

# SUBURBAN LIFE

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KAY SWEENEY

## Heed mom: eat fruits, veggies

**M**om always said, "It's important to eat your fruits and vegetables if you want to be strong and healthy."

While dietary recommendations have changed over the years, this is one bit of advice that shouldn't be ignored. Recent studies have shown that fruits and vegetables contain antioxidant vitamins which aid in preventing degenerative diseases.

Most people do not realize that oxygen, while necessary for human life is also a highly reactive molecule that can cause damage. We are familiar with many kinds of oxidative damage in everyday life. For example, when a fruit is cut and left exposed to the oxygen in the air, the fruit will turn brown.

Also, when fats and oils are exposed to oxygen, they may turn rancid (develop an "off" flavor and odor). Rusting metal is another form of oxidative damage.

### Prevent damage

Oxidative damage can also occur in the cells of our body. In cells, oxygen can produce unstable molecules called free radicals. Free radicals then travel through the cell, disrupting the structure of the DNA and result in cellular damage. Such damage can eventually contribute to degenerative disease.

Cataracts, which are areas of opacity in the lens of the eye, have been linked to oxidative stress and free radical damage. Free radicals also appear to play an important role in the initiation and promotion of carcinogenesis.

Free radicals can damage the cellular DNA and thus cause an increased risk of cancer. There is also increasing evidence that the initiation of atherosclerosis is related to free radical reactions and oxidative modification of low density lipoproteins (LDL).

Apparently, LDL, the bad cholesterol, promotes clogged arteries only when it is oxidized by free radicals. Other degenerative diseases which have been linked to free radical damage include rheumatoid arthritis, diminished immune function, and perhaps the aging process itself.

Antioxidants protect cell components from damage by combining with the free radicals and neutralizing them. Antioxidants that occur naturally in the body or are consumed through the diet may block most of the damage.

### Eat fruits and veggies

The best-known dietary antioxidant nutrients are beta-carotene and vitamins C and E. Beta-carotene is an orange-yellow which gives color to fruits and vegetables such as cantaloupe and carrots. Beta-carotene is also present in green vegetables, but the chlorophyll, green pigment, masks the orange-yellow color.

Thus, any deep orange fruit or vegetable or dark green vegetable is a good source of beta-carotene. In general, the deeper the color, the more beta-carotene is present. The National Cancer Institute recommends that individuals consume one to two servings of a beta-carotene-rich food every day. A serving equals a half-cup of fruit or vegetable.

Vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, is another powerful antioxidant. Like beta-carotene, vitamin C is found in a number of fruits and vegetables. The best sources include citrus fruits, melons, red and green peppers, tomatoes, green leafy vegetables, cabbage and broccoli.

Vitamin C is destroyed by heat, so eat your vitamin C foods raw or with a minimum amount of cooking. Try to consume at least two servings of vitamin C rich fruits and vegetables every day. Note that many of the good sources of vitamin C are also good sources of beta-carotene.

Vitamin E is also called tocopherol. This antioxidant is plentiful in seedoil, green leafy vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds and vegetable oils. Fortified cereals can also contribute a good amount of vitamin E in the diet.

### Pills aren't recommended

Many times people want to know if it would be beneficial to take antioxidant supplements. The American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society believe it is premature to recommend dietary supplements containing antioxidants.

Most of the research studies have been done with foods rather than with supplements containing antioxidants, so perhaps some other as yet unidentified substance in fruits and vegetables may actually be partially responsible for the reduced risk of degenerative diseases.

Besides, by taking a pill instead of eating increased amounts of fruits and vegetables, you will miss the high fiber, low-fat advantages of these foods.

Kay Sweeney, Ph.D., R.D., is a health education instructor for Health Development Network of Hartford General Hospital. Health Development Network offers a class on antioxidants, as well as other wellness programs. Call (810) 477-6100 for more information.



SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Giving it their all: Team Farmington athletes, Kevin Brown, Darren Reynolds, David Reynolds and Antwon Murray, use every ounce of will and spirit during a recent 100-meter race.

## Removing the mask

### Athletes are winners on and off the field



Team Farmington challenges mentally impaired students and graduates in ways that prepare them to face obstacles in life. Coaches hope they succeed during competition, but the real goal is help them become more independent.

BY DIANE GALE  
STAFF WRITER

When coach Todd Lipa speaks to groups about Team Farmington he starts out asking, "What is retarded?"

There are all different kinds of labels, like mentally impaired. But until you start working with, or least watching the athletes on Team Farmington you really don't get a clear picture of who they are.

"It's quite an emotional thing to see, and it's very enlightening," said Mike Todorov, Farmington High School special education teacher and Team Farmington head coach. I can see the disability, but just because they are mentally impaired, they're not necessarily physically impaired."

### Making strides

He also sees the strides they make on the field carried over into the classroom. Todorov and Sue Kissinger, also a special education teacher and Team Farmington head coach, said they build a bridge of friendship with the students.

"People have ideas of what special education kids are like, droolers or what not, and they're not," Todorov said. "They're just regular folks. We use sports as a vehicle to get them strength to do jobs and be as independent as they can."

They're mentally challenged and they want to be treated like everyone else, Lipa added.

Special Olympics got it's start in

1968 by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver. In 1974 a few area parents of special education students asked Kissinger about starting a bowling program for their children. Shortly after track was added.

Five years later, Special Olympics was brought to Farmington High School and about six students were involved in a few sports, like bowling, skiing and track.

"The first time it was more like a field day," Kissinger said. "It's not like that now it's an all year training and constant competition."

In 1985 the school became the headquarters for South Oakland Skills Center, a program serving special education students from Bloomfield Hills, Clarencville, Farmington, Novi, South Lyon, Southfield, Walled Lake, West Bloomfield and Huron Valley.

The curriculum is designed to meet the academic and vocational needs of ninth- and 12th-grade students requiring the support of a self-

contained program. Academic and pre-vocational classes are provided at Farmington High School.

There are between 45 and 50 students involved in the program today. You never know whose going to be in the program, Todorov said. Some of the students were born with disabilities others came to the program after an accident and a closed head injury.

### Removing the mask

"It's like the disability is a mask," Todorov said adding that once you get to know the person the mask begins to fall.

Todorov joined the group in 1985 and Lipa, a Farmington High School football coach and weight room instructor, joined the group the following year.

"You really found that the athletes in Special Olympics worked so hard," Lipa said. "You don't see the gains as quickly in the general sec

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## Composer captures computer sounds

BY DIANE HANSON  
SPECIAL WRITER

With a flick of a switch or a shift of a lever, Marty Liebman can change a string quartet into a 300-piece orchestra. He can capture a crescendo, alter an allegro and freeze the forte in the finale forever on digital tape, cd rom, hard drive or floppy disc.

Mozart would be more than amazed. "I compose generally on the keyboard first, as a rule," explained the 38-year-old composer as he sat in front of the black and white keys. Those keys connect to a computer and an electrical panel that would rival the cockpit of a rocket ship.

Through the magic of computer technology, pressure applied to these keys can result in the melodious strains of nearly any instrument from an alto saxophone to a sitar. The computer generated sounds are amazingly similar to those produced by the actual instrument.

"To me there's a big difference," he said. "Even with great samples, to me there are just certain things about the way the instrument sounds; the way you make the instrument, the phrasing, the articulations, the different things a live player can do just make it sound that much more alive. Given enough time and enough memory in your computer, you might be able to simulate most of that but, to me, it's still not the same as a live player."

For his most recent movie score, "One Room Castle," a fictional story concerning the Holocaust, Liebman produced the musical sample



SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Composing with a computer: Marty Liebman sits in front of a machine that can recreate the sounds of an entire orchestra.

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