

The Dangers of Dip

By Josh Green

We all know about the dangers of smoking cigarettes; have heard the mortality stats, have seen the ads on television, and the billboards on the side of the road. Recognizing the dangers of cigarette smoking is very important. However, there is a lack of awareness surrounding the risks associated with chewing tobacco.

Chewing tobacco is no safer than smoking cigarettes. According to cancer facts and figures from the Journal of the American Dental Association, when chewed, tobacco delivers even more nicotine making it more addictive than smoking. Most people who do not chew see it as a disgusting, dangerous habit, but adolescents are very impressionable. Seeing professional athletes, older siblings, or friends dipping can provide the impetus to start. I myself started chewing when I was a sophomore in high school because I looked up to my older brother who chewed. Recently accepting the fact that I was addicted, I realize how naïve it was to assume that I could escape the cancer, gum disease and tooth loss associated with dip. I decided to try to quit and am glad to say that so far I have been successful.

If you or somebody that you know chews or smokes and is interested in quitting, you should know that the University Health Center is offering FREE nicotine replacement therapy (including nicotine gum and patch) through a generous grant from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Institute. If you are interested call Health Education at 346-4456 or stop by our office just past the pharmacy on the first floor of the Health Center to set up an appointment.



Hypertension



By Missy Columbo

High blood pressure is an issue we typically associate with folks our parents' age. As young college students, we shouldn't have to worry about this condition also known as hypertension! Right? That is what I thought before I became a Peer Health Educator. Through this class I have come to learn that hypertension does indeed affect many people our age.

Blood pressure is measured routinely at the Health Center, and yet many students do not know what

their values are or what they mean. Healthy normal values are at or below 120/80. Hypertension is classified as blood pressure above 140/90. The upper number indicates the pressure of blood against the arteries immediately after the heart contracts. The lower number indicates the pressure against the arteries between heart beats. High blood pressure typically has no warning signs, so that many people with hypertension have it without knowing it.

Hypertension matters because it is linked to heart disease, the

leading killer in the US. It is also correlated to a number of other chronic diseases. And while it may take years to cause the damage associated with these diseases, it makes infinite sense to prevent hypertension in the first place. Fortunately there are measures we can take today to prevent hypertension. These measures are the general health promoting superstars: physical activity, a healthy diet that is low in saturated fat and sodium, alcohol in moderation or not at all, and

maintaining a healthy weight. Put most simply, this translates into 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week, limiting fat to 1/3 of your daily calories, and limiting alcohol to one drink/day for women and two for men.

Come in to the Health Education Office in the Health Center and get your blood pressure checked for free. One of the Peers can provide more details about heart health. It will only take a minute and may open your eyes to improved living!

Destigmatizing Carbohydrates

By Akiko Gordon

Carbohydrates are getting a bad rap these days. Processed and refined carbohydrates which are low in nutrient density have certainly contributed to this rap. The low-carb diet craze has also weighed in. I would like to remind us of the simple virtues of the often maligned carbohydrates and shed some light on a misleading labeling trend.

There are two types of carbohydrates—complex and simple. While both are sources of energy (i.e. 4 calories/g), complex carbs also provide essential vitamins, minerals and fiber. Dietary fiber is classified as a carbohydrate, present only in plant based foods, but it is not actually digested. Fiber is classified as soluble or insoluble. Soluble fiber has been shown to help lower blood cholesterol and insoluble fiber is an important aid in normal bowel function. Fruits, vegetables, whole-grains, nuts, beans and legumes are good sources of both soluble and insoluble dietary fiber. The RDA for fiber is 20-35 grams/day.

LOW CARB CRAZE

Low-carbohydrate diets have been popular in the mainstream since at least 1972, when the late Robert C. Atkins, M.D. introduced his book, "Dr. Atkins' Diet Revolution." The Atkins Diet promotes a reduction in carbohydrate intake so that the body will use fat, instead of carbohydrates, as its primary source of energy. In the induction period of the Atkins Diet, dieters must limit their carbohydrate intake to 20 grams per day, which eliminates most foods rich in fiber (e.g. whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes). The dieters are told instead to eat unlimited high protein foods such as red meat, eggs and cheese, which are typically high in saturated fat and low in fiber. Such a diet over time, increases the dieter's risk of developing heart disease, kidney stones and osteoporosis.

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

To know what you're eating, you probably turn to

the food label. According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the values listed on food labels for total carbohydrate should include "all carbohydrate, including dietary fiber and sugars listed below it." Some food producers have been advising the consumer to subtract fiber (which is indigestible but does contribute calories through a process of fermentation) from the total carbohydrate count.

For example, Trader Joes offer a whole wheat tortilla by LaTortilla Factory with the total carbohydrates, fiber and total net carbohydrates clearly listed on the package. Pitching to the low-carb dieter, the package claims that one tortilla has 11 total grams of carbohydrates, yet only "three net carbs." Their website states: "To get three grams of carbohydrates you deduct the grams of dietary fiber (eight grams) from the total carbohydrate grams (11 grams) to get net carbohydrates grams (three grams), because according to the Code of Federal Regulations set by the Food and Drug Administration, dietary fiber is non-digestible."

According to the FDA, however, we DO need to include dietary fiber in total carbohydrate grams and must multiply total carbs by 4 calories/g. While fiber is not "digestible" it does provide calories through a fermentation process further down the digestive tract. For those of us who want to do the math, we multiply the total fat grams by 9, multiply the total carbohydrate grams by 4 and multiply the total protein grams by 4 to get the calorie total.

MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE

For those of us who don't want to do the math, the UO Health Center's Registered Dietitian, Kristen Olmos, can answer questions about low carbohydrate diets and offer nutrition counseling. Appointments can be made at 346-2770. Olmos also teaches a workshop called Boiling Water 101 where students can learn skills to cook fast, nutritious and delicious veggie meals. Register by calling 346-2794.