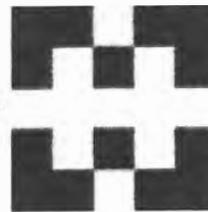




The Challenger



A Publication of:
William Rainey Harper College Honors Program

Nutrition Matters

by: Valerie Hubbard

Imagine the diet of a typical college student. You probably don't foresee a healthy and nutritionally balanced diet. In fact, you probably picture the exact opposite. In movies, on television, even walking the halls of most campuses, you are certain to see college students filling up on pizzas, potato chips, candies, and sodas. I have personally overheard more than one conversation about the "vending-machine-diets" of students enrolled at Harper.

The truth is, more often than not, the typical diet of the college student is nutritionally inadequate. It is often overloaded with sugars and

fats and lacking in fruits and vegetables. Students indulge more on the foods that do not provide nutritional benefits, and in turn, leave out the nutrient-dense foods that supply those much needed vitamins and minerals that promote health.



There are plenty of reasons why students have poor nutritional habits. For one thing, school commitments do not revolve around a sound nutritional plan; rather, the diet is incorporated into the rigorous school schedule.

This results in a lot of fast, con-

venient foods that are often unhealthy. Another deterrent to a healthy diet is stress. Students snack more when they are stressed. Food provides fuel for the brain, and it supplies energy for long study sessions. However, most students don't reach for an apple or a cup of carrot sticks to boost their energy. Instead, they munch on popcorn or chips or a cheeseburger and fries.

Students are eating on the go, in their cars, in between classes and work, and late at night. They don't always have time or energy to prepare healthy meals, or they just don't think about their food choices. I, for one, have been known to use the "no-time" excuse when it comes

(Continued on page 4)

December 2005

Editor: Valerie Hubbard

Central Theme:
HEALTH

Inside This Issue:

Nutrition Matters

Circumcision: An Ethical Debate

Advantages of Integrated Medicine

Drug Happy USA

Stress Survival

A Look at Influenza

Mass Murder Makes No Sense—Go Veg!

Food Guide Pyramid

Editor's Note

Circumcision: An Ethical Debate

by: Jessie Crow Mermel

In this country, the routine amputation of the foreskin of the penis is one of the first experiences many newborn boys encounter in their lives. The United States is the only country in the world in which the majority of newborn boys are circumcised for non-religious reasons. Traditions and myths perpetuate this unnecessary surgery. It was once said that newborns do not feel pain. The modern amendment to that statement is that they do feel pain but soon forget it. The physical pain of the procedure may never be remembered, but who can say what the unconscious ramifications are to a child undergoing such an operation? Research shows how the conditions at birth can affect a person later in life and how crucial

(Continued on page 5)

Advantages of Integrated Medicine

by: Oosa Sinrapanurak

Integrative medicine is a novel approach combining both Eastern and Western medicine modalities. The healthcare system is evolving, and people are becoming more conscientious with the options and influence they have in health care. Conventional medicine is still highly influential for most citizens, because there are insecurities about the delivery and difficulties in proving the efficacy of many complementary and alternative methods. Medical practices are beginning to be seen as more than brief treatments to cure a disease or ailment, or as a practice to bring comfort as life and health begin to dwindle; now, medicine is being implemented as a tool to maintain health and prevent the development of more chronic conditions.

Health practices are focusing more on maintaining a positive psychological, physical, emotional, spiritual, and economical level. Each individual is striving to operate at the highest level of functioning possible. Those who are ill and suffering from a chronic condition are finding more available options to regain their strength and energy and are better able to live out life according to their individual desires. As envisioned by the Integrative Medicine Alliance, "People have a certain power, spirit, balance, self-awareness, positive disposition, and resilience – an ability to work with the rhythm and cycles of life and to adapt to changes."

Sensitivity to environmental issues and their effects on health has led to more aggressive grass-roots efforts and national cooperation toward improving the sustenance of our surroundings. The materials inhaled and ingested are becoming a public concern; compare this to the ignorance in previous years.

One of the largest threats that impedes an individual from developing a more health-

(Continued on page 6)



Drug Happy USA

by: Jessie Crow Mermel

Turn on the television for an hour and you are bound to see at least one commercial with beautiful, happy people bouncing around and playing. You are not quite sure why they are so elated until the end of the commercial, upon which you are instructed to ask your doctor about a certain brand-name prescription drug. One such ad simply mentions the "purple pill" with no explanation of what it is. Upon arriving at www.purplepill.com, large letters at the top of the screen state, "Get to know the purple pill."

There are pills for almost any symptom, and Americans are taking them in massive quantities. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that about 130 million Americans swallow, inject, inhale, infuse, spray, and pat on prescribed medication each month. Americans spend more money per person on medications than any other country. "We are taking way too many drugs for dubious or exaggerated ailments," says Dr. Marcia Angell, former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* and author of "The Truth About the Drug Companies," complains that "What the drug companies are doing now is pro-



moting drugs for long-term use to essentially healthy people. Why? Because it's the biggest market." Drug companies stand to make a lot of money from ailments that could have a non-pharmaceutical treatment.

And over-medicating does not come without risks. At the tail-end of any drug commercial, the announcer quickly runs through a list of possible side-effects, often including death. According to Associated Press projections from landmark medical studies of the 1990s, well over 125,000 Americans die from drug reactions and mistakes each year. That estimate would make pharmaceuticals the fourth-leading national cause of death after heart disease, cancer and stroke. Our culture is consumed with the notion that any malady can be fixed by popping a pill. Or two. Or three. Most American babies come into this world in a narcotic haze, which, ironically, is how many people exit.

Prescription drug use, particularly in children, is on the rise. In many hospitals as many as 99% of the mothers are medicated during labor with drugs

that are very similar to cocaine or morphine. The child is then barraged with vaccinations for diseases that often pose no risk to children. Whereas children used to get a few vaccines for polio and childhood diseases, many now routinely get as many as 22 in a short period of time. Some of the vaccines pose more of a risk that the diseases they are meant to prevent. Overuse of antibiotics is also a growing concern. According to CDC estimates, one-third of the 150 million outpatient prescriptions for antibiotics written each year in the United States are unnecessary. One of the results of the over-use of antibiotics has been a chemical counterattack by bacteria - - the growth of strains that have become tougher than the drugs being used against them.

Many school-age children are treated for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) with a drug called Ritalin. In some schools, as many as 20% of the students take Ritalin. Use of the drug has increased by 700 percent since 1990, and so has its abuse. Ritalin is now being sold in the school yard and on the street. In a 1994 report, there were more U.S. high-school seniors abusing Ritalin than there were seniors legally prescribed the drug. When a child is having difficulty focusing in school, their faulty brain is blamed and a

(Continued on page 7)

Stress Survival

by: Valerie Hubbard

As college students, we all know that stress is inevitable. Small amounts of stress are indeed practical and even beneficial to our development. Dr. Hans Selye, a leader in the study of the physiological effects of stress, coined the term *eustress* for the positive stress in our lives. Eustress can help us grow and expand our thought processes, it challenges us to develop new ways of coping with various stressors, and it prepares us for the adjustments of an ever-changing en-

vironment. The stress, for instance, that comes along with being accepted to a university and planning your schedule requires new adaptations and different expectations. This would be eustress.

On the other hand, *distress* involves the types of negative life stress that most of us are all too familiar with, specifically college students. We feel stressed over academic success, nervous about tests or essay deadlines, frustrated with set-backs, anxious about adapting to several different professors with different class formats, and pressured to balance school with jobs and family and social

life. The stressors are seemingly endless, and the negative effects are just as numerous... and detrimental to health.

Stress can play a significant role in the everyday as well as long-term functioning of the body. Stress triggers the release of hormones that can affect memory or can even cause neurons to deteriorate and die. Under stress, the adrenal glands produce stress hormones that may increase abdominal fat and increase glucose production in the liver, resulting in renal hypertension. An individual with chronic stress might experience headaches, anxiety, depres-

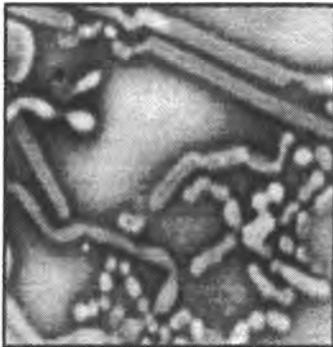
(Continued on page 7)



A Look At Influenza

by: Oosa Sinrapanurak

With flu season in progress, one of the primary health concerns of the public is the possible development of a pandemic from avian influenza. What exactly is it? Avian influenza, "Bird Flu," is a virus that is normally present in birds. Wild birds naturally carry this virus but in a "low pathogenic" form, no symptoms or mild symptoms. The virus is highly contagious among birds, and when passed to domesticated birds, the virus can change and become a "high pathogenic" virus that spreads quickly, causes multiple-organ shutdown, and has a mortality rate as high as 90-100%. The avian influenza A virus has two virus subtypes that have the highest rate of high pathogenicity: the H5 and H7 subtypes.



Most outbreaks have occurred in Asia and Europe, with the highest percentage of human mortality occurring in Asia. The most virulent form is the H5N1 virus, which has carried a more than 50% mortality rate in the 100 confirmed human cases since 1997. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the virus is spread to humans who have come into "contact with infected poultry (e.g. domesticated chicken, ducks, and turkeys) or surfaces contaminated with secretions/excretions from infected birds."

The CDC provides a list of symptoms most noted from avian influenza; "Symptoms of avian influenza in humans have ranged from typical human influenza-like symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches) to eye infections, pneumonia, severe respiratory diseases (such as acute respiratory distress), and other severe and life-threatening complications." The spread from human to human is very rare. According to the World Health Organization, the virus has affected mostly "healthy children and young adults."

There are currently only four antiviral medications used to treat influ-

enza: amantadine, rimantadine, oseltamavir, and zanamavir. The virus is resistant to the amantadine and rimantadine, and the efficacy of the other two antiviral drugs has not yet been confirmed. Also, there is currently no vaccine for the avian influenza. People are highly susceptible to a rapid progression of the virus, and since it is not common in humans, "there is little or no immune protection."

For this virus to become a pandemic, three criteria must first be met: "1) a new influenza virus subtype must emerge; 2) it must infect humans and causes serious illness; and 3) it must spread easily and sustainedly (continue without interruption) among humans." In Europe and Asia, the virus only meets the first two criteria. The third criteria can only occur if the virus either goes through reassortment or adaptive mutation. According to the CDC, reassortment occurs when genetic material is exchanged between human and avian viruses during co-infection (infection with both viruses at the same time) of a human or pig. A more gradual process is adaptive mutation, where the capability of a virus to bind to human cells increases during infections of humans.

As of this date more than 150 million birds have been destroyed to contain the outbreaks. Even if an outbreak were to occur in the U.S., the risk of developing avian influenza can be minimized by following proper storage, handling, and cooking practices. Some precautions include washing hands with soap and water, disinfecting all countertops contaminated with raw meat, using separate cutting boards for raw meat, and cooking the meat to at least 70°C (158°F) so there is no visible pinkness.



According to an article in *The Washington Post*, "the disease could kill one in eight human beings, including 40 million Americans, and cause a collapse of the world economy." With such a public health threat, the CDC and WHO are maintaining a close watch on the progression of the virus' mutation and transmissibility. The conditions that domesticated animals reside in make them more prone to contracting this disease, thus increasing the risk of its transmission to other more free-roaming animals. Since viruses do not respond well to any medication other than an anti-viral drug, there is a limited ability to treat those who contract this virus.

Vaccinations are available to prevent a severe development of seasonal flu by bolstering a person's immune system. Flu season usually begins from as early as October and lasts as late as May. Vaccinations are highly recommended for those over 65 and anyone who is at high risk of developing the flu due to chronic health

conditions or contact with high-risk individuals. Complications are similar to those of avian flu, but vaccines decrease the risk of complications and lowers mortality rate comparatively to avian influenza. The virus for seasonal flu is also more susceptible to all the anti-viral therapies as listed above.

Despite how the influenza virus is circulating, following good health habits can reduce or eliminate the transmission of this disease. Covering your face and nose when coughing or sneezing, washing hands often with soap and water, and following proper food handling and preparation techniques will benefit not just your health, but the public's health. A pandemic may be avoided with careful monitoring and each individual's contribution to maintaining clean and safe living spaces.



Nutrition continued

(Continued from page 1)

to eating nutritious foods, even though I know it is detrimental to my health. (I have also been known to use the “no-time-to-do-the-dishes” excuse, but that’s just detrimental to my kitchen.)

While the excuses for poor nutritional habits are readily available, and certainly understandable, to college students, there are several reasons why we should take more interest in our daily diets. The list of reasons is, of course, too long and extensive to devote sufficient time to in this article. I will address a few important topics that I hope will motivate you to learn more on your own. I highly recommend taking a nutrition course or even just reading the appropriate textbooks if your schedule does not allow space for an additional course. The information to follow may be found in the book, *Understanding Nutrition*, 10th Edition, by Ellie Whitney and Sharon Rady Rolfes.

- Fat cells do not decrease in numbers, they only diminish in size. Therefore, a person who has accumulated a greater number of enlarged fat cells will have a harder time maintaining weight loss. In this way, it is important to try to prevent poor dietary habits early on in life.

- Different foods have varying degrees of nutrient densities, meaning, don’t fill up on the high calorie foods that lack a substantial amount of essential nutrients. Otherwise, you won’t have room in your diet for the foods your body relies upon to function properly.
- Don’t omit any essential nutrients from your diet. Too many people fall for the fad diets that eliminate carbohydrates or proteins. A diet that eliminates any one nutrient is fooling you into losing weight by manipulating your body in unhealthy ways. If you do not absorb enough carbohydrates, your body breaks down other materials to make up for the losses in glucose. If you do not absorb enough proteins, your body breaks down other materials, and you put yourself at risk for extreme loss and degeneration of the bones - osteoporosis. (Vegetarians who do not get their protein from meats substitute other sources of protein to ensure adequate supplies.)
- Your brain needs glucose to fuel its activity. Two-thirds of the glucose you absorb is utilized by the brain. When you are starving or depriving your body of specific nutrients, the capacity of your brain to do its work diminishes. In addition, your immune system suffers when you are not receiving adequate supplies of the essential nutrients.
- The essential nutrients include: carbohy-

drates, proteins, fatty acids, water, vitamins, and minerals. All are needed in sufficient amounts to assist your body in performing and maintaining metabolic processes, brain activity, immune system functioning, physical activity, and the basic processes of life including breathing, heart rate, and blood flow.

Nutrition is an important part of carrying on a healthy and normal life. It plays a significant role in almost every daily activity. Many students don’t take the proper precautions when it comes to their diets, and this can cause serious problems later in life. If you think you’re too busy to plan for proper nutrition while you are a student and say you can worry about it later, think again. Many of the habits you learn early in life are harder to break later on. In addition, a lot of the choices you make now have an impact on your body as you start to get older. Serious diseases such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, cancer, osteoporosis, and many more can be better avoided when you equip your body with the nutrients it needs and demands. Take some time to think about your body and what you are doing to it now, before it is too late.

For more information on nutrition and for related links, visit: www.wadsworth.com/nutrition.

Mass Murder Makes No Sense—Go Veg!

By: Aleksey Maromyguin

Most people nowadays have too many “problems” and “issues” to care at all about their eating habits. They are ignorant and apathetic to any and all effects of their habits and their impacts on a world outside their own.

Factory farms inadvertently cause miscarriages and birth defects by leaking toxic wastes into the local groundwater. They cause respiratory problems, including acute and chronic bronchitis and asthma, by releasing toxic fumes such as ammonia. Ammonia also combines with nitrogen oxide to form millions of pounds of “particulate smog” per year, which contributes to the development of lung and heart disease. According to the South Coast Air Quality Management District, ammonia

fumes are a bigger priority to reduce than the pollution generated by cars. Factory farms release massive amounts of methane and hydrogen sulfide fumes, which are greenhouse gasses that damage the atmosphere. There are also those bacterial infections that form in the massive pits of waste generated by millions of slaughtered farm animals, such as salmonella (which causes vomiting, fever and diarrhea), campylobacter (which is a disease of the intestinal tract and reproductive organs), listeria (which leads to meningitis, an infection of the meninges of the brain and spinal cord), E. coli (which causes urogenital tract infection and diarrhea), and enterocolitica (which causes gastroenteri-



tis, arthritis and lymphadenitis).

These conditions are spread among workers at the factory farm and the miles of surrounding communities. Then, these infections, diseases, toxic fumes and bad water all get spread to the general population, sometimes affecting entire mass populations. The ground water cannot be cleaned, the particulate smog travels, the overall environment is damaged (in addition to all the automobile industry’s harm), and the bacterial infections are dispersed.

To top it off, the farmed animals (cattle, poultry, and pigs) are given antibiotics, 70 percent of all those used in the United States each year, which are then consumed

(Continued on page 6)



Circumcision Cont.

(Continued from page 1)

immediate bonding is to the healthy development of an individual. The experience of circumcision in the critical first days or first weeks of life may have serious consequences. Infant circumcision removes a normal, healthy, functioning part of the male anatomy, without the child's consent, most often for the sake of tradition rather than medical necessity.

For many years, circumcision was considered so normal and routine that few people questioned whether it was right to remove a part of anatomy from an unconsenting individual. The prevalence of circumcision was once as high as 80 - 90% of births per year in the U.S., but has steadily decreased to nearly 60%; this remains a stark contrast to Western neighbors. Canada and England, for example, have yearly circumcision rates of 17% and 0.5% respectively.

The arguments supporting circumcision, including cleanliness, prevention of STD's, and even curbing masturbation, simply don't hold any water. No national or international medical organization recommends the procedure for routine, non-therapeutic reasons. Many insurance companies refuse to pay for the procedure because it is "cosmetic". Moreover, many doctors and nurses are refusing to perform or assist in the procedure because they feel it denies the patient's ethical rights. Increasing amounts of parents, including those of Jewish and Muslim faith, are questioning the tradition of exposing their baby to the pain and risks of a procedure with life-long consequences.

The decision to alter permanently a person's body is left to that child's parents. It is usually a simple decision. The doctor asks if they want the baby to be circumcised. Perhaps they hadn't really thought about it before, and maybe the father is circumcised. They don't want their son to be teased in the locker room for being different, they reason, so they acquiesce and hand their son over. The newborn boy is taken by the nurse from his mother's warm arms, within

hours after birth. The parents believe that they are doing what is best and think it will just be a quick procedure — no harm done. Meanwhile, their tiny son is strapped to a plastic body board in an uncomfortable and unfamiliar spread-eagle position. His genitals are scrubbed with antiseptic. Next, usually without any anesthesia, his foreskin is torn from the glans of his penis and cut lengthwise. As he begins to scream out in pain, the cold, metal blade of the circumcision instrument is inserted, and the foreskin, so heavily laden with nerves, is cut from his penis. So traumatized, he slips into heavy sleep, but in the coming days, he will experience pain at every movement, every diaper change.



Once parents have learned about or even seen the procedure being performed, they often adamantly refuse to do this to their little son. After all, isn't it the responsibility of the parent to keep the child safe from harm? Many parents are uninformed about circumcision. Because circumcision has been so prevalent in this country for so long, many people don't know any different. Times have changed, however; a baby born today, whether he is circumcised or not, will be *different* from roughly half his peers anyway. And why be so opposed to diversity? Just because noses look different, should we perform routine rhinoplasty on infants at birth as well? To remove one of the most sensitive

parts of the body for a purely psychological reason is unacceptable. If the child's feelings are in question, perhaps the possibility of being made fun of in the locker room should be weighed against the reality of an unconsensual amputation of a body part and the resulting loss of sexual sensation.

The foreskin serves a clear purpose. It contains as much as half or more of the penile skin system. It has three known functions: protective, sensory, and sexual. The foreskin keeps the glans soft and lubricated and protects it from injury. Without the foreskin, the glans dries up and becomes desensitized from exposure and chafing. Nerve endings in the foreskin

enhance sexual pleasure. Circumcised males will never know the full extent of sexual pleasure. Does anyone have the right to rob a boy of his natural right to maximum sexual sensation as he matures to adulthood?

In addition to the loss of sexual sensation, circumcision carries risks and potential complications. Like any surgery, there is a possibility of hemorrhaging, infection, complications from anesthetics, and even death. Surgical mistakes have caused the head of the penis or the entire penis to be accidentally removed, typically resulting in gender-reassignment surgery that can cause severe physical, emotional, and psychological distress. More commonly, circumcised males live with scarring, curvature of the penis, tight or painful erections, impotence, and feelings of being violated or mutilated. Furthermore, circumcision may have risks and consequences that are not yet recognized or fully understood.

Routine infant circumcision violates all of the major principles of medical ethics: beneficence, non-maleficence, proportionality, autonomy, and justice. The principle of beneficence, in a nutshell, states that "when dealing with an individual, you should only do what is good." Non-therapeutic circumcision fails this principle, because there is a lack of medical benefit. Non-maleficence (do no harm) is also violated by circumcision because of the potential serious complications and risks, both physically and psychologically. Circumcision also lacks proportionality, because the risks outweigh any conceivable benefits. Likewise, autonomy is denied when permission is given by a surrogate instead of the individual. Finally, circumcision fails the test of justice, because it removes healthy, functioning tissue from the body and violates a person's rights to bodily integrity, security, and freedom from degrading and cruel treatment.

Circumcision can be performed at any age. The individual should be allowed to wait until legal age and make the decision for himself. The law forbids a child from having any other body part non-therapeutically amputated. Should the foreskin be any different?





Go Veg. continued

(Continued from page 4)

in food. The drugs are used to stimulate the animals' growth and to keep them alive in horrific conditions. As a result, as the American Medical Association and other health groups have warned, countless new strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria have developed and have already rendered commonly used antibiotics worthless. For example, Vancomycin was considered the "last defense" in fighting the deadly blood infections and pneumonia caused by staphylococcus. But because powerful medicines have been fed to animals by the factory farmers, Vancomycin has become obsolete. This is a predictable effect of feeding farmed animals antibiotics.

In other words, factory farms are poisoning rivers; killing fish; and making pollution, sickness and death commonplace in the general population, especially the factory farm communities. The government does absolutely nothing about this. In fact, it does all it can to make it worse. The problem can be traced to the

combination of powerful meat industry lobbyists, large campaign contributions from the meat and dairy industries, and executive agencies that hire meat and dairy industry reps to fill crucial posts, and that's only scratching the surface. These are mere symptoms of the capitalist structure that supports and encourages them.

What's the least you can do to protect yourself from all this? Go vegetarian, or better yet, go vegan. Besides everything else mentioned, there are also plenty of positive reasons to go veg. Vegetarians are 50 percent less likely to develop heart disease and have 40 percent of the cancer rates of meat-eaters. Meat-eaters are nine times more likely to become obese than vegans. Meat and dairy consumption has been linked to heart disease, obesity, diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's, asthma, and impotence. Studies found that vegetarians have stronger immune systems than meat-eaters and can thus resist everyday illnesses better. On average, vegetarians and vegans live 6 to 10 years longer than

those who eat meat.

Finally, vegetarianism on a global scale is much more efficient. The world's cattle is fed enough food per year to satisfy the caloric needs of 8.7 billion people. Think about it. How much energy does it take to raise cattle, even in the horrendous conditions that exist? Does it make sense that we allocate the caloric needs of nearly nine billion people *not* to the people themselves but, instead, to the meat industry? Even ignoring the moral and animal rights arguments (which most certainly shouldn't be ignored), the incentives for *you* to go veg greatly outweigh that of a meat and dairy diet.

These *are* your issues and problems, as is the burden of guilt resulting from mass torture and blatantly grotesque treatment of the animals you eat every day. There is absolutely no reason to continue this lifestyle of nonsensical murder. Don't fall in line with corporate and government interests, as those are the only people who benefit! (The information provided here has, in part, been gathered and cited from www.goveg.com.)

Integrated Medicine continued

(Continued from page 1)

conscious mindset is the growing number of individuals suffering from severe emotional issues. There appears to be an increase in the level of constant stress, anxiety, and depression in each individual's domain. The quality of life seems to be declining as life spans are continually increasing.

The rampant advertising from pharmaceutical companies and narrow-minded health-care providers leads to conflicting messages about prescribed treatments. This becomes a great threat to the movement of bringing a more trustworthy and reliable healthcare organization together. An example of this situation can be found in the use of aspirin. Doctors prescribe aspirin to those suffering from chronic heart disease to prevent heart attacks, but damage to the liver can be incurred from long-term use. This twisted "truth" leads to a paradoxical message that the prescribed therapy is utilized to sustain health, but it might also cause damage to your body or accelerate its systematic decline.

The movement towards better health and preventative care perpetuates a

need for more awareness of the options available for implementation. The Internet can serve as a starting point in a search for a more balanced and fulfilling way of life. The depth of knowledge gained from taking a more proactive stance to healthcare can lead to a greater satisfaction with therapies practiced. Below is just an introduction to some of the possible therapies out there. With further investigation, you may discover what works for you and improves your daily functioning.

Chiropractors offer an array of services, including acupressure, acupuncture, applied kinesiology, Chinese herbal medicine, traditional Chinese medicine, and reflexology. The practitioner is usually highly skilled in some of the alternative therapies and must demonstrate proficiency and maintain certification through state and

national regulations. Acupuncture, for example, is the use of very fine needles at particular points throughout the body to improve the flow of qi (pronounced "chee"). Qi is defined as the natural flow of energy as utilized more than 2,500 years ago in China. This technique can be used for a variety of ailments from arthritis, and back pain to PMS. According to Whole Health MD, the stimulation caused by these needles is believed to initiate a release "of endorphins and monoamines, chemicals that block pain signals in the spinal chord and brain."

There are other practitioners who range in their scope of practice, such as herbalists, homeopathic doctors, Native American medicine practitioners, naprapathic doctors, and naturopathic doctors. The practitioners of Native American medicine differ in their practices depending on their primary tribe but the commonality of these "shamans" are seen by the use of herbal remedies, ritual purification or purging, and other symbolic rituals and ceremonies. The overall effect is a healing that embodies a more holistic view of the individual.

There are still other alternative therapies that have been implemented and

(Continued on page 8)





Stress Continued

(Continued from page 2)

sion, and disrupted sleep. Stress causes a rise in blood pressure and heart rate and thus increases the risk for blood clotting, stroke, and heart attack. Stress acts to suppress the immune system, and in turn, there is an increased susceptibility to colds and respiratory infections. Stress can impact the metabolic processes and may hinder the digestion and absorption of essential nutrients. The digestive system slows down, leading to upset stomach and cramping. Muscles may become tense and painful. Stress also affects the reproductive systems, causing menstrual disorders in women and impotence or premature ejaculation in men.

In addition to physical symptoms, stress also has a tremendous influence on psychological well-being. Individuals under severe stress are at risk for post-traumatic stress disorders, anxiety problems, depression, and emotional disorders. It is imperative to be able to recognize the warning signals of stress overload and ap-



ply the proper techniques to cope with and relieve the stress.

As we have come to the end of the semester (and by the time you read this, hopefully you are enjoying a week of sleeping in and Christmas shopping), our school-related stress has perhaps declined.

Soak up the time and try to delight in some long-overdue pastimes or neglected leisure activities.

But beware, as the holidays come barging through your vacation, of the stress that comes along with the holiday season. Financial strain, work commitments, family obligations, time to actually catch up on applications and other necessary paperwork...there is much to stress about even as we "relax."

Keep these factors in mind, and try to remember a few helpful hints to reduce your stress and enjoy your holiday break:



- **Remember to breath.** Deep breathing is an effective and easy way to relax your body and it forces your brain to be calm.
- **Take a break.** If you are working relentlessly and the stress is building, take regular tranquility breaks to revitalize your mind and recapture your focus. Taking a walk or journaling are both good ways to take a time out.
- **Exercise.** Physical activity promotes the production and release of endorphins that boost your spirit and counteract stress and anxiety.
- **Renew your spirituality.** Whether you find comfort in praying to a god, worshipping a higher being or force, or just tapping into the serenity of your soul, expressing your spirituality has a healing power that inevitably relieves stress.
- **Laugh, and laugh often.** Studies have implicated humor in lessening the negative effects of stress on the immune system and on overall health. Watch a funny movie, go to a comedy show, remember a silly joke—just laugh...and make others laugh.

(This article makes references from the text, *An Invitation to Health*, Eleventh Ed., by Dianne Hales.)

Drug Happy cont.

(Continued from page 2)

drug is prescribed to fix the problem. Perhaps our culture should look at different ways children learn and faulty parenting or teaching before we put our children on mind-altering medication.

Also on the rise in children is the use of anti-depressants. In 2002, two million pediatric prescriptions were filled for Paxil alone, and many to toddlers! According to one study, the use of behavioral medications for children topped all other areas of drugs in 2003 at 17%. This is compared to 16% for antibiotics and asthma drugs, 11% for treatments of skin conditions, and 6% for allergy medications.

Children aren't the only ones affected by the rise in anti-depressant and anti-anxiety use. Instead of therapy, many adults simply get a prescription for a pill to ease their symptoms, without even trying to get to the root cause. The number of antidepressants prescribed by general practitioners

in the U.S. more than doubled between 1975 and 1998 to 23.4 million per year.

Yet another mounting problem in America is dependence on prescription pain-killing opiates such as Vicodin and Oxycontin. Hydrocodone, the narcotic found in Vicodin, is considered to be morphine-like in all respects. In a NIDA national survey from 1999, abuse of pain relievers was nearly triple that of stimulants and more than double that of sedatives and tranquilizers. Vicodin and Oxycontin are more socially acceptable drugs than heroin, yet the effects of addiction and withdrawal are similar. Many addicts of pain-relieving drugs turn to street heroin when their doctors stop prescribing these drugs for them and the cost of it on the street is too high. Addiction to painkillers has the same effects on one's life and livelihood as alcoholism or addiction to heroin. The use of these painkillers continues to rise as they are readily available on internet pharmacies. Many websites make it

accessible for children and teens to acquire these drugs.

The major problem with our culture and allopathic medicine in general is that it places little emphasis on prevention and fails to look at the person holistically, taking into account their history, emotional and psychological well-being as well as their physical symptoms. When most people in America go to the doctor, they are asked about their symptoms and simply handed a prescription to either eliminate the symptom or cover it up. Of course, many pharmaceuticals improve Americans' health. However, the nation also overindulges far too often and therefore violates the classic proscription of the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates: "First, do no harm."





Integrated Medicine continued

(Continued from page 6)

are much more popular. Such therapies are as follows: massage (craniosacral therapy, reiki, energy healing, rolfing, Hellerwork, etc.), meditation, aromatherapy, art therapy, biofeedback, guided imagery, humor therapy, therapeutic touch, prayer, hydrotherapy, hypnotherapy, and herbal remedies. Most fitness centers are also beginning to provide some of the following therapeutic activities: pilates, qigong, dance therapy, yoga, and tai chi. Conventional doctors are also referring patients to supportive treatments and consultations with a dietitian, nutritionist, occupational therapist, personal trainer/exercise specialist, or physical therapist.

There are several websites available to help you investigate the therapy options and better understand the goal and structure of each therapy. The following list of resources can be accessed online: WholeHealthMD, WebMD, ChicagoHealers, CDC, NIH, GoVeg.

Any of your local hospital and health-care providers may also have a website or additional information available in print. The state of "being healthy is knowing how to be healthy," as described by the Integrative Medicine Alliance.

Editor's Note

Any view and opinions expressed within these pages do not represent those other than the *Challenger* editors. If you have questions or comments, please email us at the address below.

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The Updated Food Guide Pyramid

Adapted from the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, and organization of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

Stairs: Physical Activity

Find your balance between food and physical activity.

* Be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.

* Children and teens should be physically active for 60 minutes every day, or most days.

Orange: Grains

Make half your grains whole.

* Eat at least 3 oz. of whole grain bran, cereal, crackers, rice, or pasta every day.

* Look for "whole" before grain on the list of ingredients.

Green: Vegetables

Vary your veggies.

* Eat more dark green veggies
* Eat more orange veggies
* Eat more dry beans and peas

Red: Fruits

Focus on fruits.

* Eat a variety of fruit
* Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit

* Go easy on fruit juices

Yellow: Oils

Know your fats.

* Make most of your fat sources from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils
* Limit solid fats like butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard

Blue: Milk

Get your calcium-rich foods.

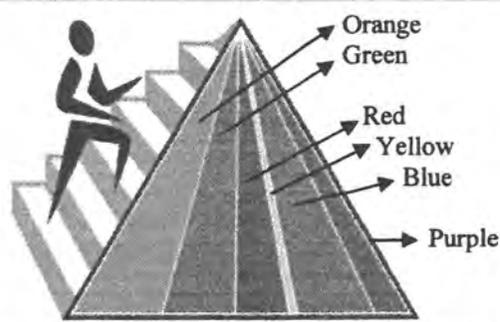
* Go low-fat or fat-free
* If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free products or other calcium sources

Purple: Meats & Beans

Go lean on protein

* Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry
* Bake it, broil it, or grill it
* Vary your choices—with more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds

(For more personalized and interactive information of the food guide, visit www.mypyramid.gov.)



Be healthy.
Be happy.
Learn more about your body and take charge of your health.



For more information, visit:
www.health.gov
www.americanheart.org

"Live each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influences of each."

- Henry David Thoreau

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