



BETTER HEALTH

AN INTERPRETIVE HEALTH NEWSLETTER THAT EMPHASIZES SELF-HELP AND WELLNESS LIFESTYLE

"GOOD HEALTH IS NO ACCIDENT IT ONLY COMES TO THOSE WHO ACTIVELY SEEK IT." - JAS

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Here's to Optimism

About 340,000 senior citizens in the USA fracture a hip each year. Researchers at Boston University wanted to determine performance outcome between the patients who have a positive outlook on life compared to their more depressed counterparts.

"This study found that elderly patients with hip fracture with high positive attitude had better recovery than patients with low positive attitude and depressive symptoms," writes study author Dr. Lisa Fredman.

Fredman and her team assessed 432 men and women, aged 65 years and older, who were hospitalized for hip fracture between 1990 and 1991.



Seniors with a more positive outlook more frequently reported that they were happy, enjoyed life, felt hopeful about the future, and felt that they were just as good as other people.

At various follow-up points throughout the two-year study, seniors who scored higher in positive attitude -- walked faster and stood from a chair more quickly than did the seniors with low positive affect.

Overall, seniors who consistently scored high in positive affect also exhibited the best functioning throughout the follow-up period

Journal of the American Geriatric Society, July 2006

Need We Say This Again

Exercise keeps the body and mind in shape according to a review of published studies on this topic. Dr. Kramer, from the Beckman Institute at the University of Illinois in Urbana, presented his team's work at the annual gathering of the American Psychological Association.

The data pooled from 18 studies suggest that exercise and physical activity may slow age-related decline in mental function.

The mental functions that seemed to be helped were the functions such as planning, scheduling, working memory and multi-tasking -- many of these processes often show substantial decline with age.

They concluded that exercise is not only beneficial for healthy people but for those already showing signs of dementia and related mental impairments. Fitness training may improve some mental processes even more than moderate activity.

Annual Meeting American Psychological Association, 2006

Treating IBS

Irritable Bowel Syndrome affects up to 15% of adults in the USA. It is a functional disorder and not a bowel structure disorder. IBS is not related to colon cancer. It must be differentiated from Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis since these are bowel structure disorders. These can be very serious health problems. Any blood in the stool is not related to IBS and must be checked by a physician.

Common symptoms include bloating, gas (particularly after eating), abdominal cramping, constipation, diarrhea, urgency to have a bowel movement and abnormal stool like mucus.



Foods that worsen IBS symptoms include carbonated drinks, caffeine, fatty foods, milk products and alcohol. Stress is also noted to increase IBS symptoms.

What can you do to help with the symptoms if you have IBS? Eat vegetables, fruits, whole-grain breads and

cereals. Drink lots of water and eat smaller meals more often. Reduce stress. Avoid foods that trigger an increase in your symptoms. Last but not least, engage in regular physical exercise.

http://www.med.unc.edu/medicine/fgidc/ibs_overview.pdf

Mind If I Use Marijuana?

A recent study in Neurology, tested 64 persons in a drug-abuse treatment program with cognitive tests looking at memory, attention and verbal fluency. Both long and short term users of marijuana performed worse than non-users. Long term users performed the worst.



In the memory test, participants were asked to remember 15 words, non-users could recall 12 and long term users only 7. The findings suggest that marijuana use may weaken cognitive abilities, and have added a new twist in the ongoing debate on the effects of marijuana use.

Neurology, March 14, 2006

Another Look At Optimism

According to a recent study, optimistic people may be less likely to die from heart disease or stroke. The study included 545 men between the ages of 64 and 84 for 15 years.

All the men were tested to see how optimistic they were. The ones who were classified as optimistic in 1985 were 55% less likely to die from stroke or heart disease by the year 2000 as compared with men who were not classified as optimistic. An added benefit of being optimistic was that they exercised more and dealt with misfortune better than their counterparts.

SMILE!

This suggests what heart specialist have agreed with for years, that a positive attitude has a significant effect on

health and recovery from disease.

Archives of Internal Medicine, February 27, 2006

Sticks and Stones

We have all heard this axiom, sticks and stones may

break my bones, but words will never hurt me. There is a new meaning now in regards to children with overweight problems.

Researchers evaluated 92 children who were overweight between the ages of 8 to 18. It was found that these children who were bullied on the playground and in gym classes had more trouble losing weight. The bullying was found to lead to depression, loneliness, and anxiety toward physical activity making it more likely that these children will become obese adults.

Journal of Pediatric Psychology, April 6, 2006

Rats to Stress

In a recent study using rats, scientists wanted to determine if stress hormones had any affect on their desire for something pleasurable without actually increasing their enjoyment.



So the scientists injected the rats with a stress hormone which is naturally released by rewards or incentive cues.

The rats that received the stress hormone worked harder at pressing a lever to get a dose of sugar than those rats with low levels of the stress hormones. Looking at the results of the study the researchers believe that stress can trigger binge eating, drug abuse and relapses and other excessive pursuits of rewards.

BMC Biology, April 13, 2006

YOURS FOR BETTER HEALTH,

David H. Saxon, MD

In memory and honor of Jackson A. Saxon, MD

(This health newsletter is not to be used for self-diagnosis or self-treatment. If you suspect a medical problem, see you physician.)

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