



## Volume 19, Number 1 2004

The Lipid Clinic is located in Suite 330, 3rd floor of the Physicians' Pavilion at OHSU. To make Lipid Clinic appointments, call: (503) 494 - 1794 (new patient) or (503) 494 - 1775 (follow-up).

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### In This Issue

- *Obesity and Cancer Risk: Is There a Link?*
- *A New Way to Save Time in the Kitchen*
- *Should You Be Ordering Those Low-Carb Menu Items?*

### Could Those Extra Pounds Be Increasing Your Cancer Risk?

We already know that those unwanted pounds are hard on the self-esteem. And most of us are aware that they increase our chances of diabetes, heart disease and hypertension, to name a few. But you may be surprised that obesity is also linked to higher rates of breast cancer, colon cancer, esophageal cancer, and several other forms of cancer.

A recent study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* evaluated the influence of excess body weight on

risk of death from cancer. They studied a group of 900,000 U.S. adults who were cancer-free at the time of enrollment. They followed the subjects for the next 16 years, during which there were over 57,000 deaths from cancer. Their findings? The heaviest members of this group (those with a body mass index {BMI} of at least 40) had death rates from *all cancers* that were 52% higher for men, and 62% higher for women than the rates for normal weight individuals. FYI: BMI is a quick estimate of obesity, derived at by dividing weight (kg) over height (m<sup>2</sup>). Generally, a desirable body weight corresponds to a BMI of 22.5).

Looking at specific types of cancer, BMI was significantly associated with higher death rates due to:

- cancer of the esophagus, colon and rectum, liver, gallbladder, pancreas and kidney
- non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and multiple myeloma

In addition, risk significantly increased with higher BMI values for the following types of cancer deaths:

- Men: stomach and prostate
- Women: breast, uterus, cervix and ovaries

Based on these data, the American Cancer Society estimates that overweight/obesity could account for 14% of cancer deaths in men and as many as 20% in women. In other words, 90,000 cancer deaths could be prevented each year in the U.S. if both men and women could maintain a normal body weight.

So how exactly does obesity increase cancer risk? We don't know for sure, but here is one theory—damage to DNA can trigger cancer by turning off normal cell regulation. In order to grow, it must be stimulated. Here is where obesity comes into play. Obesity raises levels of hormones like insulin and estrogen, which in turn stimulate cell growth.

### What Do We Think?

Studies like this give us more reason to control our waistlines. However, maintaining a normal body weight is often easier said than done. What we know for sure is that two components must be in place to achieve permanent weight loss: physical activity (at least 30 minutes every day) and reduced calorie intake (from a low-fat, high-fiber diet). Permanent lifestyle change must occur in order to succeed; crash diets that get the weight off quickly rarely produce long-term results. Quick weight loss almost always means quick weight regain, usually within six months to a year.

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*Nutrition Action* October 2003



## Want to Spend Less Time in the Kitchen? Join a Cooking Club!

I've been reading about these for years, and finally decided to start one of my own. There are many different types of cooking clubs; I was most interested in finding a group of people to cook large batches of a recipe, put them in freezable, reusable containers and exchange them with each other on a regular basis. My primary goals were to eat out less and to rely on fewer convenience products. While I love to cook, I don't always have lots of time to prepare healthy, homemade meals.

I gathered a group of five friends, including myself, all mothers of young children who don't have a lot of extra time to spend in the kitchen. We decided to do all the cooking at home and meet at someone's house to exchange meals (about once a month). We agreed that our meals would be low in fat, and of course, they would have to be kid-friendly—nothing too spicy or fishy. To make things convenient, we are using disposable (but reusable) bakeware and storage containers. Hint: A personal favorite is the Glad® disposable bake ware—it can go from freezer to oven to dishwasher, and back again. And, it comes with a convenient plastic lid.

To our delight, it has gone much better than expected. Prepared for a day of sweating over a hot stove with screaming kids hovering around, we have all been pleasantly surprised that it only takes about 1½ hours to prepare all those meals! We also thought it would be difficult to find recipes that freeze well. Again, we were wrong. Lots of recipes freeze great, and it's been fun searching our recipe files, old cookbooks, and the internet for new ideas. There were also some concerns about food preferences—would we all like the same foods? This hasn't been a problem either. It's so much fun eating food that someone else has prepared, and trying a recipe that you otherwise might not have tried. Best of all, it's great knowing that by spending only an hour or so in the kitchen, you end up with a freezer full of entrees that would have taken many hours to shop for and prepare!

You might be wondering what type of recipes we prepare. Our group has found Cooking Light® recipes to be quite popular; we also modify some old family favorites, and use recipes from our very own "New American Diet Cookbook". Here are a few winners so far: Turkey Tetrazzini, Beef Stroganoff, Chicken Enchiladas, Chicken Pot Pie, Three Sisters Chili, Macaroni and Cheese (low-fat, of course) and Em's Black Bean Soup.

If you find yourself struggling to put a decent meal on the table every night, a cooking club might be just what you need!



## Cooking Tip of the Month

### *Frozen Chopped Fresh Basil, Parsley & Garlic*

Do you get tired of chopping fresh basil? Find that you have too much leftover parsley to justify buying the whole bunch? So do we! Fortunately, we have discovered these new convenient products at our local Trader Joe's stores--frozen chopped parsley, basil and garlic. They are packaged in teaspoon-sized frozen squares, with 20 cubes to a pack. They don't need to be defrosted before use; in fact, they are easier to "pop out" if completely frozen.

Our staff members have used them in a variety of recipes, from spaghetti sauce and soups to casseroles and pasta dishes. They have definitely helped us save time, and possibly money (by having less waste) in our kitchens!

## New Product Review

### *Mountain High European Delight Yogurt*

This is a recent discovery at the local supermarket. Why would we get excited about yogurt, when new brands and flavors hit the shelves on a regular basis? We like its smaller size (4 oz), delicious flavors (how does Swiss Cream & Raspberries sound?) and convenient packaging (they come in 4-packs). Best of all, they're low in fat (2 grams or less) and calories (only about 100 calories).

### *Cabot 50% and 75% Light Cheddar Cheese*

We have been using these cheeses for some time now. Available in the following:

- Light Cheddar Cheese – 50% Reduced Fat
- Light Cheddar Cheese – 75% Reduced Fat
- Jalapeno Light Cheddar Cheese – 50% Reduced Fat
- Sliced Light Cheddar Cheese – 50% Reduced Fat

They can be found at Trader Joe's, Nature's and Haggen grocery stores in the Portland, Oregon area. They're usually "hidden" in the gourmet cheese section. They work great in cooking, which we all know can be a problem with reduced fat cheeses. In our opinion, Cabot® has some of the best-tasting reduced fat cheeses around.



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## Subway Atkins®-Friendly Wraps

We can hardly make it through a day without seeing or hearing about products marketed towards the “low-carb dieters.” Many restaurants have also started promoting their own low-carb menu items. Even if you’re not jumping on the low-carb bandwagon, you’re probably a little curious what all the hype is about. Now Subway, a leader in the healthier fast-food industry, is offering two new “Atkins®-Friendly Wraps”—your choice of Chicken Bacon Ranch or Turkey Bacon Melt. With less than 11 grams “net carbs” they must be a dieter’s dream, right? Wrong! Let’s look a little more closely at what you’re eating when you order an Atkins special.

First, we must understand what they mean by “net carbs”. Simply put, it is total carbohydrates minus fiber. The tortilla used in these wraps is made with wheat gluten, cornstarch, oat, sesame flour and soy protein, so it does contain more fiber than the other breads on the menu. We have no problem with the tortilla. The trouble starts with the meats, cheeses and sauces added to the wraps. The Chicken Bacon Ranch contains 480 Calories, 27 grams fat and 9 grams (artery-clogging) saturated fat. The Turkey Bacon Melt is not much better with 430 Calories, 25 grams fat, and 9 grams saturated fat. Compare this to the sandwiches containing 6 grams of fat or less. For example, the 6” Turkey Breast Sandwich on wheat bread contains 280 calories, 4.5 grams fat and only 1.5 grams saturated fat. Even the 6” Turkey Breast and Ham Sandwich contains 290 calories, 5 grams fat and only 1.5 grams saturated fat as well. So does it make sense to eat all of that fat from those Atkins sandwiches? The only benefit we see from choosing one of those artery-clogging sandwiches is the added fiber from the tortilla.

Other fast food chains such as Burger King also offer low-carb options. Not only are their sandwiches high in calories without the bun (230-810 kcals), they are also high in total fat (17-65 gm) and saturated fat (3.5-26 gm). Although McDonald’s is not promoting low-carb items, they still offer the public ways to reduce their daily carb intake with their menu ideas. This trend appears to be here to stay for awhile.

**Bottom Line:** When eating out, use common sense when making your selections. Keep in mind that when it comes to weight loss, reducing your calorie intake is the ultimate goal. Before you “shun the bun”, remember that some of the healthiest populations of the world consume diets high in complex carbohydrates. We fear that some serious health consequences may be on the horizon if the wrong individuals consume these atherogenic diets. We’re already seeing the effects in our Lipid Clinic. (The next article is a letter written to our patients in response to the high cholesterol and triglyceride values we’re seeing in many patients who consume Atkins-type diets).

## Letter To Our Lipid Clinic Patients

Obesity is an ever-increasing problem in our society. People are so desperate to lose weight they will even try unproven diet plans. This could include the many low carbohydrate diet plans, particularly the Atkins Diet, the South Beach Diet and the LA Weight Loss Center Program. Diets that reduce energy intake or restrict food intake to high protein, high fat foods usually produce weight loss.

We would caution our patients that the low carbohydrate diets involve high consumption of meat, eggs, cheese, butter, heavy cream, sausage and bacon, foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol that are known to elevate blood cholesterol levels, cause coronary heart attacks and strokes, and increase the risk of cancer. Other harmful effects may include kidney stones, gout, possible bone loss, and increased risk of loss of kidney function in diabetic patients.

The safest, proven strategies for weight loss include diets low in fat, low in sugar and high in fiber, which are very similar to the dietary program you may already be following, plus increased daily exercise. Around the world, the healthiest populations (lowest rates of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease) tend to consume diets that are the exact opposite of an Atkins-style diet. In your best interests, we recommend that you not initiate diets like the Atkins or South Beach Diet without consultation with us.

We have already seen some harmful effects of such diets in our patients and are very concerned about people who follow them for any period of time. These low carbohydrate diets have not been studied for longer than a year, and their long-term safety is in question. Despite the appealing effects on body weight, they have serious implications for the development of hyperlipidemia, coronary heart disease, stroke and other diseases.

Yours sincerely,

William E. Connor, M.D.

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# Party Carrot Cake

*Here is a recipe that has stood the test of time! It came about in 1979, when Martha wanted carrot cake for her wedding cake. After sampling carrot cake at several bakeries, she decided that her own recipe was the best. So Sonja made this carrot cake for her, otherwise known as "Martha's Wedding Cake". It has since been made at other weddings, bridal showers and farewell parties. We hope you like it, too!*

2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup oil  
1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour  
1 1/2 cups white flour  
2 1/2 teaspoons baking soda  
2 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon Lite Salt or less  
2 cups shredded carrots  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
1 can (11 ounces) mandarin oranges, undrained  
5 egg whites



*Cream Cheese Frosting:* (make half the frosting recipe if the sides of cake are not being frosted)

1/2 package (4 ounces) light cream cheese or Neufchatel, softened  
1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350°. In large bowl, combine all cake ingredients. Beat 2 minutes at high speed. Pour into lightly oiled 9-X-13 inch pan. Bake 35 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean and cake pulls away from sides of pan. Cool. Cake can be removed from pan after 30 minutes.

*To Prepare Frosting:* Blend ingredients in medium bowl; beat until smooth. Adjust powdered sugar as desired for proper firmness. Spread over cake. Store frosted cake in refrigerator.

Makes 24 servings (about 2-X-2 inches).

|               |                                       |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| PER SERVING:  |                                       |
| CALORIES 224  | TOTAL FAT 6 gm                        |
| SODIUM 130 mg | CHOLESTEROL-SATURATED FAT INDEX trace |
| FIBER 1 gm    |                                       |

