

JANUARY 2001
ISSUE 2

Study Staff

Project Director
Sheila Laredo, MD
416-351-3800 ext 2721
sheila.laredo@swchsc.on.ca

Physiologist &
Coordinator
Vanessa Speers, MSc
416-351-2536
vanessa.speers@swchsc.on.ca

Registered Dietitian
Christine Mehling, MSc
416-760-8778

University of Toronto
Maternal, Infant and
Reproductive Health
Research Unit

at

The Centre for Research
in Women's Health

790 Bay Street, Suite
719
Toronto CANADA M5G 1N8

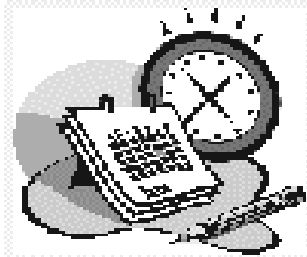
Tel 416-351-2536
Fax 416-351-3771

vanessa.speers@swchsc.on.ca

PCOS NEWS

FIRST SUPPORT GROUP MEETING IS HERE!

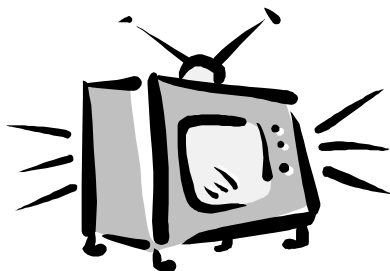
Mark Your Calendars for Feb 7th!



Due to many of you expressing your interest, we are undertaking as part of the PCOS Lifestyle Study, a support program for participating women. Women in your group will have the opportunity to meet together this February 7th to share study experiences and questions with each other, and generally socialize. You will also have the opportunity to meet with the study staff. You will get some helpful hints from Christine and Vanessa, and updates on PCOS from Sheila.

Please mark your calendars for Wednesday February 7th at 6:00pm for an informative and supportive evening. The group will meet in room 2007 in the Athletic Centre at the University of Toronto.

TV TIMES: PCOS STUDY ON THE TUBE



The PCOS Lifestyle Study was recently featured on the TVO broadcast called Your Health. The original broadcast aired on December 19th at 7:30pm. Don't fret if you missed the premiere event - encore presentations will be aired on Feb 18th at 7:30pm, Feb 19th at 3:30am, and Feb 24th at 11:30am. All broadcasts will be shown on Prime TV (channel 54 in Toronto). Set your VCR's for date and time if you'll be away from your set.



RUNNING LATE?

An appointment made with the study staff is time that is reserved especially for you to look after your needs. If you are unable to keep an appointment, we ask that you notify us 24-hours in advance so that the time can be offered to someone else. We understand that situations arise - please keep us informed with a phone call of your situation or if you will be 5 to 10 minutes late. Your cooperation is appreciated and will help to ensure that the study runs efficiently and you are seen on time.

THE RATIONAL BEHIND YOUR DIETARY PROGRAM...

PCOS MEDICAL FORUM

Sheila Laredo, MD



When we designed the PCOS Lifestyle study, the choice of A Healthy Heart Diet was one that we made carefully. We have been asked on a few occasions by women interested in the study why we did not use one of the popular low carbohydrate ("low carb") type of diets, so I thought that I would address this in this issue. On writing this article, I took the opportunity to review the recent literature to attempt to provide as up-to-date information as possible. I was a bit surprised to find that despite the intense interest in these diets and all the books published and sold, there is still almost no research upon which to base recommendations in favor of these diets. There are some theoretical concerns regarding their risks nonetheless. Here's the lowdown:

There are several reasons that low carb diets do seem to result in weight loss. First, they are still calorie-restricted diets. There has yet to be a diet that breaks the cardinal rule of supply and demand - if supply is greater than demand you gain weight; if the reverse is true, you lose weight. If you can break this law of physics, you may be up for the next Nobel Prize! Second, it has been suggested that ketosis which is induced by a very low carb diet, by causing nausea or loss of appetite, can contribute to the reduction in calorie intake. That said, some people do initially experience a profound weight loss on a very low carbohydrate diet. Here's why - the combination of depleting the body's store of glycogen (the next most available energy source after circulating blood glucose), and causing ketosis results in a significant diuresis - loss of body water. This is not true fat weight loss, and would not be expected to be permanent.

It has been suggested that this fluid loss, while not only artificial, can be dangerous. Dehydration can result in lowering of serum potassium, which when severe can cause heart rhythm disturbances (this is a common cause of death in people with anorexia nervosa for example). It may also precipitate kidney stones in those predisposed to develop them. Some people using a very low carbohydrate approach report difficulty thinking clearly. Lack of fruits and vegetables may result in vitamin deficiencies - Dr. Atkins, for example recommends supplements while on his diet. Finally, there is the concern that the effect of long-term high fat diets on raising LDL (bad) and total cholesterol may be harmful with respect to risk of heart disease.

There is only one comparative study in the literature and it compared a 25% carb (higher than Atkins-style diets) to a 45% carb diet (lower than in a Healthy Heart diet), both equal in caloric intake (Golay et al, 1996). Both groups lost weight, but this study found no differences between groups in weight loss, percent body fat loss, or body fat distribution. It was only 12 weeks long in duration and thus did not address the critical issue of weight regain.

In summary then, good research still needs to be done to ensure that "low carb" diets are not only effective, but safe, prior to considering them a reasonable alternative to the current standard "Healthy Heart Diet".

Recipe of the Month

Bean Casserole

1 tsp oil
5 oz (150 g) lean meat (beef, pork, chicken)
½ tsp paprika
½ tsp salt
½ tsp ground ginger or grated fresh ginger
½ tsp ground black pepper
1 onion, finely chopped
2 cups (19 oz can) kidney or romano or black beans
½ cup diced carrots
½ cup chopped celery
½ cup chopped sweet green pepper
1 tbsp brown sugar
½ can (284 ml) cream of mushroom soup

In a nonstick pan, heat oil over medium heat. Add meat cubes; sprinkle with paprika, salt, ginger and pepper. Cook until lightly browned. Remove to paper towels to drain.

Add onion to skillet; cook for about 4 minutes or until translucent. Add 1½ oz water and deglaze skillet by stirring to scrape up any raw bits. Set aside.

In a large casserole dish, combine beans, carrots, celery and green pepper. Stir in onion mixture and meat cubes.

Dissolve brown sugar in 2 oz of water; stir into bean and meat mixture. Stir in the cream of mushroom soup.

Bake, covered in 325 F oven for about 35 minutes or until carrots are tender.

Each serving: ¼ of the recipe
233 kcal/serving = 1 starch, 1 vegetable, 1 serving meat/protein
5 g total fat
1 g saturated fat
13 mg cholesterol
14 g protein
29 g carbohydrate

*When I made this recipe, I used ½ cup textured vegetable protein rather than the meat. Soak the textured vegetable protein in 1 cup vegetable broth for 15 minutes and then drain away about half of the volume. Add the texture vegetable protein and remaining fluid to the bean and cream of mushroom mixture.

I also sautéed the carrots, celery and green peppers with the onions.

Taken from the Full of Beans Cookbook

CHRISTINE'S CORNER

Christine Mehling, MSc



The Health Benefits of Legumes

Over the last 30-40 years a lot of research has been done to determine the health benefits of the legume family. The list of proposed benefits has grown and looks quite impressive. The health benefits include reducing the risk for developing certain types of cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and gastrointestinal disorders such as constipation and diverticulosis and in helping to maintain or reduce weight.

How do the legumes do it?

First, legumes contain a lot of fibre, both soluble and insoluble fibre. Soluble fibre is the type of fibre that dissolves in water, than swells and forms a gel. Insoluble fibre or “roughage” on the other hand does not dissolve in water but still has water-holding capacity. For example oatmeal, which is a good source of soluble fibre, becomes thick and pasty once it is cooked. Compare that to a bowl of All Bran that is high in insoluble fiber, after it sits in milk for awhile, all it does is gets mushy.

The soluble fiber is thought to slow down the absorption and digestion of food. These benefits may help regulate and prevent big swings in blood sugar levels and lower the need for insulin thus helping in the prevention of diabetes. Soluble fiber has also been shown to reduce blood cholesterol levels by binding with the cholesterol molecule (LDL particle) thus reducing the risk of heart disease. Foods rich in soluble and insoluble fiber may also help in maintaining or reducing body weight by satisfying the appetite for a longer period of time because of its blood sugar moderating effect.

The dietary fibre found in legumes helps in preventing constipation by pushing other foods through the digestive tract. Dietary fiber does this by its water holding capacity. By holding on to its water it increases the mass in the digestive tract and helps push the food through faster and thus helps in the prevention of constipation. Once the fibre reaches the large intestine, its benefits in reducing the risk for cancer begins. In the large intestine (colon) the fibre is further broken down into smaller components. Some of these breakdown products may help in the inhibition of cancer cell growth.

Any way you put it, the bean seems like a mighty powerful food. And something all of us should add to our diet more often.

The Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Diabetes Association, Health and Welfare Canada recommend 25-35 grams of fibre per day. A cup of beans contains 10-15 grams of fibre and puts you are on the road to reaching that goal.

Name those beans!

Most people are familiar with brown beans, kidney beans and split peas but here is a list of other beans that you could try:

<u>Beans</u>	<u>Lentils</u>	<u>Peas</u>
Adzuki	Red	Chick or garbanzo
White, red kidney	Green	Black eyed or cow
Romano or cranberry	Brown	Split
Black, turtle or tiger		
Dutch brown		
Navy, pinto		
White, pink		
Lima, great northern		

A Fork in the Road: A 4-Step Plan for Eating out Healthfully

Once considered a special treat, dining out is now an everyday occurrence for busy women trying to balance family and career obligations with some sort of leisure life. Women often feel that eating and driving, a.k.a. dashboard dining, is the only solution to getting it all done! Unfortunately, restaurant meals often serve up too many calories and too few nutrients compared to homemade versions. The following steps will help satisfy the taste buds and your nutritional needs.

Step One: Plan Ahead

Just as you plan your daily meetings, you need to take time do the same with your meals. Since almost half of us eat a meal away from home on a typical day, dining out is no longer an automatic occasion to throw out nutritional sense and indulge. Use Canada's Food Guide as you would at home. Search out eateries that feature wholesome, high-carbohydrate, low-fat foods. Ethnic cuisines and restaurants offering vegetarian selections make good choices. Next, look for fresh fruits and vegetables. Using the Food Guide as a daily tool will help you develop, and stick to, a healthful eating plan when dining out.

Step Two: Become a Regular

Once you've found a venue with healthy options, take advantage of being a regular. Benefits of being a regular customer include quicker service, having your special requests honored, and having your likes and dislikes known in case you forget to ask, such as going "light on the cheese" or skipping the mayo on sandwiches. Competition for customers is fierce among restaurants, so don't be afraid to ask for what you want. Inquire on how foods are prepared and the ingredients they contain before ordering then customize to your needs.

Step Three: Fight Portion Distortion

It's a simple fact that we eat more food when more food is placed in front of us. One recent study revealed that women who either bought take-out food or ate at restaurants at least six times a week consumed, per day, 300 more calories, 20 more grams of fat and 400 more milligrams of sodium compared to women who ate foods prepared away from home less than six times per week. Unfortunately, these extra calories don't necessarily translate into extra nutrients. The group who ate out didn't consume any more fiber or calcium, just more sodium and fat.

Portion sizes have ballooned so dramatically that even a health conscious woman can gain weight if eating out regularly and cleaning the plate. Over the past 40 years, the "average" bagel has grown 350% - a big, deli-bagel is now equivalent to eating five to seven pieces of bread! Softball sized muffins, buckets of popcorn (as much as 20 cups with over 1600 calories with the butter topping) and 32-oz Big Gulps (400 calories and the equivalent of 25 teaspoons of sugar) are bargains only if you value quantity over quality.



Vanessa R. Speers, MSc

How can you contend with portion distortion? Don't let the kitchen staff at restaurants decide what is an appropriate amount to eat. Learn to estimate healthful food portions. For example, three ounces of meat, poultry or fish is about the size of a deck of playing cards. An ounce of cheese is about the size of four stacked dice, a half-cup of mashed potatoes or broccoli about the size of an average women's fist, and a half-cup of ice cream resembles a tennis ball. For more accurate measurements, periodically use a kitchen scale and measuring cups at home.

Keep in mind that restaurant plates, on average, have grown from eight to twelve inches. Consciously divide or split in half enormous entrees or gargantuan portions in take-out cartons, to be saved for tomorrow's lunch, or order two appetizers instead of an appetizer and an entrée. If you plan to end the meal with something rich and decadent, go easy on the appetizers and entrees or split it with a friend or two.

Step Four: Slow Down and Taste It

Since it can take 20-minutes for your brain to register that you're full, slow down and savor your choices. Remind yourself that you're already saving time by not having to cook or clean up. When you indulge in one of your favorites, savor every bite. Taking the time to taste and enjoy food makes for a guilt-free, pleasurable dining experience, because you have made the choice to indulge, and know that it is rare. This also helps reduce the desire to overindulge, because you appreciated the quality, rather than great quantities.

Keep in mind, also, that just because we can buy food virtually anywhere and at any time (while gassing up the car, for example), doesn't mean that these dining ventures are fulfilling or necessary. Doing a lot of things at once may make you feel more efficient even if you're not doing a very good job at any of them. In the long run, your health will benefit more from taking a few uninterrupted minutes to sit down and eat a healthy meal, than wolfing down a taco without spilling a drop while speeding across town on the way back to your office from your child's daycare.

Like anything worthwhile, eating out healthfully requires effort - you have to decide to do it. But, once you have made the initial investment of research and planning, the daily decisions become easier. As a participant in the PCOS Diet & Exercise Study, you have already made decisions to improve the quality of your life, and, since you will likely eat out anyway, why not do it well?