

Healthy Wednesday Club

Newsletter Issue 3



February 20, 2008

It's been an unusual summer with more rain, cloudy days and only a handful of days above 30 degrees. This is the typical weather for a La Nina weather pattern. El Nino heralds dry weather and hot winds and now the ecosystem is looking for balance.

The concern for this sort of weather pattern is that we find even more excuses to stay inside and take it easy instead of getting our healthy doses of vitamin D out in the sunshine. That doesn't mean sunbaking or being exposed to direct sunlight. Being outside is more than enough. Activities like going outside, meeting friends and eating with others can lift our mood and help us feel happier. Our article this week looks at a few simple aspects of happy living.

Don't forget our Healthy Wednesday Workshop this week on the subject of Insulin Resistance – the dreaded Syndrome X. Let's get our facts straight and start some positive Healthy Wednesday habits.

Your body can't afford to miss this presentation!

When: 20th of February, Wednesday, 2008

Where: Level 11, 6- 10 O'Connell Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

Time: 6:15 pm for 6:30 pm Start to 8:00pm

Phone: Office on 02 9231 2133 or Helen on 0419 446 960

BRAIN EXERCISES

A mute person goes into a shop and wants to buy a toothbrush. By imitating the action of brushing his teeth he successfully expresses himself to the shopkeeper and the purchase is done.

Next, a blind man comes into the shop who wants to buy a pair of sunglasses; how does HE indicate what he wants?
Answer next week.

BODY FACTS

You blink your eyes about 20,000 times a day. Your heart beats about 100,000 times a day.

Humans breathe 20 times per minute, more than 10 million times per year and about 700 million times in a lifetime.

FABULOUS FOOD

Try this really simple recipe – Seafood Risotto

1 cup rice
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
425g can chopped tomatoes with herbs
1 fresh red chilli, seeded and chopped
1/3 cup red or white wine (optional)
1 medium red capsicum, seeded and chopped
1 cup frozen peas
350g white fish fillets, cut into small pieces
100g scallops or scallop pieces (optional)
1 bunch English spinach, washed, drained and

chopped

Cook rice following packet directions. Heat oil in pan and cook onion and garlic until softened. Add tomatoes, chilli and wine and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in cooked rice, capsicum, peas, fish and scallops, cover and cook for 5 minutes or until fish and capsicum are cooked. Stir through spinach until wilted and mixed well with all ingredients.

Serves 4.

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HEALTHY WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

Try to do just one, if not all, this Wednesday

Exercise: If you have a chair with arms try to lift yourself off the chair with your arms. Give your bottom a break from being in the chair all day! If your wrists or arms begins to hurt then take it easy and maybe lets your legs help a bit. Do this 10 times just before you do the mind exercise below.

Mind: Take a 5-10 minute pause about every 2 hours and think positively about what has happened in the last 2 hours and what might have been learnt. Review recent information or learning experiences.

Soul: At the end of your 5-10 minute pause spend 1 minute thinking about the sounds within yourself. Close your eyes and hear your breathing, noises from your stomach, the beating of your heart. Contemplate how these noises are similar for every human on the planet regardless of their politics, race or creed.

HAPPY DAYS

Happiness may well be just a grand illusion. The pursuit of happiness is described by some as being the heart of the problem of unhappiness! Happiness is not meant to be a permanent emotional state. It seems that we often get how we feel and what we think into a real tangle. Jonathan Haidt in his book *The Happiness Hypothesis*, gives a wonderful description of our feeling self and thinking self as like an elephant with a rider.

The elephant, our non-conscious body and brain, has evolved to create a rider, our conscious awareness, to guide us through the minefield of life. It is very handy to have this rider who can look beyond the immediate situation. The rider can plan into the future and see the outcome of actions. In Sri Lanka the elephant is used to lift huge trunks of trees. The elephant has no idea that this tree might become a beautiful table. The elephant responds to the rider's instructions because it seems like a good idea at the time. There are little rewards and pleasures that make it seem worthwhile.

It isn't long before the rider feels that they have control of this wild and ancient beast. With just a tap behind the ears the rider can make the elephant turn this way and that, lift logs and all that the elephant requires is a handful of peanuts. But come the day that the elephant wants to do something against the rider's wishes, the whole happy scenario turns upside down. When the elephant wants to go left and the rider wants to go right there isn't a damn thing the rider can do. After all, the rider is just this tiny thing on the elephant's shoulders. The rider has the big brain, but no brawn.

All too often we confuse happiness with control. When the rider is getting everything the way they want then many people think they are happy. If the rider believes that lots of money makes you happy or owning a big house or being better than someone else makes you happy then being happy becomes even more complicated. When the rider flogs the elephant to achieve these beliefs it is a short path to where the elephant rebels. The rider loses control and no-one is happy – neither rider nor elephant.

The elephant, however, can't rationally explain that it is not happy. The elephant simply responds to what is happening here and now. The elephant gets stressed under the pressure, stress damages the immune system and so the elephant gets sick, the elephant gets cranky, tired, dispassionate and, guess what, unhappy!

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So, even though the rider may have a lot of the brainpower, the elephant has been getting on quite well in the world long before the rider came along. It is important to listen to the elephant. Sometimes the elephant is the one that seems to have greater wisdom. When you are tired, it's not about rationally pushing through it because of some deadline, but using all that brainpower to try and understand why and learn what might be done. When you begin to investigate the messages that your body is sending through your health and emotions it can become a fascinating investigation.

The interesting thing is that when we are fascinated, curious and creative we release the sorts of hormones and neurotransmitters that are found when people are happy. The elephants's message may feel like a downer at first, especially when we call it a 'problem', but we are quickly lifted when we look at our problems as messages and opportunities to create a better bond between elephant and rider – to be more at one with yourself. The pursuit of control never made anyone happy.

Richard Hill,
February, 2008

Looking forward to sharing more thoughts, suggestions, news and making a very Healthy Wednesday connection with you!

Take Care,

The Healthy Wednesday Team

You can try to convince us that this is
what you *really* meant to do, but ...



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