

MEDICAL BRIEFS

Run, don't walk

Oakland Physical Therapy will present "Getting Ready To Run," a seminar for all individuals interested in starting a running or walking program, at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 2 at Providence Medical Center, 47601 Grand River Ave. (near Beck Road), Suite B124, Novi.

Objectives: Identify normal and abnormal biomechanics of running, identify common running injuries, learn proper stretching techniques. The format will include a lecture, discussion and demonstration. Active group participation is encouraged, so please dress comfortably.

There is no charge, but space is limited. Please RSVP by phone if you plan to attend. Call (248) 380-3550.

Prostate cancer screening

If you think prostate cancer is a man's disease, you're right. Half right. Prostate cancer not only affects the grandfather, father, husband and son, but the whole family — emotionally, financially and physically.

St. Mary Hospital in Livonia will offer a Prostate Cancer Screening Day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, March 4 in the St. Mary Hospital Pavilion, 14555 Levan Road.

The prostate screening is free and provides a prostate exam by a physician, blood test to measure the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) level, and educational material.

Registration is requested. Call (734) 655-8940 or toll free 1-800-494-1650. The program is cosponsored by the Radiation Oncology and Community Outreach Departments at St. Mary Hospital.

Adult grief support

Community Hospice & Home Care Services, Inc. introduces "Living the Journey," a six-week adult grief support series from 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesdays, Feb. 22-March 28. The series provides education regarding the physical, emotional and social effects of grief.

The series is held at Community Hospice & Home Care Services, 32932 Warren Road (corner of Veno), Westland. Call (313) 522-4244 to register.

The message? Massage!

Schoolcraft College Continuing Education Services is offering "Massage for Better Health 7-10 p.m. Monday, March 13. The course will include basic principles and techniques of massage and acupressure. Professional demonstration followed by hands-on practice on head, neck, shoulders, hands and feet.

"The class is a learning experience and lots of fun for individuals and couples, including friends," said instructor Dan Butts.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Cost is \$39 and \$31.20 for seniors. For more information call Continuing Education Services at (734) 462-4443.

We want your health news

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Friday action provides numerous venues for you to offer newsworthy information including Medical Database (opening calendar events), Medical Newscasters (appointments/new hires in the medical field), and Medical Briefs (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, companies).

We also welcome newsworthy ideas for health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

CALL US:
(734) 953-2123

IN WRITE US:
Observer & Executive Newspapers
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FLAXSEED

A whole lot of nutrition comes in small package

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Want to increase your intake of disease-fighting omega-3 fatty acids but don't like the taste of fish? Consider adding flaxseed to your diet. These tiny, smooth, flat seeds - harvested from a blue-flower crop on the prairies of Canada - pack a whollop of nutritional muscle when it comes to essential fatty acids, vitamins and minerals, and fiber.

Omega-3 is a "good" fat and should play an important role in any heart-healthy diet. Dietary surveys and animal studies indicate omega-3, a source of alpha-linolenic acid, may reduce the risk of blood-clotting.

What they're finding is that omega-3 plays a role in platelet aggregation. It makes platelets less sticky," said Caroline Mandel, a dietitian with the University of Michigan's Preventive Cardiology Heart Care Program. "American think all fat is bad for their heart. I'm dispelling that myth."

Commercial food companies are now using flaxseed, which has a pleasant nutty flavor, in everything from yeast breads, to bagels and cookie mixes. But today's bakers have discovered nothing new: People have eaten flaxseed since ancient times.

The Babylonians cultivated flaxseed as early as 3,000 B.C., and in 650 B.C. Hippocrates used it for the relief of intestinal discomfort. The 8th century king Charlemagne considered flaxseed so important for the health of his subjects that he passed laws governing its consumption.

Good Medicine

Flaxseed, which contains both soluble and insoluble fiber, appears to act as a protector against chronic illnesses like cardiovascular disease and cancer. Consider the following study results.

According to a report from the University of Toronto, total cholesterol levels dropped 9 percent and LDL (the "bad" cholesterol) decreased 18 percent when a group of nine healthy women ate 50 grams of milled flaxseed a day for four weeks (as flour or cooked into bread) along with their regular diets.

The American National Cancer Institute has singled out flaxseed as one of six foods to study for its potential cancer-fighting ability. It is the richest source of lignans, a type of phytoestrogen. Phytoestrogens are compounds that may protect against cancer, particularly hormone-sensitive cancers such as those of the breast and prostate.

More than half the fat in flaxseed is of the essential omega-3 fatty acid type. New research suggests that alpha-linolenic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid abundant in flaxseed, offers protection against both coronary heart disease and stroke. Omega-3s also have been shown to protect against hypertension and inflammatory and autoimmune disorders.

Eating 50 grams of flaxseed per day (baked into muffins) helped increase the frequency of bowel movements and the number of consecutive days with bowel movements in a group of older Canadian adults.

Fatty Acids and fiber

"I recommend it to people who are trying to achieve a healthier diet because the frequency of bowel movements and the number of consecutive days with bowel movements in a group of older Canadian adults."

Mandel prefers to sprinkle her flaxseed on cereal. "I think it ups the flavor and texture of a breakfast cereal."

American diets are high in omega-6 fatty acids, derived from other plants seeds like corn, sunflower and peanuts. Nutritionists recommend replacing some omega-6 fatty acids with omega-3 fatty acids. Flaxseed contains roughly 75 percent omega-3 fatty acids.

Flaxseed is also an excellent source of dietary fiber. The lower cancer rate of people living in Asia, Africa and eastern Europe - particularly hormone-dependent cancers such as cancer of the breast, endometrium and prostate - may be due in part to their high-fiber diet, which helps lower blood levels of lipids and some hormones.

Conversely, the low-fiber, high-fat diet typical of Western populations tends to raise blood estrogen levels, which may contribute to cancer development by stimulating tumor cell growth.

Population studies of diet and disease risk also suggest an anticancer role for lignans and other phytoestrogens. Populations with high intakes of phytoestrogens - such as the Japanese and Chinese, who typically consume a low-fat, high-fiber diet rich in isoflavonoids from soybeans and lignans from vegetables and grains - have lower incidence and mortality rates of breast, endometrial and prostate cancers.

Dr. Errol Erlanson, a vascular surgeon and medical director of the Comprehensive Wellness Program at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, cautions against using omega-3 supplements. "I think there's much evidence that omega-3, as well as many components of nutrition, works best in the natural matrix form."

In other words, omega-3 obtained through flaxseed or fish is more nutritionally balanced and better absorbed. In addition, Erlanson said excessive use of omega-3 supplements may cause bleeding problems. Their use should be limited to people with chronic inflammatory arthritis or clearly elevated low-density cholesterol - and then only under the direction of a physician.

Flaxseed has one tiny drawback when first introduced into a diet: the blunts. "It's high in fiber. Until your intestinal tract gets used to it, you might want to start with less," said Cox. Take some Benne with it.

Source: Flaxseed Council of Canada



Food sources of omega-3 fatty acids

Food	Serving Size	Omega-3 grams
PLANT FOODS		
<i>Oils</i>		
Flax seed oil	1 Tbsp.	6.6
Canola oil	1 Tbsp.	1.6
Walnut oil	1 Tbsp.	1.5
Soy oil	1 Tbsp.	1.0
<i>Nuts and seeds</i>		
Flax seeds, ground	2 Tbsp.	3.2
Walnuts (English)	2 Tbsp.	1.0
Sesame seeds	2 Tbsp.	0.07
Almonds	2 Tbsp.	0.06
<i>Vegetables, fruits and legumes</i>		
Soybeans, cooked	1 cup	1.1
Tofu, firm	1/2 cup	0.7
Tofu, medium	1/2 cup	0.4
Soy milk	1 cup	0.4
Berries	1 cup	0.18
Peas	1/2 cup	0.16
Broccoli, kale, Chinese greens and salad greens	1 cup, raw	0.1
	1/2 cup, cooked	0.1
Legumes	1/2 cup	0.05
Other fruits and veggies	1 cup	0.05
<i>Grains</i>		
Oat germ	2 Tbsp.	0.2
Wheat germ	2 Tbsp.	0.1
ANIMAL FOODS (for comparison)		
<i>Meat and dairy</i>		
Meat, poultry	3 1/2 oz.	0.2
Dairy products	1 cup milk	
	1 oz. cheese	0.1
<i>Fish</i>		
Fatty fish - mackerel, herring, salmon, sturgeon, bluefin or Albacore tuna, lake whitefish, sardines, bluefish	3 1/2 oz.	1.0-2.5
Medium fat fish - turbot, oysters, trout, rockfish, mussels	3 1/2 oz.	0.5-0.8
Low fat fish - halibut, squid, perch, shrimp, crab, haddock, cod, flounder, scallops, lobster, clams, swordfish, smelt, sole, orange roughy	3 1/2 oz.	0.1-0.4

Source: Flax Council of Canada

Orange bran flax muffins

- 1 1/2 cups oat bran
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup flaxseed*
- 1 cup natural bran
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1/2 Tsp. salt
- 2 whole oranges (washed, quartered and seeded)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 2 eggs
- 1 Tsp. baking soda
- 1 1/2 cup raisins (may substitute chocolate chips)

In a large bowl, combine oat bran, flour, flaxseed, bran, baking powder and salt. Set aside. In a blender or food processor, combine oranges, brown sugar, buttermilk, oil, eggs and baking soda. Blend well. Pour orange mixture into dry ingredients. Mix until well blended. Stir in raisins. Fill paper-lined muffin tins almost to the top. Bake in 375-degree oven 18-20 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center of muffin comes out clean. Cool in tins 5 minutes before removing to cooling rack. Yield: 18 muffins.

* Flaxseed may also be ground. Measure first, then grind or mill. Yield: 18 muffins

Serving Size: 1 muffin
Single serving: 276 calories; 6.1g protein; 44.5g carbohydrate; 5.7g fibre; 11.5g fat (Polyunsaturated - 5.5g, Monounsaturated - 4.0g, Saturated - 1.4g, Cholesterol - 23.6mg; 289mg Sodium; 439mg Potassium; 54mg Folate.

