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SWIMMER

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF
U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING
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AVOIDING VERTICAL BUTTERFLY

Simon Percy's Tips
On Everything From
Stroke Mechanics to Breathing

THE GREATEST GENERATION

A Story of Three
Swimmers Separated
by World War II...
and Reunited by Masters

WATER EXERCISE

Cross-Training for Improved
Strength and Flexibility

HEALING WATERS

Two Masters Swimmers
and Their Quests to Overcome
Great Physical Adversity

the healthy swimmer



Don Farrall/Photodisc Green/Getty Images

Reduce Daily Calories for a Healthier Heart

A study published in the Jan. 17 issue of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* suggests that people who follow a balanced diet that is extremely low in calories may have improved long-term heart health.

According to Luigi Fontana, M.D., Ph.D., of Washington University, the study included 25 members of the Calorie Restriction Society and found that subjects who consumed a balanced but limited number of calories daily experienced significantly lower levels of inflammatory markers, more flexible ventricles and generally better diastolic function. Fontana also said subjects' hearts seemed 15 years younger than expected.

"This is the first study to demonstrate that long-term calorie restriction with optimal nutrition has cardiac-specific effects that ameliorate age-associated declines in heart function," said Fontana.

The study included 21 men and four women who voluntarily adhered to a 1,400- to 2,000-calorie diet per day for three to 15 years. A separate group consumed approximately 2,445 calories daily. Researchers observed that calorie restriction may produce cardiac-specific benefits that could slow the effects of aging on the heart. These benefits include lower hypertension, less inflammation and less myocardial fibrosis.

Previous studies have shown that rats on low-calorie diets could live significantly longer than rats on high-calorie diets, but this type of calorie restriction study is much more difficult to conduct on humans. <<<

>>> To read more about the study, visit the American College of Cardiology at <http://content.onlinejacc.org/cgi/content/short/47/2/398>.

reader recipe

Richard Weinstein of the Oakwood Athletic Club in Lafayette, Calif., contributes this recipe, which is a variation of a recipe from Berkeley HeartLab Inc.

"It's a great drink after a challenging Masters swim workout," says Weinstein, a physician.

Super Smoothie

- 1/2 frozen banana, sliced
- 8 oz. low-fat chocolate soy milk
- 1 1/3 T natural peanut butter
- 1 T ground flax seed
- 1 t vanilla
- 1 T oatmeal
- 1/2 c berries (strawberry, blueberry, etc.)

Place all ingredients in blender and process on high speed until smooth. Serve immediately in a chilled glass. <<<

>>> DO YOU HAVE A RECIPE OUR READERS WOULD ENJOY?

Send it to editor@usms.org, or mail to: Reader Recipe, c/o Bill Volckening, 1220 NW 119th Place, Portland, OR 97229.

Participate in the Great American Health Check

According to the American Cancer Society, there are two things we know: 1) eating right and exercising regularly can help protect against cancer, and 2) detecting early cancer helps save lives.

What we may not know is whether we make the best nutrition choices, get enough of the right exercise and, ultimately, live a healthy lifestyle. But perhaps the most important thing most people don't know is what early detection tests are available and when to take those tests.

The American Cancer Society is sponsoring the Great American Health Check, which provides a personalized health action plan to share with your physician. Just use your computer to go online and take the test. It's quick, easy and confidential. <<<

>>> Visit www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/PED_13_Great_American_Health_Check.asp.

The information in this department is not intended as a substitute for professional or medical advice. It is not intended to provide medical advice on personal health matters. For personal medical advice, consult your healthcare provider. If you are concerned about a particular medical condition or injury, see your healthcare provider for evaluation and care.

READERS ASK: Coping With Chlorine Reactions

The November/December 2005 issue of *SWIMMER* included a Readers Ask question about allergic reactions to chlorine, which triggered several follow-up questions from readers.

Q: I suffer terribly if the chlorine is greater than 2.5 parts per million (ppm). No medications seem to help. I swim in the morning, and sometimes the chlorine seems to seep in through the skin all day. I've tried antihistamines, allergy medications and even chlorine-removal soap—but nothing seems to help. Do you have any suggestions to counteract reactions once they have occurred?—Carolyn Lyman, Utah Masters

A: “The cardinal rule for treatment of allergies and sensitivities is to avoid the offending agent,” says Mary Pohlmann, M.D., assistant professor of clinical medicine at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine and a member of the USMS Sports Medicine Committee. “In the case of reactions after swimming, the offending agent is not really chlorine, but rather the nitrogen and/or carbon compounds (chloramines) that form when Free Available Chlorine (FAC) comes in contact with organic substances in the pool.”

Known as combined chlorine compounds, those irritating substances form in combination with body fluids, and are more often found in pools with heavy loads of swimmers.

“The chemistry of pool sanitation is a difficult science requiring a balancing act

between chlorine levels, pH, alkalinity, and turbidity,” says Pohlmann. “FAC and total available chlorine should be measured. Most standards require an FAC of 1.0 to 4.0 ppm, with no more than 0.2 ppm of combined chlorine compounds. The pH should be between 7.2 and 7.8. Lower or higher pH can cause skin and eye irritation as well as stain or erode teeth,” she notes. “As Dr. Bovard pointed out (in the Nov./Dec. issue), chloramines may be removed by shock treatment of the pool with additional chlorine. Pools with strong chlorine-like odor likely have too many chloramines and need more chlorine, not less.”

Pohlmann confirms that chloramines found in water are absorbed into the blood through the skin. “Chloramines and chloroform in the air near the surface of the water are absorbed into your lungs when you breathe,” she also notes. “The harder you work out and the longer you swim, the greater contact you will have with these irritating substances. Good ventilation of the building air, frequent circulation of fresh water and control of the water chemistry are all important in reducing your exposure to these irritants.”

Checking to ensure that a certified swimming pool operator is properly maintaining your pool is a first step toward ameliorating pool irritants. “The records of FAC and pH readings should be available for your inspection,” Pohlmann notes.

“Proper hygiene, especially soap showers before entering the pool, should be required of all swimmers. Bathroom breaks should

be considered for groups of young children, and all should be taught that their body products don't belong in the pool. Such practices will reduce the amount of chloramines produced and thus the amount of chlorine necessary to keep the pool sanitary.”

For skin irritation and rashes, Pohlmann suggests checking with a dermatologist. “Some dermatologic problems may be infections rather than allergic reactions,” she points out. “Using a moisturizer after a soapy shower may help. Moisturizers are especially beneficial in the winter and in dry climates—but apply moisturizers after swimming, rather than before.”

For respiratory problems, Pohlmann recommends checking with an allergist. “Research suggests that chloramines and trihalomethanes (chloroform) may actually cause reactive airway disease or asthma,” she says. “Certainly, if you already have asthma, these irritants can make matters worse. Swimming in an outdoor pool or an indoor pool with high ceilings and good ventilation will reduce your exposure.”

For nasal problems, Pohlmann suggests that saline, cromolyn sodium (Nasal crom), and/or steroid nasal sprays may be of help. “Oral antihistamines and/or decongestants also may be beneficial. You might also try wearing a nose clip,” she advises. <<<

>>> Do you have a health or fitness-related question to pose to our health and medical professionals? Send it to editor@usms.org, or mail to: Readers Ask, c/o Bill Volckening, 1220 NW 119th Place, Portland, OR 97229.

Web Site Details Vegetarian Lifestyle

Thousands of people around the world are switching to a vegetarian lifestyle for a variety of reasons. Some seek the long-term health benefits of a vegetarian diet. Others stop eating meat because of ethical, environmental or religious considerations. Whatever the reason, anyone considering a vegetarian lifestyle can find information and advice from a new vegetarian web site called BestVegetarian (www.bestvegetarian.us).

“I would like to show you some of the many reasons for choosing a vegetarian lifestyle,” says BestVegetarian web site spokesman Geoff Clark on the home page introduction.

According to Clark, the word “vegetarian” is a general term used to describe anyone who does not eat meat, poultry, fish or seafood. The term encompasses vegans and also the various vegetarian subgroups. Visitors to the web site can find explanations as to the differences among semi-vegetarians, ovo-lacto-vegetarians and vegans.

The site includes a wealth of information on vegetarian meals, vegetarian diets, becoming vegan, recipes, protein in vegetarian food and many other topics. It also provides articles and links to additional information and vegetarian resources. <<<

>>> Check out the site at <http://bestvegetarian.us>.



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