

# HEALTH wise

NOV. 2009

## Could Your Carb Choice be Causing Excess Inflammation in Your Body?

Inflammation is our body's innate way of protecting itself from infection and foreign substances. We all experience inflammation at one time or another. It's a normal function of the immune system and the first response to injury.

A growing body of research suggests inflammation may be the root cause for many chronic disorders including heart disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease and cancer. Some evidence has also linked inflammation to issues of obesity and diabetes.

More recent studies have identified that prostaglandins, a hormone-like compound, made by the body, plays a role in a wide variety of physiological processes, including inflammation. Some prostaglandins promote inflammation while others reduce it. The kinds of foods we eat, particularly fats, oils, and refined carbohydrates can greatly influence the types of prostaglandins the body produces.

Omega-6 fatty acids, found in most cooking oils including, corn, safflower, peanut and soybean oil, promote inflammation. On the other hand, oils found in coldwater species of fish (like salmon), flax seeds and leafy green vegetables contain omega-3 fatty acids, which are anti-inflammatory. Trans fatty acids, particularly those found in partially hydrogenated oils, are found to increase inflammation because they interfere with enzymes needed to process omega-3 fatty acids.

In the development of heart disease, the type of carbohydrate in your diet may be as important as the type of fat, says Walter Willett, MD, professor of epidemiology and nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health and author of *Eat, Drink and Be Healthy* (Free Press, 2005). The more refined carbohydrates (carbs) you eat, the more likely you are supplying your body with more sugar than it can handle with healthy results. According to Dave Grotto, RD, a spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. "Poor regula-

tion of glucose and insulin is a breeding ground for inflammation." Understanding how different carbs break down in the body is helpful in regulating glucose and insulin, it can also help prevent insulin resistance, reduce inflammation and help optimize the effects that food has on the body.

As a rule of thumb, the more fiber, micronutrients, and macronutrients your carb choices contains, the better it is for you.

Refined carbs refer to complex carbs that have had the bran, hull, fiber and some nutrients stripped away from the grain during processing—foods such as white bread, white pasta, white rice, pretzels, some cereals, and baked goods such as cakes, cookies, etc. are examples. Although many refined carbs are "enriched" after processing, meaning nutrients such as iron and some B vitamins are replaced, other important nutrients are not replaced. By choosing a diet high in refined carbs, you may be missing out on a lot of important nutrients. In addition to missing nutrients, refined carbs have developed a negative reputation for the following reasons:

- They are metabolized quickly and lead to insulin spikes in the body. Continual high spikes in blood sugar and insulin can damage metabolism, contribute to insulin resistance, cause weight gain as well as contribute to

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### WELLNESS WORKSHOPS

#### *The Gift of Giving* Workshop Series

**Chocolate Truffles for the Holidays**  
With Melinda Baur and  
Cindy Honegger

**Thursday, November 5**  
**7:00-9:00 p.m.**

**OSF Healthy Lifestyle Kitchen**  
**Fee: \$10**

Learn the basics of chocolate confectionery by making chocolate truffles. This two hour class will cover: types of chocolate, basic molding techniques, ganache fillings, chocolate tempering, plus a little chocolate history and some chocolate chemistry! *(Please make checks payable to IWU Wellness, please send fee to Wellness prior to class.)*

#### **African Beading Party:** featuring hand-painted Kazuri beads from Kenya

With Rebecca Gearhart

**Saturday, November 7**  
**10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.**

**Turfler Room, Memorial Center**  
*All proceeds will be donated to the Lamu Center of Preventative Health (LCPH).*

#### **Give thrice this season:**

1. to the women bead-makers at Kazuri Bead Factory in Nairobi, Kenya (a Fair Trade company)
2. to the people of Lamu Island, Kenya who benefit from LCPH
3. to yourself or the recipient of your handmade jewelry

#### **Pricing:**

- \$12 for a necklace (includes glass filler beads, clasp, wire)
- \$6 for a pair of earrings (includes glass filler beads and metal fixings)
- plus \$2 for each Kazuri bead

*To reserve a space in either workshop, please contact [wellness@iwu.edu](mailto:wellness@iwu.edu) or x3334.*

**[www.iwu.edu/~wellness](http://www.iwu.edu/~wellness)**



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## COULD YOUR CARB CHOICE — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

excess inflammation in the body.

- Refined carbs are suspected of having addictive qualities because once eaten they generate an immediate and measurable spike of serotonin, the feel-good chemical neurotransmitter in the brain responsible for mood, appetite, and some other behaviors.

At the other end of the spectrum are complex carbs like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, and nuts. Complex carbs enhance our health in the following ways:

- They are typically rich in both fiber and micronutrients, offering real nutrition that the body needs to function.
- This added nutrition takes longer to digest, and the slower break-down process helps maintain healthier insulin and blood sugar levels, keeping moods on a more even keel and diminishing risk for insulin resistance and excessive inflammation in the body.

- The slower rate of absorption of the sugars they provide means we have a steadier supply of energy and results in less sugar being converted into storage forms in the liver as fat.

- Slow-acting complex carbs also satisfy hunger better and for longer periods, limiting the dramatic peaks and valleys—and vicious cycle of cravings we experience with refined carbs. If you suffer from inflammation or an inflammatory disorder, there are a number of natural remedies you can try to help reduce the symptoms of inflammation.

### Recommendations for Reducing Inflammation:

- Increase your consumption of vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, green beans and salads, which also contain anti-inflammatory nutrients.
- Avoid/reduce sugar, white breads, pasta and starchy vegetables, which can increase inflammation.
- Avoid polyunsaturated oils like corn, safflower, peanut or soy. Instead cook with healthier oils like olive, macadamia nut or cold pressed canola oil.
- Increase consumption of coldwater fish like salmon, mackerel and herring, which contain high amounts of omega-3 fatty acids or supplement with omega-3 or flax seed oil that can block inflammation producing compounds.
- Ginger has a long history as an anti-inflammatory and has properties similar to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) like ibuprofen.
- Calcium and magnesium are important minerals in the healing process and are often depleted in conditions of inflammation.
- Exercise. Exercise releases compounds such as endorphins into the blood that can soothe inflammation.

### References:

1. Confused about carbohydrates? A quick guide to the carb spectrum, <<http://www.womentowomen.com/insulinresistance/carbohydratefoods.aspx>>
2. Refined Carbohydrates, <[http://en.mimi.hu/diet/refined\\_carbohydrates.html](http://en.mimi.hu/diet/refined_carbohydrates.html)>
3. What's Causing Your Inflammation? <<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/whats-causing-your-inflammation-2.html>>
4. Sugar & Glycemic Index, <<http://www.acu-cell.com/gi.html>>
5. Inflammation, <<http://www.soulhealer.com/inflammation.htm>>

## FAMILY FUN

### Bowling with Family and Friends!

November 14, 2009 • 12:00-4:30 p.m.

ISU Bowling and Billiards Center



Wellness would like to invite you and your family and friends to a bowling bonanza! Wellness is offering three 90-minute time slots of bowling at ISU's Bowling and Billiards Center. We've reserved 6 lanes from 12:00-4:30 p.m. Register soon and join us for some bodacious bowling fun!

Each family/friend group can consist of up to 6 people per lane. The discounted cost is \$2.00/person/game and \$1.25/person for shoes. Parking is \$.80/hour in the Bone Student Center parking lot.

Please register for one of the following time slots by calling 556-3334 or e-mail Wellness at [wellness@iwu.edu](mailto:wellness@iwu.edu)

### Time slots:

12:00-1:30 p.m., 1:30-3:00 p.m., 3:00-4:30 p.m.

## NUTRITION BITES

# Recipe of the Month

*Sweet potatoes have almost twice the recommended daily allowance of vitamin A, 42 percent of the recommendation for vitamin C, four times the RDA for beta carotene, and, when eaten with the skin, sweet potatoes have more fiber than oatmeal. This densely nutritious, good tasting delight, is something that is a good addition to any meal and certainly a gem for the Thanksgiving Day menu.*

## Honey-Baked Sweet Potatoes



3 pounds sweet potatoes, 3 large	½ teaspoon salt
½ cup mild honey	¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
½ cup freshly squeezed orange juice	3 tablespoons cold butter cut into small pieces
1 tablespoon finely grated orange zest	

1. Bring sweet potatoes and enough cold water to cover them to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cook, covered, until tender when pierced with a fork but not cooked through, about 20 to 25 minutes. Drain sweet potatoes in a colander. When cool enough to handle, peel and cut crosswise into ½-inch-thick slices.
2. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9"x13" baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. In a small bowl, stir together honey, orange juice, zest, salt and pepper.

3. Arrange a layer of sliced sweet potatoes in baking dish. Drizzle with one-third honey mixture and dot one-third of butter. Repeat process with two more layers.
4. Bake sweet potatoes about 1 hour, basting every 15 minutes with honey mixture. Serve hot.

Source: <http://www.delish.com/recipefinder/honey-baked-sweet-potatoes>

# Improving Indoor Air Quality

By Laurine Brown PhD

With the chill of fall in the air, we seal our homes up tightly to keep warmth in and heating costs down. But we're also trapping pollutants from garden-variety allergens like mold, dander and pollen to fragrances and pollutants from household goods like air "fresheners," shampoos, shower curtains, and even computers. Indoor air can have 2-5 times the level of outdoor pollutants, and sometimes more than 100 times, according to the EPA. Studies have linked these pollutants to health problems, including allergies, asthma, thyroid problems, birth defects, learning disabilities in children, and even cancer. Some common threats include *phthalates* (pronounced thay-lates) used in soft plastics and synthetic fragrances, *formaldehyde* and *solvents* in home renovation products, and *flame retardants* from electronics. Fortunately, we can replace these items to help freshen the air for us "insiders."

## Phthalates

Tucked into flexible *vinyl things* (kid's toys, shower curtains, lunch boxes and bags, mini-blinds, tablecloths) and things with *fragrance* (air fresheners, deodorants, perfumes and cosmetics, nail polish dryer sheets, shampoos, cleaning products), phthalates off-gas slowly, then stick to household dust so they can be easily inhaled or ingested, in addition to absorbing through skin. They may trigger asthma and allergies, scramble our hormones, or damage children's reproductive development, especially baby boys. This is concerning since blood and urine samples of Americans find universal contamination, with the highest levels in women of child-bearing age.

**What you can do:** Instead of contaminating the air with artificial "air fresheners" that may harm your health, eliminate the source of the bad smell and freshen air by opening windows or ventilating. A study by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) found that 12 of 14 air fresheners contained phthalates. Instead of dryer sheets and fabric softeners, use baking soda in the rinse cycle to soften fabrics and eliminate static cling. Choose unscented products or those scented with simple essential oils from botanical sources. To sweeten your home use baking soda in your trash can, and add lemon to homemade cleaning solutions. Look for non-PVC shower curtains made from PEVA. Choose natural wood or soft cloth toys for kids.

## Formaldehyde and VOCs

Pressed-wood furnishings like shelving, tables, cabinets, can off-gas carcinogenic formaldehyde. Other VOCs (volatile organic compounds) like neurotoxic *toluene*, carcinogenic *benzene*, and the respiratory irritant *ammonia*, are emitted from paints, and glues used in furniture and synthetic carpets. As you inhale them, VOCs can cause headaches and upper-respiratory health problems, and even liver, kidney and central nervous system damage.

**What you can do:** Choosing formaldehyde-free products made from solid wood and natural fibers is best, and secondhand shops are a great option. If you do purchase new products, let them air outside or in the garage until the smell fades. Formaldehyde-free wheatboard is another option for cabinetry (see Neil Kelly Cabinets [www.neilkelly.com](http://www.neilkelly.com) and CitiLog [www.citilogs.com](http://www.citilogs.com)). Choose low- or no-VOC paints (e.g., Sherwin William's Harmony Line, Benjamin Moore's EcoSpec products,

and BioShield's solvent-free and clay paints.) Choose non-toxic cleaning products (or make your own cleaners) since many conventional cleaners with ammonia or bleach are linked with health problems, including cancer and respiratory problems.



## Flame Retardants

Flame retardants called *polybrominated diphenyl ethers* (PBDEs) are designed to help keep our hot electronics from catching fire — a good thing. But these chemicals are ending up in our blood and breast milk with concerns of hyperactivity, learning difficulties, thyroid problems, and decreased sperm counts among others. About 50-80% of our exposures are likely due to PBDE-contaminated dust from computers and televisions. Small kids have the highest exposures, probably because crawling exposes them to more dust. Even housecats have shown rising rates of overactive thyroid glands since the flame retardants were introduced in the 1970s.

**What you can do:** Fortunately some forms of PBDE have been discontinued worldwide as of 2005. But they're still around in older mattresses, foam cushions and draperies, and more. Vacuum regularly and turn electronics off when not in use—when warm they release more PBDEs. Consider purchasing from companies like Sony, Apple, Dell, Panasonic, Toshiba and NEC which have reduced or eliminated them. Cover or seal tears in exposed foam with aging furniture.

The next wave of greener household products will eliminate many of these concerns. But in the meantime, don't hold your breath—do what you can.

## Tips for Better Indoor Air

1. **Use a good quality air filter** on your furnace, and replace it regularly. Look for a minimum efficiency reporting value (MERV) rating of ten or higher, and prefer pleated models (more surface area to trap particles).
2. **Run exhaust fans** in bathrooms and kitchens. High humidity breeds mold and mildew. Dry out anything that is damp, like basements (use a dehumidifier) and carpets. Fix leaks in plumbing and roofs. Wipe up spills. Make sure water doesn't escape from shower curtains.
3. **Vacuum weekly** to remove dust and dander.
4. **When in doubt, ventilate.** If you smell the stinky paint, fingernail or shoe polish, cleaning product, then the molecules of these chemicals have entered your body. Open a window, turn on a fan or simply take the task outside to minimize your risk.
5. **Purify with plants**, which can remove (and even thrive on) common chemicals from the air, such as formaldehyde, benzene and carbon monoxide. Peace lilies, bamboo, palm, English ivy, mums, and gerbera daisies are among the top air-purifying plants.

*Adapted from:* Zandonella C. "Improving Indoor Air Quality," Green Guide, National Geographic, [www.greenguide.com](http://www.greenguide.com), p25-27, Spring 2008; and Care2 Make A Difference. "Simple Steps to Clean Indoor Air" Oct 11, 2009, <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/simple-steps-to-clean-your-indoor-air.html>

## HEALTH STUFF AND MORE

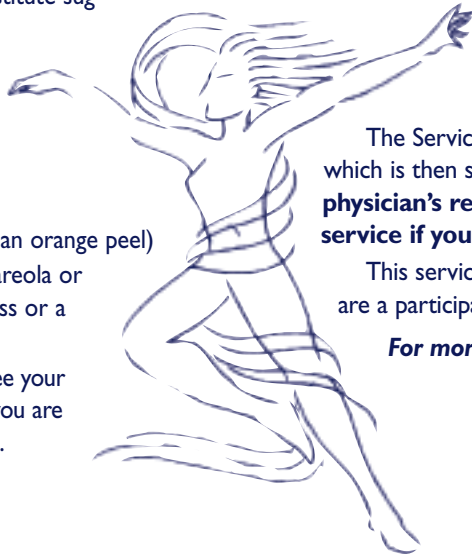
### Breast Cancer: 6 Warning Signs

Do you know the signs and symptoms that might indicate breast cancer? While personal family histories of breast cancer and lifestyle habits (including diet, exercise and how you handle stress) can all affect breast-cancer risk, learning to recognize the signs of breast cancer may save your life—early diagnosis is key to treatment and recovery. Performing a monthly self-examination is still recommended by many health professionals, as is having a yearly exam performed by your doctor. In addition, the National Cancer Institute suggests keeping an eye out for the following signs:

1. A lump or thickening in or near the breast or in the underarm area
2. A change in the size or shape of the breast
3. Nipple discharge or tenderness
4. An inverted nipple
5. Ridges or pitting on the breast (resembling an orange peel)
6. A change in the look or feel of the breast, areola or nipple (such as temperature, swelling, redness or a scaly feel)

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, see your doctor for a diagnosis and possible treatment. If you are over 40, talk to your doctor about mammograms.

Source: <http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/TIP03465/Breast-Cancer-6-Warning-Signs.html>



## FALL HEALTH SCREENINGS

### On-Site Digital Mammography

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

A routine exam by a health professional, plus monthly self-exams and mammograms at the appropriate intervals for your age, are good ways to check the health of your breasts and to detect problems early. The earlier a problem is detected, the more easily and successfully it can be treated.

Women's Health at Methodist Medical Center offers an invaluable service, On-Site Digital Mammography. They have come to the Illinois Wesleyan Campus for over a decade offering a convenient screening program.

The Service includes the screening and radiology report, which is then sent to your personal physician for evaluation. **A physician's referral is required to participate in this service if you are under the age of 40.**

This service is covered under the IWU health plan; if you are a participant there is no charge.

**For more information, or to make an appointment, please call Wellness at 556-3334.**

**Appointments will be made from 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**