

Tricking The Scale Or Taxing The Body?

BY LORETTA SORENSEN
P&D Correspondent

Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is a consumer advocacy organization which conducts innovative research and advocacy programs in health and nutrition, and provides consumers with current, useful information about their health and well-being.

Their research on artificial sweeteners - which millions of us are currently consuming in an effort to lose or maintain weight - reveals some interesting facts about sugar alternatives.

Acesulfame-potassium (ace-k) is some 200 times sweeter than sugar and is used to sweeten some diet sodas. It's sometimes combined with sucralose (high-fructose corn syrup and sugar). Sweet One is an ace-k brand name. Research conducted in the 1970s suggested ace-k could cause cancer.

Aspartame is also approximately 200 times sweeter than sugar and widely used in low- and zero-calorie foods. Its brand name is NutraSweet. Some independent animal research studies have linked aspartame to lymphomas, leukemias, kidney and other cancers. Other studies suggest this artificial sweetener could cause headaches or other neurological symptoms in a small number of people.

Monk fruit is used in some of today's "sugar-free" foods. It's a small green berry, the fruit of an herbaceous perennial vine native to southern China and northern Thailand. Monk fruit, which is a natural plant, is said to be packed with healthy antioxidants and vitamins. At www.monkfruit.org, experts say the berry's "amazing sweetness comes from unique, naturally occurring antioxidants which have a delicious sweet taste, but without the calories of sugar."

So why is monk fruit just

now coming to the market? Officials say it's previously been grown in mountainous regions in private gardens. In recent years, New Zealand's BioVittoria established a grower network to produce the fruit on a larger scale.

Monk fruit contains super-sweet chemicals called mogrosides. It is combined with a small amount of sugar, molasses and erythritol to produce brand name Nectresse. While it seems a harmless, natural product, monk fruit research is far from being thorough or conclusive.

Neotame, a "chemical cousin" of aspartame, is about 40 times sweeter than sugar and deemed relatively safe for consumers. It's not often found in foods because lacks the taste appeal of other artificial sweeteners.

Did you know saccharin was discovered in 1878? It's more than 300 times sweeter than sugar, but animal testing links it to cancer of the bladder, uterus, ovaries and other organs. In humans, saccharin has been associated with higher cancer risk. Because of its bitter after-taste, saccharin's use in low-calorie foods has faded significantly.

You may have heard of sugar alcohols, which include erythritol, isomalt, lactitol, mannitol, sorbitol, xylitol and others. They have about half as many calories as sugar (erythritol has about one-twentieth the calories). Other than gastrointestinal distress caused by overconsumption, these are considered safe alternatives to sugar.

Here's a Nectresse (monk fruit) recipe found at www.nectresse.com/recipes:

- 1 1/2 c hot skim milk
- 1 T cocoa
- 1 T semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 Nectresse packets
- 1/8 tsp cinnamon

Stir all ingredients together until chips melt. Makes 2 servings, 120 calories, 18 carbs per serving.

Jennifer Poppen Named Interim CEO

Jennifer Poppen has been named the interim CEO at Avera Creighton Hospital in Creighton, Neb.

Poppen is a native of Madison and a graduate of the University of South Dakota. She received her Masters of Health Administration from the University of Iowa, Iowa City.

Poppen has been serving as an administrative fellow at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital since July 2013. Prior to that, she had served two other administrative internships with the Mayo Clinic Health System in Owatonna, Minn. and Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center in Sioux Falls.

During her time at Avera Sacred Heart, Poppen has served several roles including interim Director of Organizational Excellence. That position enabled her to focus her leadership abilities on patient and resident satisfaction as well as strategic planning. She began her duties in Creighton Feb. 8.

"We would all like to thank outgoing CEO Mark Schulte for his three years of service as Avera Creighton's CEO," said Russ Diedrichsen, Creighton Advisory Council Chair and ASHH board member. "Mark and his family have found a new opportunity in Sturgis and we wish them all the best. "Recruitment of a permanent CEO has been initiated, and as candidates are identified, the Avera Creighton Hospital Advisory Council will be involved with the final selection," Diedrichsen continued.

SHIINE Presentation Set For Feb. 20

PIERRE — Senior Health Information and Insurance Education (SHIINE) will host a free informational Medicare presentation on Thursday, Feb. 20, at the Yankton Area Senior Center (The Center), 900 Whiting Drive, Yankton, beginning at 10:30 a.m.

The presentation includes an overview of basic Medicare, the differences between Parts A, B, C and D, how and when to apply for coverage, covered services, Medigap, Medicare Advantage plans, and who may be eligible for extra help with prescription drug costs. The presentation is free and open to the public.

Administered by the S.D. Department of Social Services, SHIINE is a federally-funded program that advocates for, educates and assists consumers with Medicare and related health information, to allow consumers to make timely and informed decisions and access necessary resources. The program is free.

For more information on SHIINE or the presentation, contact SHIINE Regional Coordinator Tom Hoy, at 1-800-536-8197 or locally, 333-3314 or visit www.shiine.net.

Delta Dental Smile Mobile Set To Return

Lack of access to oral health care is a major problem for many South Dakota children, including here in Yankton. The Delta Dental Smile Mobile program provides comprehensive oral health care to children ages 0-21. If your child has not seen a dentist in two years, the recommended dental care is too costly or you do not have a dentist, the Smile Mobile dental office will be offering free dental care.

Preregistration is required to participate. Registration forms can be obtained at the Contact Center, County Health Nurse, Clothing Closet, Head Start, and United Way & Volunteer Services. Please return completed registration forms to United Way & Volunteer Services' at 610 W 23rd Street, Suite 11, Yankton, by March 7 for scheduling purposes.

Call 605-665-6766 for more information.

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Don't Be A Distracted Pedestrian

BY MICHAEL ROIZEN, M.D.,
AND MEHMET OZ, M.D.
King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Two of our favorite cartoons: One depicts a man walking across the street, texting. As he passes a "Men at Work" sign, he steps right into an open manhole. The caption below reads, "Natural selection at work." The other shows an illustration of an anthropological chart. They usually depict man's evolution into an upright, walking being. But the caption on this one, instead of saying "The Ascent of Man," reads "The Descent of Man," and the last image is of a hunched-over human form, texting.

According to some reports, in the past seven years, the number of pedestrians who have gotten hit and landed in the emergency room while crossing the street because of "distracted walking" has quadrupled. And some estimates put the actual number at more than twice that, because many incidents go unreported. We do know that there's been a spike in the number of pedestrian fatalities.

Now, we could suggest that you pay more attention while you cross the street, but you have to take responsibility for keeping your chin up and being alert. What we can do point out that the neck-bent, shoulders-slumped posture that goes along with texting and walking is a trigger for headaches, shallow breathing, and shoulder and neck pain. What's more, your entire balance system is compromised, and you're likely to injure yourself in a stumble. So the next time you start to walk and text, stop. Just pull over, look up and find a place where it's safe for everyone to communicate.

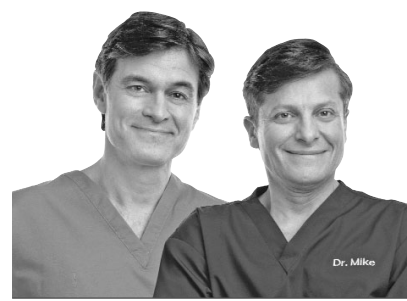
WARDING OFF JUNK FOOD DEMONS IN SCHOOL

By the time he graduated from Hogwarts, Harry Potter had battled a never-ending array of evil forces. But those confrontations are nothing compared with the evil foods that kids in elementary, middle and high schools have to deal with day in and day out.

Food and beverage companies spent \$149 million on in-school marketing campaigns in 2009. Three years later, 51 percent of high schools had company-sponsored vending machines (at least now the Affordable Care Act will make them post nutritional info). And almost 66 percent of elementary schools now offer kids coupons for life-shortening, brain-fogging fast-food discounts. Even worse, 19 percent of high schools actually serve branded fast food in their cafeteria daily.

If you're a parent who's vigilant about protecting your children from the hazards of fast food, you still can't prevent them from being bombarded with "Eat this junk now!" messages 200 days a year! So how can you shield your kids from the food menace at their school?

Lobby school administrators (ask them to act as leaders) for changes. Work to create other avenues for fundraising, like a family sports day in conjunction with sport shoe manufacturers (hey, it's worth a phone call). And empower your kids to make smart choices. One study found that kids who pay cash for meals order fewer sweets, more healthy foods and consume 10



OZ AND ROIZEN

Dr. Mehmet Oz and Dr. Michael Roizen

percent fewer calories than kids who don't need to do the math. So keep talking to them about making healthy choices, and don't give up the fight to make school a place of learning and good health!

HOW TO BECOME THE HEALTH INFLUENCER AT HOME

They say that opposites attract, but if you scan a newspaper's photos of couples celebrating silver and golden anniversaries, you'd swear the secret to a long and happy marriage is to wed someone who looks just like you. That's because shared habits and experiences shape facial expressions, wrinkles and folds, creating similarities between a husband and wife that weren't there when they were younger.

But superficial worry lines aren't all that can develop as years go by. Research shows that some couples become similarly UNhealthy: If one person in a couple is obese, there's a 37 percent chance the other will become obese too. And if one person has Type 2 diabetes, then the other has a 26 percent increased risk of developing it.

But what we noticed about these studies was that many more of you do not become obese or develop diabetes when your partner does. And we're interested in supporting YOU to become "The Influencer" in your house by making better health fun — even seductive.

1. Make a walking date: Take a daily stroll for 10 days running (it'll set the habit). Then get his and hers pedometers; set goals for the next four months, heading for 10,000 steps a day.

2. Together, start your own cooking show — "Chopped" meets "Your Kitchen Makeover." What's chopped? Anything with added sugar or syrup and trans fats, any grain that's not 100 percent whole, and red meat. Your kitchen makeover? A week's menu featuring ingredients and dishes you've never tried before.

3. Remember — share hugs and laughter! Focus on the younger ReaAge, livelier sexual relationship and healthier life you want for you both!

NOT A DRY EYE IN THE HOUSE

When Walt Disney decided to follow the original story line in "Bambi" and keep the scene in which the fawn's mother is killed by a hunter, he took a lot of heat for it, reportedly even from his daughter. But the result was a movie classic, and whenever it's shown, there's not a dry eye in the house.

But watching "Bambi" won't help the 40 million North Americans who struggle with burning, itchy, sensitive eyes. This irritation is caused by a lack of or

poor-quality tears. Tears are made up of water, oil and mucus. Water creates the tears. Oil prevents evaporation. The mucous layer spreads tears across the eye. If there's not enough oil or mucus, you get what's called dry eye. Not enough water? Then you have keratoconjunctivitis sicca — or dry eye syndrome.

Dry eye can be triggered by certain medications, medical conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes, eyelid inflammation, blockage of the oil-producing glands, pollution or even LASIK surgery.

Preservative-free artificial tears can ease the discomfort. But chronic dry eye can lead to corneal damage. Cyclosporine, an anti-inflammatory, is the only available prescription medicine. It increases tear production, but takes up to six months, used twice daily, to get results. Other ways to ease discomfort include keeping indoor humidity above 30 percent, wearing sunglasses and making sure your diet includes plenty of omega-3 fats from salmon, walnuts and avocados. And consider taking 900 IU of DHA omega-3 supplements daily; they can ease inflammation in your tear glands to help relieve dryness.

IN THE LONG RUN, OVERDOING IT DOESN'T DO IT

NASCAR driving legend Dale Earnhardt once said, "You win some, lose some and wreck some." He was talking about racing cars, but he could just as well have been referring to the latest craze for super-extreme workouts. You know the ones. The folks in the testimonials always say, "The first time I tried it, I thought I would die!" as if that were a virtue.

Well, they're closer to the truth than they know. Seems these body-bashing routines destroy muscles and threaten kidney health. They can trigger a condition called rhabdomyolysis — the breakdown of muscle cells that causes the release of a protein, myoglobin, into your bloodstream. Your kidneys aren't equipped to process it, and they shut down. Muscles are left depleted and dying. You can cause long-term damage to joints and tendons too.

And the "fitness" companies know it! One even created cartoon characters called Uncle Rhabdo and Pukie the Clown to make light of the knock-you-down dangers of their exercises.

We'd like to see you keep your ReaAge younger throughout your life, like 90-plus Olga Kotelko, who still competes in track and field. As she says, "It's not how old we are; it's how we get old." So if you want to stay fit for the long run, exercise regularly, but not extremely: 30-60 minutes of aerobics daily, plus two to three 30-minute strength-building sessions a week. Olga's muscles have been closely studied; they haven't seen the usual breakdown that happens with age, and yours don't have to either.

Mehmet Oz, M.D. is host of "The Dr. Oz Show," and Mike Roizen, M.D. is Chief Wellness Officer and Chair of Wellness Institute at Cleveland Clinic. To live your healthiest, tune into "The Dr. Oz Show" or visit www.sharecare.com.

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Avera Receives Grant To Expand Rural Telemedicine

SIoux FALLS — Through a federal grant awarded to Avera Health, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska are among 25 states to benefit from investments in rural telecommunications to expand access to education, create jobs and improve access to health care.

Avera Health has received a \$294,586 grant to purchase equipment and software to expand and improve its telemedicine network. Participating clinics and hospitals will receive equipment such as telephonic stethoscopes, LifePak15 Defibrillators, Sony Handicams, video laryngoscopes and Polycom video-conferencing units. The technology will give health providers and patients real-time, face-to-face consultations with specialized physicians at hub locations in Sioux Falls and Pierre, S.D., and Marshall, Minn. The system will double as an instructional medium so rural health care providers can receive medical education and mentoring.

"Avera pioneered telehealth technology in South Dakota starting in early 1990s. Continued innovation, development, and support from private and federal funds has resulted in Avera's telehealth program, called Avera eCARE(tm)," said John T. Porter, President and CEO of

Avera Health. "Avera is now a national leader in leveraging specialty care through interactive video technology to serve a rural population."

Through programs including eConsult, eEmergency, eICU and ePharmacy, Avera eCARE:

- Has touched 169,000 patients;
- Serves 166 hospitals and clinics;
- Impacts 1,184 providers;
- Covers 545,000 square miles;
- Has saved \$122 million in health care costs.

Sites will receive equipment for eConsult and/or eEmergency depending on their individual needs. Several sites will use eConsult equipment specifically for nephrology consults for dialysis and kidney disease care.

eConsult is similar to any other physician-patient interaction. Instead of a face-to-face visit, it involves the use of interactive video and computer technology. Equipment often is set up in exam rooms so that visits mirror a typical patient-physician encounter as closely as possible. A nurse, therapist or midlevel provider at the remote site assists the specialist in assessing the patient.

Through monitors at both locations, the physician can see and hear the patient, and the patient can hear and see the physician.

Through eEmergency, participating rural locations can push a button and immediately be connected to an emergency medicine specialist at the Avera eCARE site in Sioux Falls, S.D. Specialists provide consults in critical situations such as life-threatening injuries, stroke or heart attack.

The announcement of nearly \$16 million in USDA grants for distance learning and telemedicine services helps to support President Obama's ConnectED initiative. In June 2013, President Obama announced an effort to connect 99 percent of America's students to high-speed Internet over the next five years. Since 2009, USDA has provided support for more than 3,300 educational institutions receiving distance learning services to help rural children get an education that is as good as that of their peers in cities.

The USDA's Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant program provides funding to rural hospitals, clinics, schools and libraries for equipment and technical assistance for telemedicine and distance learning. Grant recipients

must demonstrate that they serve rural

America, prove there is an economic need and provide at least 15 percent in matching funds.

Since 2009, USDA has invested almost \$150 million in the Distance Learning and Telemedicine program. Avera Health has received USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine funding every year since 2005.

The grants through Avera will go to 27 sites that are described as "exceptionally rural," as well five other sites described as mid-rural and rural. Some sites already have connections with Avera eCARE, and others are new eCARE sites, thus expanding Avera's eCARE network.

Sites in South Dakota include Mitchell, Chamberlain, Flandreau, Freeman, Gettysburg, Gregory, Highmore, Madison, Yankton, Milbank, Miller, Fort Pierre, Parkston, Pierre, Platte, Sisseton, Kennebec and Bowdle. Minnesota sites include Appleton, Ivanhoe, Madelia, Madison, Hendricks, Pipestone, Ortonville, Sleepy Eye and Tyler. Nebraska sites are O'Neill and Creighton, and Iowa sites include Estherville, Sibley and Rock Valley.

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