount of this kind of fat present, which will be in direct proportion to the amount of dairy products the person consumes.[33]

All that fat the dairy industry asks us to eat is associated with higher risks of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and breast, prostate, uterine and colon cancer. Yet, as a marketing scheme, the dairy industry has teamed up with the **National Medical Association** to write articles about "the role of dairy in helping reduce the risk of heart disease, hypertension, and other serious health issues."[34] The National Medical Association promotes the collective interests of physicians and patients of African descent. Please explain to me how this association came about when the vast majority of people of African descent (80% to 90%) cannot drink milk because of *lactose intolerance*; causing them diarrhea, stomach cramps and gas.[35]

Not only is this dairy fat unattractively worn and a health hazard, but it is also a source of large quantities of environmental chemicals, like dioxins and DDT, that affect your health and the health of a mother's offspring during pregnancy and nursing.[36] One reason a young girl needs to start thinking about a healthier diet early is because the accumulation of these chemicals in her own body fat occurs over her entire lifetime.

The UMP Will Try to Confuse You about Bone Health and Animal Protein

Osteoporosis is caused by several factors; however, the most important one is diet – especially the amount of animal protein and acid in the foods we eat.[37-39] The high acid foods are meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and hard cheeses – parmesan cheese is the most acidic of all foods commonly consumed.[40] Once consumed, this food-derived acid must be neutralized in the body. Fruits and vegetables can do this neutralizing (these foods are alkaline in nature). However, because the diet of the average Westerner is so deficient in fruits and vegetables and see page 7

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so high in acid foods, the primary neutralizer of dietary acid becomes their bones – the bones dissolve to release alkaline materials. Worldwide, the highest rates of hip fractures are among populations that consume the most animal food (including dairy products) – like people from the USA, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, etc.[41,42] The lowest rates are among people who eat little or no dairy foods (these people are on lower calcium diets) – like people from rural Asia and rural Africa.[41,42] The basic experiments published in the 1980s clearly show protein causes bone loss, and calcium offers little or no protection.[43]

Even the foremost scientists hired by the dairy industry know protein is harmful to the bones.[44] In my April 2003 Newsletter I explained there was only one properly designed study testing the effects of fluid milk on the bone health of postmenopausal women – and the results were: those who received the extra milk for a year lost more bone than those who didn't drink the milk.[44] The authors, funded by the National Dairy Council®, explained in their paper, "The protein content of the milk supplement may have a negative effect on calcium balance, possibly through an increase in kidney losses of calcium or through a direct effect on bone resorption." Trying to explain why those receiving the milk were in worse calcium balance, they said, "…this may have been due to the average 30 percent increase in protein intake during milk supplementation."

Unfortunately, all this damning information does not sit well with the powerful dairy industry, so they have started the "3-A-Day of Dairy" program to battle the calcium crisis in America by promoting milk, cheese and yogurt for stronger bones – and they have been busy doing their own research to prove protein is good for the bones.[45-48] Regrettably for them, their designing means were just revealed in the May 2003 issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.[49] The article in this journal exposed the way they made the results show protein is good for the bones. To devise research that appears to contradict hundreds of articles published over the past 35 years, you only have to provide sufficient alkaline material in the diet of the people being studied to neutralize the acid from the animal foods. This was accomplished by studying populations that have diets high in neutralizing fruits and vegetables; the other approach employed was to add a strong alkali source to the experiment, such as an antacid pill (wafer), calcium citrate (like Citracal).

Once the acid from the food is neutralized, then any bone building factors that might be present in meat and dairy can exert their effects. High protein foods, and especially dairy foods, raise the levels of a powerful growth-stimulating hormone in the body, called *insulin-like growth factor-1* or *IGF-1*. Stimulation of bone growth by this hormone is now being offered as the reason dairy products build strong bones. It has long been necessary for them to find a more scientifically supportable explanation, because the bulk of the research shows the calcium in dairy foods has little or no benefit for bone health.[50-52]

The UMP Will Not Promote the Fact that IGF–1 is a Powerful Cancer Promoter

Consumption of animal products increases the levels of insulin-like growth factor-1 in your body. However, modern dairy technology has made dairy products an even more potent source of this growth stimulant. Since 1985, U.S. dairy farmers have been allowed to inject cows with *recombinant bovine growth hormone (rbGH)*, see page 8

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a genetically engineered bovine growth hormone that increases milk production. RbGH treatment produces an increase in IGF-1 in cow's milk, by as much as 10-fold.[53,54] IGF-1 is not destroyed by pasteurization.[53] The overall effect is that milk seems to raise IGF-1 levels in people more than any other component of our diet.[55] The direct evidence of the effects of cow's milk on IGF-1 levels in people has been provided by the dairy industry's own efforts. Two recent studies, one on adolescent girls and the other on postmenopausal women, showed increasing milk consumption actually raises plasma levels of IGF-1 in the person's body by an average of 10%.[56,57] Their take on this is, "this is a beneficial effect" because IGF-1 stimulates bone growth. But, the actual lasting consequences should deliver the final deathblow to dairy products: ***IGF-1 promotes the growth of cancer.*** This growth promoter has been strongly linked to the development of cancer of the breast, prostate, lung, and colon.[58] Excess IGF-1 stimulates cell proliferation and inhibits cell death – two activities you definitely don't want when cancer cells are involved.[58]

There is more to cancer promotion by dairy foods than IGF-1. Most dairy products are high in saturated fat – and fat is the number one suspect when it comes to the cause of most common cancers in Western societies (for example, breast, prostate, colon, kidney, pancreas). Recent studies have linked the sugar (lactose) and fat in milk with ovarian cancer,[59,60] and the calcium in milk lowers concentrations of a specific form of vitamin D that protects against prostate cancer, raising men's overall risk.[61,62] (See my February 2003 Newsletter for more information on diet and prostate cancer.) Hormones (estrogens) are also involved in cancers of reproductive organs, like breast and uterine cancer. There are several reasons dairy products raise a woman's hormone levels – causing a variety of hormone-dependent problems from early onset of menstruation (menarche) to PMS and uterine fibroids – but one is unique to cow's milk. Cows are milked even while they are pregnant. As a result of the pregnancy, cows secrete high levels of estrogen into their milk.[63]

Will the UMP Advertise that Dairy Is Simply Liquid Meat?

Red meat has become a "dirty word" when it comes to health. At the opposite end of the spectrum of opinions on food is cow's milk – one of the world's most trusted foods. Do you remember the "Basic Four Food Groups?" Dairy was usually placed first in this chart which was hung in every schoolroom (and by no coincidence the dairy industry also provided the chart). If you compare closely the nutritional make up of meat and dairy you will see why I call dairy products "liquid meats."[64] (see chart on next page)

Dairy products are deficient in iron and beef is deficient in calcium; both contain too little dietary fiber, essential fat (linoleic acid), and vitamin C and B3 (niacin) to meet human nutritional requirements.[64] Heavy consumption of either of these food groups – loaded with fat and cholesterol – will result in the diseases common to affluent societies, such as obesity, heart disease, strokes, type-2 diabetes and cancer, to name just a few serious problems.[65]

If a patient bargained with me, "I'll give up only one of the first two food groups – meat or see page 9

THE MACRONUTRIENTS IN DAIRY MAKE IT "LIQUID MEAT"

	Ground Chuck Beef	Cheddar Cheese	Yogurt	Whole Milk
% of calories from fat	68%	73%	49%	50%
% of calories from protein	32%	25%	22%	21%
% of calories from carbohy-drates	0%	2%	29%	29%
Fiber (grams)	0	0	0	0
Cholesterol mg per 100 cal	22	27	21	22
Vitamin C	0	0	0	0

milk – in hopes of getting well," my recommendation for almost all common health problems in Western society would be, "You're likely to get the most benefits if you give up the dairy products."

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By going to the National Library of Medicine at www.nlm.nih.gov you can view the abstracts of most of these studies, and many times secure the original paper.

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Furthermore, when the study was finished, those on a "low-fat" diet were eating 33% of their calories as fat – exactly the same as before the study. Any weight loss from the "low-fat" diet was clearly due to calorie, rather than fat, restriction. A truly low-fat diet as prescribed by Kempner, Pritikin, Ornish and McDougall has 7% to 10% of the calories as fat.

Without a doubt a high-protein, very low-carbohydrate diet causes weight loss, but as these two studies showed, this kind of diet cannot be sustained – nearly half of the participants in the Samaha study did not last 6 months and in the Foster study nearly 40% quit by 12 months. The "low-fat" group did no better – calorie-restricted diets have never worked because it is too painful to be hungry. Furthermore, if the one hospitalization for chest pain and the one death in the Atkins diet[1] group are any indication of the future for people who choose high-fat diets, then clearly people are sacrificing their health for temporary weight loss.

The mechanisms causing weight loss from the low-carbohydrate diets used in these studies should discourage doctors from recommending this approach to their patients. Followers of this diet complain of reduced appetite, nausea, and fatigue – all symptoms of illness. If followed strictly enough to enter ketosis – the goal of the Atkins diet – then there may be actual appetite suppression. Eating less, causes people to take in fewer calories and lose weight. Another result of eating less is they consume less saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and animal protein. Signs of improved health seem to appear because risk factors, like serum cholesterol, triglycerides, uric acid, and glucose, and blood pressure, decrease – and the patient is declared healthier. Not necessarily so. Similar benefits, for similar reasons, are seen when patients are placed on cancer chemotherapy[3] – and doctors don't brag about these results.

If people want to know the truth about good nutrition, they simply need to look at the world picture. Populations following high-carbohydrate, low-fat, lower-protein diets, like those from traditional Asian and African countries are trim for a lifetime and avoid all the diseases common to people who follow the Western diet. The Atkins diet is simply an exaggeration of the unhealthy Western diet to a level that makes people sufficiently ill to lose their appetite.

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Everybody Will Be Taking Blood Pressure Pills Soon

On Wednesday, May 14, 2003 new guidelines were released that suggested blood pressure levels considered "normal" for 45 million people in the US, were actually dangerous all along. One in five adults falls in the new category of "prehypertension," and is considered at higher risk of heart attacks and strokes. Under the new guidelines blood pressures between 120 to 139 systolic (top number) and 80 to 89 diastolic (bottom number) are now considered abnormal. Normal is below 120/80 mm Hg. The panel of experts from the National High Blood Pressure Education Program issuing these guidelines recommends weight loss, more exercise, less salt and less alcohol. *The report does not recommend drug therapy.* But, in actuality this will translate into 45 million people being threatened with a lifetime of blood pressure medication.

This is Not New Information

Almost 20 years ago, the Final report of the Working Group on Risk and High Blood Pressure came to the same conclusion for increased health risks for blood pressures of the same levels.[1] For example, the risk of having a heart attack was found to be doubled for someone with a diastolic pressure of 80 to 89 mmHg, compared to a pressure below 80 mmHg.

What Does This Mean?

People (even most doctors) have an incorrect concept of the significance of elevated blood pressure. *They think the pressure is damaging the arteries.* In truth the elevated pressure is the result of sick arteries and an unhealthy blood system. When the blood vessel walls (arteries) become filled with cholesterol and fat, and then the atherosclerosis that follows, they become narrower and stiffer – as a result the pressure goes up. Foods that we eat (saturated fat and cholesterol) cause the arteries' muscles to spasm and narrow, raising the pressure. Vegetable, fish, and animal fats cause the blood cells to stick together and sludge, slowing the flow of blood – this back-up also raises the pressure. It is natural, normal, and desirable for the pressure to go up. This rise is an attempt to overcome all this resistance to flow, and deliver nutrients to the tissues. (You can learn the details on all of this in the McDougall Program for a Healthy Heart book.)

Thus, what the elevated blood pressure really means is the whole blood vessel system is in trouble and ready to close down with a heart attack or stroke.

Damn the Blood Pressure

The approach of the drug industry, and their workers, the doctors, is to attack the elevated blood pressure with medications. The pressure goes down, but they have done nothing about the sick blood vessel system. As a result, this pharmaceutical approach does nothing to reduce the risk of heart attacks and very little to reduce the risk of strokes. The ultimate beneficiary of these new recommendations from the National High Blood Pressure Education Program will be the pharmaceutical industry and the prescribing doctors – not the patients; unless they see page 14

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know the truth, and take proper action.

Proper Action to Save Your Life

Without a doubt this elevation of blood pressure above 120/80 is a serious warning that there is “trouble down below.” Your response should not be to hide the warning sign – the elevated blood pressure – with medication. Your response should be to fix the trouble.

Now is the time to change your diet, lose weight, and exercise, as recommended. But do it seriously with a starch-based diet, with additional fruits and vegetables. Although not the most important recommendation, salt intake should be kept low. (We recommend sprinkling it on the surface of the foods rather than cooking with it, for more taste and less sodium.) Exercise daily. When you do both of the diet and exercise suggestions correctly, then you will effortlessly attain, and then maintain that ideal weight – and avoid blood pressure medication and most future health problems.
Blood pressure lowering medications are indicated, in general, for otherwise healthy people, if the blood pressure remains on average 160 or greater, systolic, and/or 100 or greater, diastolic, for a period of time (say months).[2]
For more information on how to avoid taking blood pressure medications and how to discontinue medications you are now taking, see the August 2002 McDougall Newsletter at www.drmcdougall.com

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EATING OUT IN A THAI RESTAURANT

Thai restaurants are Mary's favorite place to eat out of the house. She loves the curry flavors, the flavorful vegetables, and the "light feeling" about the whole meal. Curry is not John's favorite, but he always knows a suggestion to eat Thai will make Mary happy. When we left Hawaii in 1987, one of Mary's biggest regrets was no longer being able to eat at her favorite Thai restaurant, Mekong, in Honolulu. We are fortunate now to live in Northern California with an abundance of interesting ethnic restaurants. In our town in Sonoma County we have several Thai restaurants offering delicious "McDougall style" choices right on their menu.

Our favorite restaurant in Santa Rosa is called California Thai. They serve 26 "McDougall style" dishes on their menu (all of them very delicious) – and these dishes are very popular with vegetarians, as well as non-vegetarians. During our 10-day live-in program, one of the favorite "eating out experiences" is at this Thai restaurant. Before we go people tell us that they have been afraid to try Thai foods because of the spice. They are always pleasantly surprised to find that Thai food doesn't have to be spicy to be delicious.

Thai menus always have a section of vegetarian selections; some are more extensive than others. Thai restaurants also cook food to order, and most dishes are not prepared ahead of time, so you can order your food the way you like. Don't be afraid to insist on no animal products – ***and no added oil***. Start by looking for vegetarian items, at least there is no meat, chicken, fish, or seafood here. Thai places do not use much dairy, except in Chai (a drink), which usually contains cow-milk. The other ingredient you have to pay attention to is the coconut milk. Coconut milk is high in saturated fat, and because this is fattening and raises cholesterol, you may want to avoid it. The second thing to focus your attention on is the vegetable oil used in almost all the cooking. Request your food be cooked with no oil (or "as little oil as possible," – a phrase which often gets lost in the translation to the cook). Your server can check with the kitchen to find out which dishes are best to make oil-free.

Since your Thai dish is cooked to order, you have an opportunity to choose mild, medium or very spicy. The hot spice comes from chili added during cooking. I would suggest if you are new to Thai restaurants in general, or this is a new restaurant for you, order mild, or at most medium. You can always add spice from the chili jar found on your table.

Start with the appetizers section on the menu – look for fresh items, not deep-fried – like some type of ***Spring Rolls or Fresh Veggie Rolls***. These are served cold and made with fresh vegetables, sprouts, herbs, sometimes tofu, and wrapped in a thin rice paper wrap. They are usually served with either a sweet and sour sauce or a peanut sauce. (Remember peanuts are high in fat so you might want to choose the lighter sauce.) On the appetizer menu you may find ***Lettuce Leaf Wraps***. This dish is served as lettuce leaves upon which you pile an assortment of condiments, such as mint, peanuts, onions, chopped lime, coconut, and/or tofu, which all come in separate bowls. You roll the leaf up and top with a sweet and sour sauce. Grilled (not fried) ***Tofu Satay*** as a higher fat appetizer is often served with a peanut dipping sauce.

Move on to the soup and salad sections of the menu. You should find one or two vegetable see page 16

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soups, like ***Hot and Sour Vegetable Soup*** or ***Clear Vegetable Soup*** consisting of a clear vegetable broth (usually no-oil) and an assortment of vegetables. Most salads are healthy until they add the dressing. Ask for the dressing on the side or use a squeeze of lime juice and/or soy sauce on it instead – unless, of course, you remembered to bring your own bottled non-fat salad dressing from home. Som Tam is a ***Green Papaya Salad*** and one of our favorites – made from a raw green papaya, green beans and tomatoes with a lime dressing (no oil used) – spicing can be ordered mild to very hot.

When checking out the entrees, look for vegetarian options first, then go to the other sections of the menu and find some dishes made mostly of vegetables or rice noodles (these noodles are made from rice flour and water). If you find something that looks good and healthy, but contains beef, chicken, fish, or seafood, ask if they can make the dish without. Every restaurant has tofu available as a substitute for the animal products. ***Vegetarian Pad Thai***, made from rice noodles, tofu, scallions, and bean sprouts, is one dish that most newcomers like and is served at all Thai restaurants around the world. To make it healthy, tell then to leave out the oils and animal products. Other ***noodle dishes*** can be ordered with any combination of basil leaves, onions, tomatoes, bell peppers, carrots, broccoli, mushrooms, bamboo shoots, bean sprouts, scallions, watercress, celery, garlic, and/or cabbage, and mixed with a Thai spicy sauce. Try ***Sautéed Eggplant*** with scallions, basil leaves and a bean sauce. ***Sweet and sour vegetable dishes***, made with carrots, cauliflower; straw mushrooms and other assorted vegetables, and served over rice, are easy to find. Steamed white rice is a staple in Thai dining and always cooked without oil. It will be a rare treasure to find a Thai restaurant the serves whole grain “brown” rice – but it is always worth asking for.

Once you’ve found a great Thai restaurant that serves healthy dishes you will become a regular patron and probably try, like we do, to convince friends that the food is not too spicy and well worth a try.

Recipes

Many of these recipes can easily be served to the "vegetable haters" that you know. Sometimes a few modifications are all that are necessary to make these dishes into favorites. Anyone who likes chili will be sure to like this version of meatless chili (but don't tell them that it's meatless).

HEARTY CHILI

This is a very hearty, "meaty", chili that is popular with vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike. If you like things a bit spicier, add ¼ to ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes to this recipe. This is even better the following day as a leftover. This also can be frozen and reheated with delicious results.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 4 hours
Servings: 6-8

2 cups dry red kidney beans
5 cups water
2 onions, chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
1 bell pepper, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 15 ounce can chopped tomatoes
1 15 ounce can tomato sauce
3 tablespoons chili powder
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 package Yves Veggie Ground Round (original)

Place beans and water in a large pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 2 hours. Add remaining ingredients, except for the "ground round", mix well, and cook for an additional 1 hour and 45 minutes. Add the soy meat and heat for 15 minutes.

Serve over brown rice with toppings of your choice.
Hints: Use any color of bell pepper that you like. Green is the most common, but you can also try red, yellow or orange. Topping suggestions: Shredded soy cheese, chopped sweet onion, mustard, cooked corn, relish. Some people also like cooked mild greens on top of their chili, such as steamed chard, kale or spinach.

CASHEW MILK

I have been making this for about 28 years now and it is still the best flavor for rich sauces and "french" toast. Make sure you use raw cashews, not roasted ones, and make sure you blend this thoroughly and then strain it to remove any pieces that did not get blended.
Preparation Time: 5 minutes
Servings: makes 2 cups

½ cup RAW cashews
2 cups water

Place the cashews in a blender jar with 1 cup of the water. Process until very smooth. Add the remaining water and blend until no large pieces remain. This may take a minute or two. Strain after processing to remove any remaining pieces. Refrigerate until ready to use.

VEGGIE BENEDICTS

Leave off the tomato for the "vegetable haters" and this could also become one of their favorites.
Preparation Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: 5 minutes
Servings: 2-4

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For the sauce:
1 cup cashew milk (see recipe above)
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon nutritional yeast powder
½ teaspoon onion powder
1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/16 teaspoon turmeric
pinch of paprika
1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 2 tablespoons cold water
Place the cashew milk in a saucepan. Add all the remaining ingredients and mix well with a whisk. Slowly bring to a boil, stirring constantly, until thickened and smooth. Set aside. (If you need to reheat this just before serving, do it slowly while stirring with a whisk.)

For the base:
1 vine-ripened tomato
½ avocado
4 fat-free English muffin halves

Slice the tomato into 4 medium-thick slices. Peel and slice the avocado. Toast the muffin halves. Place the tomato and the avocado on the English muffin halves. Ladle about ¼ cup of the sauce over each muffin half and serve.
Hints: The sauce may be made 1 day ahead of time and slowly reheated. This saves time on a busy morning. The sauce is also great with asparagus, other vegetables or potatoes.

FRENCH TOAST

This is a winner for almost everyone who likes "french" toast. I have been making this for years and have served it to many of our children's friends who responded with smiles every time.
Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Cooking Time: 15 minutes
Servings: 12

2 cups cashew milk (see recipe above)
3 tablespoons chopped dates
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
dash turmeric
12 slices whole wheat bread
Place 1 cup of the cashew milk in a blender jar. Add the dates, cinnamon and turmeric. Process until well blended. Add remaining milk and blend again. Pour into a bowl. Dip slices of bread into the cashew mixture, coating well. Brown on a medium-hot non-stick griddle or frying pan, turning once so both sides are evenly browned.

Serve with pure maple syrup or fruit sauces or spread.
Hints: These are easy to store for later use. Place them in individual zip-lock bags and refrigerate. Reheat in micro-wave. They may also be frozen and popped into the toaster for reheating.

We had our friends, Don and Sharon, over for dinner a few nights ago and so I thought I'd try something new out on the "vegetable hater" featured last month, Sharon. Usually we stick to the tried and true bean burrito meal (I'll share that dinner with you next month) but I wanted to try something different. I made the Tamale Pie (December 2002 newsletter recipe) and the Bean Enchilada Casserole that follows. Sharon ate both of them! She even had seconds of the Tamale Pie. I think she would have rather had bean burritos, but at least she didn't turn up her nose and refuse to eat them. She added a bit more hot sauce to the bean enchiladas (she does like hot stuff) and she ate the tamales plain, without the sausage topping. We'll keep trying new recipes on her and let you know the results.

BEAN ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

Preparation Time: 40 minutes
Cooking Time: 45 minutes
Servings: 8-10

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Sauce:
3- 8 ounce cans tomato sauce
4½ cups water
6 tablespoons cornstarch
3 ½ to 4 ½ tablespoons chili powder
1 ½ teaspoons onion powder
¾ teaspoon garlic powder
Place all ingredients for the sauce in a saucepan. Start with the lesser amount of chili powder unless you like really spicy foods. Mix well with a whisk until well combined. Cook and stir over medium heat until thickened, about 7 minutes. Taste and add more chili powder if desired. Set aside.
12-14 flour tortillas
4-5 cups mashed pinto beans
½- 1 cup chopped green onions
½-1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed
1-2 tablespoons chopped ripe olives
1-2 tablespoons chopped green chilies (optional)
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

To assemble casserole:
Place 1-2 cups of the sauce in the bottom of a large non-stick oblong baking dish. Take 1 tortilla at a time and spread some beans down the center of the tortilla. Roll up and place seam side down in the baking dish. Repeat with remaining tortillas, placing them snugly next to each other. Reserve about 1½ cups of the remaining sauce, then pour the rest of the sauce over the rolled up tortillas, spreading it out evenly. Sprinkle the green onions, corn kernels, olives and chilies over the sauce. Cover with parchment paper, then cover with aluminum foil, crimping the edges over the baking dish. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove from oven and let rest for about 5 minutes before cutting. Serve with the extra sauce or salsa, if desired.