

An apple a day adage may be true

An apple a day may just keep the doctor away! That's because fiber from apples, and other similar fruits, has been directly linked to reduced risk of serious medical conditions.

Fiber is a material made by plants that cannot be digested. It's found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. And while fiber is most often touted as a tool to combat constipation, this dietary all-star is proving to offer many more health benefits. In fact, one Harvard study shows a 40 percent reduced risk of coronary heart disease among adults with high fiber intake. Another Harvard study indicates that the risk of type 2 diabetes is cut in half when adults eat a diet packed with fiber.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing a fiber famine across the United States. Adults should consume between 20-35 grams of dietary fiber each

day. Yet, the average American eats only 14-15 grams per day.

Perhaps more Americans would accelerate their efforts to eat a fiber-rich diet if they knew that fiber also aids in weight loss. The number of calories in fiber is small, typically one to two calories per gram of fiber. That means that foods rich in fiber will fill you up on less calories!

When it comes to adding fiber into your daily diet, recommendations from mass media can be confusing. Some publications promote soluble fiber, while others promote insoluble fiber. The simple truth is that both types of fiber are beneficial. All humans need soluble fiber, found in oatmeal, nuts, and citrus fruits, because it helps to regulate blood sugar and cholesterol. Meanwhile, the benefits of insoluble fiber, typically found in whole grains

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To Your Health!

By Judy Hargis, P.A., and Audeen Wagner



HUMAN PAPILLOMA VIRUS

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) has certainly been in the news lately, and for good reason: Certain strains of HPV cause cervical cancer, and a vaccine has been developed which can stop HPV in its tracks, therefore preventing most cervical cancers.

HPV is a virus that is common in the United States and around the world, and is spread through sexual contact. While there are many types of HPV, certain ones are said to be "high risk" because they can cause cervical cancer and other genital cancers.

One-fourth of women between the ages of 14 and 59 in the U.S. are infected with the HPV virus. That's a staggering figure, considering that it translates to about 20 million people. Of the more than six million new cases of HPV each year, an estimated 74 percent of them occur in 15 to 24-year-old women.

Since not all strains of HPV are the cancer-causing ones, not all those women are in a "high risk" category; however, it is cause for concern. Cervical cancer strikes a younger population, and it kills several hundred thousand women per year worldwide. The HPV virus rate is highest in girls and women from age 14 to 24.

Because the process of transforming normal cervical cells into cancerous ones is slow, cancer occurs in people who have been infected with HPV for a long time, usually a decade or more. It is important to know that female patients should begin having regular Pap smears at an earlier age, to detect and identify the strains of HPV that might be present. A Pap smear helps detect changes to the cells of the cervix before they advance to cancer.

Prevention is now possible because of the new vaccine called Gardasil. It is recommended for young girls, as young as 11, because it is more effective if given before a woman is infected. The vaccine is still of benefit even if a woman has had an abnormal pap or a positive high-risk HPV, because the vaccine protects against four strains of the virus, so it is possible to become infected with the other types after treatment. A little confusing, but the bottom line is that it is important to continue screenings for cervical cancer as recommended by a healthcare provider.

Parents of daughters would be wise to look further into the possibility of the Gardasil vaccinations. The procedure involves three injections over a six-month period, and is quite expensive. Many insurance plans and managed healthcare plans cover it. There is also a "Vaccines for Children" program that helps families who do not have insurance.

It is heartening to learn that, at last, there is a vaccine to prevent one kind of cancer. That's good news!

Suggestions, comments and questions are welcome – feedback from readers is appreciated, and we will address any suggestions or concerns. Notes can be addressed to The Independent, Attn: To Your Health! at 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064.

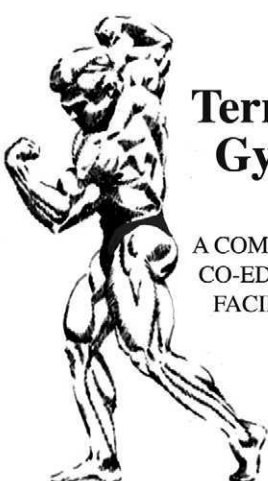
Vernonia Factoid

According to records that Vernonian Bill Sword was reviewing recently; in 1950, there were 436 people employed at the O-A Mill and there were 310 people at Camp Olson.

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