



Vantage Health Hints

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Vantage Health Hints # 1

General Wellness: I'm In The Mood:

Do you have time to get into a better mood? A few minutes could be all it takes to deliver a positive frame of mind.

A study conducted at Northern Arizona University suggests that as little as 10 minutes of exercise may be enough to generate the mood-boosting side effects that come with physical activity. Researchers speculate that physical activity may increase the production of brain chemicals that regulate positive mood and emotions. Exercise has been shown to improve mood by increasing levels of endorphins, the body's natural mood-boosting hormones.

Physical activity also may provide a psychological boost because people tend to feel better when they know they are doing something good for themselves. These results complement current recommendations, which suggest that to experience positive fitness and health benefits, healthy adults should participate in a total of up to 30 min of moderate physical exercise daily.

Vantage Health Hints #2

Medicine: Read the Ingredients

If you have old cough and cold medicines in your medicine cabinet, be sure to check the labels for this potentially dangerous ingredient.

The Food and Drug Administration recently issued a consumer advisory against using any medications that contain phenylpropanolamine, a common decongestant in cold remedies that you possibly have in your medicine cabinet. According to the advisory, this ingredient could cause a small increase in a person's risk of hemorrhagic stroke.

Although the increased stroke risk caused by phenylpropanolamine is small, the FDA recommends that consumers not use any products containing this ingredient and has asked medication manufacturers to discontinue use of this ingredient.

Vantage Health Hints #3

So Beet It...

Add Beets to your diet and get the latest in antioxidant-rich nutrition.

According to the Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry, recent research has revealed a new class of antioxidants found in beets. These newly discovered antioxidants, called betalains, might help protect the body against oxidative stress-related aging and disease. What's more, beets are low in calories with a mere 37 calories per half-cup serving.

Beets contain not only betalain antioxidants, but also compounds called betacyanins. Betacyanins give beets their purple hue. Research suggests that these nutrients may lend beets their potent cancer-fighting powers. A cup of pickled beet slices contains significantly more calories and sodium compared to a cup of plain, cooked beets.

Vantage Health Hints #4

The Calcium Connection:

In a study conducted by the Dept. of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health, they linked high calcium intake with reduced colon cancer risk. Study participants received the bulk of their calcium from dairy products. However, getting all of your calcium nutrition from food sources can be a difficult task. Calcium supplementation is a good way to get the recommended daily dose of not only calcium, but also vitamin D (400 IU per day).

Osteoporosis is a disease in which old bone cells are lost faster than new bone cells are made, causing bones—usually in the spine, wrist, or hip—to thin and become brittle. Although women are more likely to develop osteoporosis than men, the disease can progress without symptoms throughout the life of both women and men.

You're probably aware that adequate calcium intake is important in warding off brittle bone disease. Just 700 milligrams of calcium per day was also enough to significantly reduce the risk of colon cancer in study participants.

Vantage Health Hints: #5

Microwave Safe:

Dr. Edward Fujimoto, a PhD serving as director of the Center for Health Promotion at Castle Medical Center in Kailua, Hawaii, made this report on national TV. He spoke about dioxins and how bad they are for us. He said that we should not be heating our food in the microwave using plastic containers. This applies to foods that contain fat. He recommends using glass, Corning Ware, or ceramic containers for heating food.

Supposedly, the combination of fat, high heat, and plastics releases dioxins into the food and ultimately into the cells of the body. He reported that we might remember when some of the fast food restaurants moved away from the foam containers to paper. The dioxin problem was one of the reasons. But how real is this concern? According to Dr. George Pauli, a leading Food and Drug Administration scientist, acknowledged that some plasticizers do migrate into foods, particularly those containing a lot of fat, oil, or sugars. But research has found no ill effects from consumption of plasticizers in FDA-approved plastic wraps. Even so, others remain unconvinced, and those on both sides of the issue recommend not letting the wrap touch the food.

Vantage Health Hints # 6

Washing down your medication:

Picking the wrong liquid to help wash down your aspirin may reduce the medicine's effectiveness. If you take aspirin, don't use milk to wash it down. Studies show that milk, along with beer and other kinds of alcoholic beverages, inhibits the body's absorption of the medication. If you need to wash down your non-chewable aspirin, a drink of water is usually your best bet.

Ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider whether there are any beverages that will interfere with your body's absorption of your medication. In addition to milk and alcoholic beverages, grapefruit juice has been shown to interfere with the effectiveness of some medications.

Vantage Health Hints #7

Banana's & B6

You can help make sure you're getting enough vitamin B6 in your diet by eating more bananas. Research suggests that vitamin B6 may be important for proper neurotransmitter function. It also may help prevent mood disorders, such as depression. For a quick and easy vitamin B6 fix, add a banana to your breakfast cereal. One medium banana contains almost a milligram of this nutrient.

Vitamin B6 helps your body break down fats, carbohydrates, and proteins. It's also an essential part of red blood cell formation and antibody production. In addition to bananas, food sources of vitamin B6 include chicken, tomato's, sweet potatoes, sunflower seeds, and most red meats.

Vantage Health Hints #8

Nutrition: Garlic Power.....

Garlic contains selenium, a trace mineral thought to have cancer-fighting powers. Certain studies suggest garlic may have the ability to inhibit the growth of breast, stomach, and colorectal cancer. What's more, garlic is thought to stimulate the immune system, helping the body fight disease and infection.

Based on a study conducted through the Graduate Program of Nutrition at Penn State University, the study states that cooking garlic may destroy some of the anti-carcinogenic compounds found in the cloves. However, allowing freshly minced or crushed garlic to stand for 10 minutes before cooking may help preserve them. Microwave cooking also appears to help preserve the cancer-fighting compounds.

Vantage Health Hints #9

It's never too late to reap the health rewards of being a jock.

According to a study examining the exercise habits of over 60,000 women ages 55-69, it was determined that if you are not physically able to participate in sports, that any type of physical activity may reduce your disease risk.

In one study, biking or walking for one hour each day was associated with a 19% reduction in breast cancer risk for women. Women who played sports for more than 5 hours per week appeared to have a 13% lower risk of developing breast cancer.

This in-depth, seven year research project, conducted by the Netherlands Cohort Study on diet and cancer, also stated that the reduced risk appeared to be independent of the age at which the women began playing sports.

Vantage Health Hints #10

Folic Acid

Research suggests that a diet high in folate, or folic acid, may help protect against colorectal cancer, one of the most common cancers in the U.S. Although some foods are fortified with folic acid, most people need to take a supplement to get the optimum daily dose.

Folate is found naturally in many foods, such as asparagus and sunflower seeds. Folic acid is the synthetic form of folate. It is found in supplements as well as in fortified breads and cereals. It is difficult to get the optimum dose of folate (700 micrograms per day) from food sources alone because the folate found naturally in foods is not always bioavailable. However, the body easily absorbs the folic acid found in supplements and fortified foods.

You can help ward off a common killer by getting your daily fill of folate.

Vantage Health Hints #11

High Protein linked to Obesity:

Researchers at the University of Athens Medical School are unsure why high protein intake may be conducive to obesity. Dietary sources of protein include meat, chicken, fish, dairy products, nuts, beans, and soy.

When you eat meat and dairy products, choose low-fat sources, such as lean meat, chicken, or fish and low-fat or nonfat dairy products. If you consume a 2,000 calories-per-day diet, only 300 of those calories should come from protein. That's equivalent to about 3 ounces of lean ground beef plus an ounce or so of nuts.

It is suggested that a high protein intake may lead to a high body mass index. For optimum health, limit protein intake to about 15% of your daily calories and make complex carbohydrates, such as fruits and vegetables, your menu mainstay.

Vantage Health Hints #12

Olive Oil...

In a study conducted by the department of Nutrition at the University of Barcelona, they reported that in just one week of adding olive oil to the diet caused noticeable changes in the cholesterol profiles of study participants. After seven days, the bad cholesterol molecules in the study participants' bloodstreams became more stable, making the molecules less likely to oxidize and cause blockages.

A healthy plan is to limit your fat intake to 30% of your daily calories, and choose mostly unsaturated fats. Unsaturated fats include olive oil, canola oil, and flaxseed oil. One tablespoon of olive oil is equivalent to 13.5 grams of fat and contains 119 calories, so be sure to decrease your intake of other fats if you add olive oil to your diet.

2 tablespoons of olive oil per day appeared beneficial to the cholesterol profiles of study participants. However, in addition to consuming 2 tablespoons of olive oil per day for one week, study participants also minimized their intake of other fats during the study.

Vantage Health Hints #13

Vitamins and a Healthy Heart:

Here's another reason to stay the course with your daily multivitamin: it could help slow arterial aging.

Both vitamin C and vitamin E intake appear to be important to the health of your arteries. In one study, adequate intake of these antioxidant nutrients was associated with a significant reduction in arterial disease. Aim to get about 400 IU of vitamin E per day and up to 1,200 milligrams of vitamin C per day through food and supplements.

Both vitamin C and vitamin E are antioxidants that can slow aging of the coronary arteries. In one study, vitamin E appeared to be particularly important to arterial health in men, while vitamin C was strongly associated with arterial health in women. Vitamin C has been shown to prevent, and even reverse, arterial plaque buildup. Vitamin E can help protect against cell-damaging free radicals. Both vitamins may help protect and support immune system function.

Vantage Health Hint # 14

Endurance Through Weight Lifting:

According to the College of Medicine, University of Florida Health Sciences Center, If you want to be able to walk or jog for longer periods of time before getting tired, don't skip your weight-lifting routine. This study was done to test aerobic capacity and treadmill time to exhaustion in adults aged 60 to 83 years.

This study shows that lifting weights isn't only about building strong muscles. A light weight-lifting routine also can help improve your aerobic capacity. With improved aerobic endurance, you'll be able to walk, swim, bike, or jog for longer periods of time before reaching the point of exhaustion.

Improved endurance and stamina can enhance the quality of your life and also may help ward off heart disease. Performing resistance exercises three times per week for six months produced a measurable effect on aerobic capacity.

Vantage Health Hint #15

Soy Good For You...

Research indicates that improved cholesterol levels and better heart health are but one benefit of eating soy. Preliminary reports suggest soy may also help dull pain.

In animal studies, moderate blood levels of phytoestrogens appeared to reduce sensitivity to certain kinds of pain. Phytoestrogens are plant compounds found in high concentrations in soy and soy products. A diet that includes moderate amounts of soy may be helpful particularly to people suffering from chronic, painful inflammation or swelling.

If you're adding soy to your diet for its potential pain-relieving effects, note that more is not necessarily better. A moderate amount of soy in the diet may be enough to produce benefits. Research suggests that eating 20-50 grams of soy protein per day can significantly reduce LDL cholesterol.

Vantage Health Hints #16

Nothing beats Home Cookin...

Don't spend your weekend waiting in restaurant lines or driving up to fast food restaurants. Home cooking is almost always better for your health.

A recent study revealed that people who frequently ate at restaurants tended to have more body fat than people who ate out only occasionally. People who ate out frequently also tended to consume more fat and calories compared to those who limited their consumption of restaurant food.

If you must eat out frequently, take special care to order healthy meals. Ask questions about how your food is prepared and then ask if healthful alterations can be made. For example, order dressings and sauces on the side so you can control the amount you use. Steer clear of creamy or buttery sauces and ask if you can have a marinara sauce on the side instead. Choose grilled, broiled or baked foods over fried. Ask about the portions size and don't hesitate in asking for a doggie bag

Vantage Health Hints #17

Good Manna Medicine

Whole-grain breads are breads made from minimally processed grains. Minimal processing helps retain fiber and helps preserve disease-fighting nutrients. A high-fiber diet can help protect your heart and arteries from needless aging. That's because a high-fiber diet helps lower blood levels of cholesterol, a major contributor to heart disease risk. A low-sodium diet can help protect against high blood pressure, especially in sodium sensitive people.

Health Hints recommends however that you read the labels on all products, even bread. Some whole-grain breads hide a lot of sodium. Two slices can add up to as much as 340 milligrams of the salty stuff so be sure to check the nutrition label and choose high-fiber, whole-grain breads with the least amount of sodium.

Vantage Health Hints #18

An Angry Heart is not always a Healthy Heart.

Researchers are unsure why hostility may be linked to poor heart health. Hostile people may be overly responsive to a hormone that not only contributes to a volatile temperament but also affects cholesterol production. Holding a grudge or taking an unforgiving stance also may negatively affect health outcomes, according to a research project performed at the University of Maryland.

Research suggests that people who are prone to angry outbursts may be more likely than even-tempered people to have heart disease risk factors, such as poor cholesterol control. However, exercise appears to level the playing field. In one study, people who exercised regularly had the best lipid profiles, regardless of temperament. So start your day out with exercise and help eliminate road rage.