



PCOS NEWS

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Happy Holidays

**to you and your family
from all of us at the
PCOS Diet & Exercise Study!**



News Flash



**60 Women Have Now
Been Enrolled in the
PCOS Study!**

We're 75% of the way there!!

A LITTLE HOLIDAY JOKE

While both male and female reindeer grow antlers in the summer each year, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, male reindeer drop their antlers at the beginning of winter, usually late November to mid-December. Female reindeer retain their antlers until after they give birth in the spring. Therefore, according to every historical rendition depicting Santa's reindeer, every single one of them, from Rudolph to Blitzen-had to be a girl. We should've known. . . only women would be able to drag a jolly old guy in a red velvet suit all around the world in one night and not get lost!

MEDICAL FORUM

SHEILA LAREDO, M.D.

PCOS - Pray For Pregnancy?



Once in a while, a study crosses my desk, and I just have to write about it. The results of the study I'm going to describe are perplexing, even to the authors. Although this is not a study about PCOS, it is about infertility. One of the authors is known for his interest in PCOS and is well-respected. This is also a study which addressed a non-pharmacologic approach, but very different from the Diet & Exercise Study. I preface the description of this study with this information because I don't know how to interpret the results. You'll see what I mean:

This was a study that looked at pregnancy rates in women at an in-vitro fertilization clinic in Seoul, Korea (Cha et al, J Reprod Med 2001). The study was double-blinded and randomized. Neither the women nor their physicians in the clinic knew about the treatment. The treatment, which was randomly assigned to half of the 219 women, was prayer. The prayer was carried out by prayer groups in the U.S., Canada and Australia who had photographs of the women for whom they were praying. Prayer was on behalf of the women by people who did not know them. Some of the prayer groups prayed for the other prayer groups (who had the photos) to have success in their prayers.

The result? Women who were prayed for had an almost doubled pregnancy rate than women who were not prayed for: 50% vs. 26%. The authors cannot explain this finding despite having re-analyzed their results. They are planning follow-up studies to determine whether they can confirm these first results.

There are a few possible explanations for this result. Firstly, it may be that in fact, intercessory prayer impacts on medical outcomes, in ways that we don't understand. Alternatively, it is possible that this result is a 'statistical anomaly'. In other words, once in a while, a study, by chance alone, will have an unusual finding which on further research cannot be replicated. If this is the case, then we might conclude that the initial findings happened by chance alone. This is analogous to flipping a coin 10 times and having it come up 'heads' each of the ten times. It is possible that this happened because the coin was 'loaded' towards heads, or it is possible that it was just 'luck'. Because of the large differences between the two groups found in this study, this explanation is less likely to be true. The last possibility is that the groups were in some way not 'balanced' and that the prayer group was predisposed to better outcomes for some reason other than prayer. The investigators have looked at a number of variables to determine whether there were differences at baseline between the groups that could have affected likelihood of pregnancy, but were unable to find any.

In any event, this is not the only study that has addressed intercessory prayer. A recent pilot study published in the American Heart Journal (Krucoff et al, 2001) found that patients who received "noetic" therapies with their angiograms for angina (including one of either stress-relaxation, imagery, touch or off-site prayer) had better overall outcomes than those who did not, with the prayer group having the lowest adverse effects. However, mortality occurred only in the noetic treatment groups, so that further study is needed.

These two studies are interesting because they raise questions about our understanding of non-traditional, non-medical approaches. Clearly, more studies will need to be done before we can conclude that prayer is a reasonable alternative form of therapy, and these studies are now being planned. It is possible, and an interesting notion, that other therapies that reduce stress, like those discussed in the second article on heart disease, may be a potential adjunct to other lifestyle approaches like diet and exercise. This also will require further study.

Happy Holidays...

Christine Mehling, M.Sc.

We are in the middle of Ramadan, Hanukkah begins on December 10, and the Christmas season is upon us. Like most holidays, these holidays are associated with gatherings of family and friends and include wonderful festive foods. Just because you are trying to eat healthy, doesn't mean you need to avoid celebrations or that you have to accept a few extra "party" pounds. All foods, — even the traditional holiday treats — can fit into a healthy eating plan for the calorie conscious. There is no magic bullet to getting through the holiday season, but there is a secret: "moderation and balance". Balance yourself between feeling guilty and deprived and enjoying those holiday foods. Remember this is a holiday season and part of the holidays includes eating. Get rid of the mindset "All or Nothing" and add a new motto "Moderation and Balance". This new motto should be carried with us not only through out the holiday season but the rest of the year.

Tips To Stay On Track...

Be realistic. Strive to maintain your weight versus losing weight during the holiday season. Losing weight during the holidays may be unrealistic and self-defeating. On the other hand, gaining weight should not be acceptable either.

Balance and moderation is key. If you are going to a party or special dinner, don't starve yourself the whole day, rather choose to have smaller lighter, lower calorie meals over the day (ie fruit, salad, cereal, soup) and balance this with a moderate intake of a variety of foods at your special dinner. This serves 2 purposes. First you won't arrive at the party famished and increase the likelihood that you will eat more than you should. Second since you are eating lighter lower calorie foods during the day than you can enjoy some of your higher calorie favorites, and at the end of the day the scale should be balanced.

Don't deprive yourself of your favorite food items. Have smaller portions, skip items that are not your favorite, or try to lower the fat and calorie level of your favorite items. For example if you like apple pie a la mode, choose a small slice of pie and skip the ice cream!

Watch your portion sizes. Whether you are choosing from a buffet table or a sit down dinner, choose to have small portions and be selective. Choose things that you would not normally get at other times of the year, and skip the food items that are readily available at other times of the year. Remember even if you choose smaller portions, or choose lower fat items, if you eat too much, the outcome will be the same: possible weight gain!

Eat slowly, enjoy your food and don't overeat. Savor the flavour and texture of the food. By eating slowly, the message your body gives to your brain to signal to itself that it is "full" will come at the appropriate time. If you eat quickly you may have already overeaten by the time your brain has figured out that it is full! Listen to what your body is saying. If you are full, don't eat any more.

Take the edge off your hunger before a party. Eat some fruit, vegetables or a bowl of cereal so that you don't arrive at the party famished, and thus increase the risk of sabotaging your efforts at eating modestly.

Keep a low calorie beverage in your hand. Just by having something in your hand, it may keep you from snacking, and by drinking something low calorie it may trick your body into feeling that it is full and prevent you from excessive nibbling. Try sparkling water, diet pop or a wine spritzer.

Don't stand near the food! When socializing with fellow partygoers, don't stand near the food, it may be far too tempting to nibble!!

Remember each day is a brand new start! So if you do over indulge, just start a new the next day! Don't let it be the start of a slippery slope. Remember you are the only one who can control what goes into your mouth!

Pace yourself. Remember the holiday season is not only one day but lasts for several days or weeks. So pace yourself and enjoy a little over several occasions.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



*IF YOU ARE ENTERTAINING HERE IS A LOW FAT
RECIPE FOR AN AFTERNOON TEA ...*

Date Oatmeal Squares (makes 16 squares)

½ lb pitted dates, chopped
1 cup water or orange juice
¾ cup all-purpose flour
1 cup rolled oats
2/3 cup brown sugar
½ cup bran cereal
½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
½ cup soft margarine

In a saucepan, cover and cook dates and water over low heat, stirring often, for approximately 15 minutes or until dates are soft and liquid absorbed. Set aside. In a bowl, combine flour, rolled oats, sugar, cereal, baking powder and baking soda; cut in margarine until crumbly.

Pat half onto bottom of cake pan; spoon date mixture over top. Pat remaining crumb mixture over date mixture. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden.

Bake for 20-25 minutes or until



'Tis The Season



Vanessa R. Speers, M.Sc.

Okay, we are knee deep in Santas and snowmen in the stores and at the malls. 'Tis the season for celebration, giving, and being with family. A wonderful time of year.

For those of us who want to lose weight however, it can be a very daunting time. We are constantly tempted by office parties, chocolate seems to multiply exponentially, and it we feel the "Holiday Spirit" which conjures up visions of candy, cookies, parties and lots of FOOD! A lot of us rationalize that it is the end of the year, so why not just start over on January first as a New Year's Resolution? We want to enjoy the holidays, right? So, what's wrong with that?

Consider the following:

Look back at how far you have come so far. Isn't maintaining or adding to your health goals and weight loss the best present you can give yourself?

How long is Christmas? Last time I looked it was just one day. One day will not derail our weight loss efforts or cause a significant weight gain...but 2 MONTHS could!

It is very possible to attend those parties and not overdo it! You will feel so much better about yourself if you fill your mind with conversation rather than stuff yourself with holiday goodies.

Remember that we are changing our eating patterns, exercise and general way of treating our bodies for LIFE. The holiday Season will come every year. We need to learn how to incorporate it into our lives instead of dreading or overindulging.

Here are a few tips from me for surviving the holidays:

Focus on the company that you are around.

When you go to a family function or party-talk and socialize. Of course you can have some of the food too, but just do not make it the center of attention.

Be mindful of what you are putting in your mouth.

This is always important, but with candy and goodies around every corner it is especially important to be careful. It can be easy to pop a bunch of peanut clusters or candy in your mouth before you even realize it. You're not really enjoying it, just eating it because it's there and getting lots of extra calories you don't need.

Goals, Goals, Goals

We all have our Christmas goals; let's not forget these and set daily ones for you too. It does help!

Visit with friends or talk to the study staff for support

If you talk to your wonderful friends and even our study staff, it can help you to keep you thinking about your plan.

Keep up the exercise!

It's so easy to not get out of the house when it is freezing outside to go to the gym, or to skip our workouts because we are busy with the holiday rush, but we must make ourselves a priority! Set a date with yourself for certain times and days and treat it like an appointment you can't miss!

Forgive and Forget

I doubt any of us will get through the holidays without eating something we shouldn't eat or skipping an exercise session. Don't let this be the cause of you hanging it up until January 1! We all make mistakes — the sooner we get back on track though, the less the damage. Don't try to be perfect or punish yourself if you are not. Just do what you can do — your best! — and you will get through the season in good shape!