

FAMILY LIVING IDEAS

March 2004

WE EXPECT MORE OUT OF ADULTS

Though 11-year-old Mark wasn't much of an athlete, his dad Rick urged him to play youth baseball. Mark liked to play, but he was really hurt by some of the remarks of teammates and even parent spectators when he struck out or dropped a ball. Just before the fourth game of the season, Mark said he didn't want to go. "I'm no good," he said, "and everyone knows it."

Rick urged him to stick with it. "Just do your best," he said. "That's all anyone can ask and your best is good enough."

Mark struck out his first two times at bat, and each time looked over to his father who struggled to look positive. In his last at-bat, Mark hit the ball solidly, the first time all season. It was a hard grounder to third and the play at first was close.

When the umpire called Mark out, Rick went wild. "Kill the ump!" he yelled. "Are you blind or just stupid? If you can't do the job, stay off the field!"

On the way home, Mark broke a long silence, "Dad, you said that all anyone can ask is that we do our best."

"That's right son," Rick assured him. "But you did your best and I'm proud of you. That jerk of an umpire robbed you with a bad call."

"I wasn't talking about me," Mark replied, "I was talking about Billy's dad. He was the umpire. I know he was doing his best, but you got really mad at him."

Rick was taken aback, but he said, "Yeah, son, but he's an adult and we should expect more out of adults."

Mark looked his dad in the eye. "That's what I thought too. By the way, I was out."

Despite Rick's good intentions, he didn't set a very good example. We should expect more from adults—more fairness and respect, more sportsmanship and more self-restraint.

If your kids play sports be a model, not a problem.

Source: Michael Josephson, Josephson Institute of Ethics

Diabetes Classes in Grand Coulee, Desert Aire and Mattawa

Do you or a family member have Diabetes? Would you like better control of your Diabetes? If the answer is yes, you can benefit from this free program.

What you get free:

- Three screening tests.
- Information about five critical tests that tell you how well you are doing with your diabetes care.
- Four diabetes nutrition classes.
- Screening tests repeated after three months.
- Grocery store gift certificate for \$40 at the three month follow up.

Grand Coulee classes—Call Laurie or Betty at 1-800-572-0119 or Peggy at 633-2757 if you are interested in signing up for an afternoon class or an evening class both at the Xion Lutheran Church in Grand Coulee. The afternoon class will be at 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. and the evening class at 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. on March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and June 1.

The Mattawa and Desert Aire classes will have the same number of sessions. The Mattawa class will be taught in Spanish by Beatrice Alvarez. The classes will be on Wednesdays — March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and June 2 at 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at the Mattawa Clinic. If you know someone who would like the class in Spanish in the Mattawa area, they can call the Mattawa Clinic at 509-932-4499 to register.

Classes are being arranged in English at the Desert Aire Senior Center for April. If you are interested in this class, call the Mattawa Clinic (932-4499) or Betty Meloy or Laurie at 1-800-572-0119 Ext. 413 to sign up. We need to know what time of day and what day of the week is best for you to attend the classes.

Health is wealth...and
it's tax-free!

This is a long article on low-carbohydrate foods but I think it points out some things that we don't always see when we read labels. With all of the media attention about low-carbohydrate diets solving the growing obesity problems in the U.S., we are being bombarded with low-carb diets, low-carb food products and before and after pictures of how well they work in 3-months, 6-months or 12-months. This is becoming a multi-million dollar industry. —Betty Meloy

Low-carbohydrate foods: less than meets the eye

A few years ago the cry was "low-fat" or "nonfat," as new food products came on the market positioned to appeal to the weight-conscious and health-conscious. You could avoid most fat but still eat your ice cream and cookies. In some ways the trend to low-fat and fat-free foods was beneficial; in other ways it was not. Nonfat milk is a good thing, but nonfat junk food is still junk food, of course. Many consumers failed to notice that a low-fat cookie often has as many calories as the regular kind, and many assumed it was okay to eat the whole box.

Now the craze is for low-carbohydrate foods. If you've been to the grocery store lately, or even to McDonald's or Blimpie, you've seen promotions for "low-carb" foods. Many breads, sandwiches, muffins, pasta, cereals, tortillas, pizza crusts, beer, cakes, cookies and other foods now bear "low-carb" labels. While the health claims are seldom spelled out, the implications are clear.

If you're following a low-carb diet (such as Atkins) that forbids or severely limits bread, pasta and other starchy foods, especially those made with white flour, you might think, well, here's a way to eat some bread and still stay on the diet. Indeed, many low-carb products are sold under the Atkins brand name. Or perhaps you're not on any diet but are just calorie-conscious. You may conclude, logically enough, that a food lower in carbs is also lower in calories. Or you may buy the new stuff because you're attracted to new products, and you think that there's a law against false claims on food labels, so you conclude that low-carb claims must be (a) true and (b) meaningful.

In fact, "low-carb" is not what it seems. And any benefits these foods might offer for weight loss or nutrition are debatable, at best. If you replace carbohydrates with protein (that's the main change), you still have just as many calories. Furthermore, the labels are, essentially, meaningless. The FDA has no definition of "low-carbohydrate" and has never approved any low-carb labels. Any food can be so labeled.

Bringing down the carbs

Here's how manufacturers reduce the carbs in various foods:

- They replace refined wheat flour with soy flour (higher in protein), soy protein or wheat protein.
- They add extra fiber, such as wheat bran, oat bran or other fiber (this is not a bad thing, but read on).
- They add high-fat ingredients such as nuts (again, not so terrible: nuts are good food, containing healthy fats).
- They replace sugar with sugar alcohols (maltitol, lactitol or sorbitol) or artificial sweeteners. This has been going on a long time—ever hear of sugarless or "dietetic" candy?
- For beers, they use certain chemicals in the brewing process to reduce carbohydrates in the brew. But the result is not very different from "lite" beers, long a market staple.

Is the difference real, though?

None of these changes are unhealthy. But these products end up having nearly as many calories as their regular counterparts, and cutting calories is still the key to weight control. Protein has as many calories as carbs do, and fat has more than twice as many calories.

The products often have nearly as many carbs, too, but the labels disguise this fact with several tricks. Most often they subtract certain carbs, and provide a separate section listing a lower number, which designates the remaining ones "effective carbs" or "net impact carbs." The idea is that since fiber, for instance, doesn't affect blood sugar the way other carbs do, it doesn't count. So if a food has 10 grams of carbs, but 6 grams

are fiber, the manufacturer simply subtracts the 6 and claims only 4 "net impact" carbs. (Sometimes the results are clearly impossible. Some low-carb bread labels, for example, claim that nearly all the carbs are fiber, yet the first ingredient is always some sort of flour—a source of "regular" carbohydrates.) The calories in sugar alcohols, too, can be subtracted, according to this logic, because they don't have the same effect on blood sugar as regular sugar. None of this is allowed by the FDA.

This sleight-of-hand can distract you from an accurate comparison between low-carb foods and conventional ones. Here are just three examples:

- A slice of "low-carb" Atkins bread, for instance, has 60 calories and 8 grams of total carbs, though it claims to have only 3 "net impact" carbs. A slice of a conventional "diet" bread typically has 50 calories and 10 grams of carbs. That isn't a significant difference.
- A 1-ounce low-carb chocolate bar has 155 calories and 12 grams of fat, but no sugar; it claims to have only 1 "net impact" carb. A regular bar has 150 calories and 10 grams of fat. (Some choice!) Low-carb candies are actually pretty much the same as the sugar-free candies that have been on the market for years.
- A 12-ounce can of Michelob Ultra ("low-carb") has 95 calories and 2.6 grams of carbs. Miller Lite has 96 calories and 3.2 grams of carbs. Coors Lite has 102 calories and 5 grams of carbs. The differences are tiny. In effect, what's new is the label, not the product.

No way to tell

Another problem: there is no legal definition of a low-carb food. The FDA has defined "low-fat", for instance, but any food, even Wonder Bread, can be labeled "low-carbohydrate." Moreover, fiber is supposed to be listed as part of the carbohydrates—not subtracted from it. The FDA does not define nutrients according to the effects they have on blood sugar, and for good reason. There simply isn't any accurate way to calculate it for a food label. In any case, there is little or no evidence for the claim that some types of carbs are more likely to cause weight gain than others just because they affect blood sugar faster.

One good idea buried in the low-carb craze: It is better to choose high-fiber products over those made of refined wheat (white) flour. But that's hardly a new idea. If you want more fiber in your bread, there are lots of good conventional choices, made of whole wheat or other whole grains, on the shelves.

Less costs more, and tastes worse

And then there's the question of price. Low-carb almost always means high price. Low-carb beers cost more than lite. One low-carb breakfast cereal costs nearly four times as much per serving as regular cereals. Atkins breads cost twice as much as most regular breads. And most low-carb foods sacrifice a lot in taste and texture. (Not the candies, apparently, where chocolate flavors mask a lot) Maybe this is a good thing—people will eat less of these foods, and the fad won't last.

In the meantime, our advice: *Don't be fooled by low-carb foods. There's no evidence that they'll help you lose weight. They are not significantly more nutritious or less caloric than many regular foods. And they eat up food dollars better spent on plain good healthy foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables.*

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter, January 2004

Washington Grown



Fresh This Month –

While frost is still on the ground it's hard to imagine that any local produce is available. But take a look and you'll see winter pears in the market alongside apples that were picked last fall, stored to remain crisp and crunchy. Also picked in the fall to last through the winter are local beets in deep purple and golden yellow, turnips, rutabagas, carrots and potatoes. Any of these root vegetables make a delicious addition to stews and soups on our remaining cold weeks of winter.

Source: Nutrition Education Network of Washington, May 2003

Did you know?

The decline in family mealtimes isn't just an American phenomenon. Across the Atlantic, British researchers studying the eating habits of five- to nine-year-olds found that a third of families in the study eat as a family, compared to 82% of adults who said that when they were children they ate as a family every day. The "Americanization" of the English diet, decline in family mealtime occasions, and increase in child-only meals contribute to the growing problem of childhood obesity. Children's sedentary lifestyles, too, are a factor. Over half of the UK's kids ages five to seven have a television in their bedroom.

Source: www.just-food.com

Are you taking medications properly? asks pharmacologist Joe Graedon. *With food* means during a meal, not with a glass of milk or juice. *Before meals* means at least one hour before eating. *After meals* means at least two hours afterward. *On an empty stomach* means one hour before or two hours after eating. The type of food also matters. *Examples:* Grapefruit juice intensifies some drugs, while calcium-fortified juice can prevent proper absorption. Ask your doctor and pharmacist for the best way to take each medicine.

Source: Joe Graedon, pharmacologist in Durham, North Carolina

Sports, protein and energy bars contain as many as 180 calories...and one energy bar can cost up to four times as much as a piece of fruit or a bagel. They also don't contain many "real food" nutrients, such as the beneficial phytochemicals found in fruits and vegetables. *For a quick lift between meals or before or after a workout:* Fresh fruit...a handful of raisins or dried apricots...baby carrots or cherry tomatoes...a whole-grain or fruited bagel...or six to eight ounces of nonfat or soy yogurt.

Source: Suzanne Havala Hobbs, DrPH, RD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Unlimited calling plans often cost more than service providers claim. The plans offer a flat rate for all local and long-distance calls and certain added services—but the quoted rate does not include taxes and surcharges, which can add 15% to the monthly bill. *To find out about taxes and surcharges:* www.ucan.org/consumer_info/Phone_Bill/Taxes&Surcharges.htm.

Source: Michael Shames, Utility Consumers' Action Network, San Diego

Accidents when backing up are responsible for 30% of vehicle-related child deaths. These accidents happen because of blind spots behind vehicles—especially SUVs, pickups and minivans. *Best:* Before driving, walk behind the car to check for children. *For extra safety:* Consider a rear-mounted camera, which works on any vehicle. Cost: \$400 or more, plus installation.

Source: Consumer Reports

Beware: Your car can testify against you, we hear from auto expert David Solomon. Like an airplane flight recorder, air-bag modules on many cars log important information when air bags are deployed—such as engine speed and how fast the car was going as well as if you were applying the brake or pressing the gas pedal and wearing a seat belt. Vehicles with traction control also may store data on steering, rate of deceleration and lateral movement. Such data can be subpoenaed and used in court against you. *Note:* You also can use this data to support your case.

Source: David Solomon is a certified master auto technician and chairman of [Nutz & Boltz](http://www.nutzandboltz.com)

Did you know that...

...**some insurance companies** are urging more diagnostic tests for their network participants? The idea is to "nag" people who suffer from chronic problems into taking better care of themselves before their conditions become more severe and costly. *Examples of who might be contacted by phone, letter or E-mail:* A person who is found to be overweight at an annual physical or someone who has heart disease or asthma and has not seen a specialist for more than a year. Diseases and types of contact vary by insurer and plan.

Source: [The Wall Street Journal](http://www.wallstreetjournal.com)

Boosting good (HDL) cholesterol may be more important than lowering bad (LDL) cholesterol. High HDL levels can help mitigate heart disease risk factors, such as being overweight. Some medicines can boost HDL, but there also are ways to raise it without drugs—stop smoking...lose weight...eat poly- or monounsaturated fats, such as safflower or olive oil, respectively...drink alcohol only moderately.

Source: Daniel Rader, MD, director of preventive cardiology, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine

Very Useful Web Sites

Tax time is drawing near: Federal and state tax forms...preparation checklist...tax calculators...information on capital gains, charitable contributions, etc. <http://taxes.yahoo.com>

Beware! Government warnings and recalls on foods, drugs, vehicles, appliances, etc. www.recalls.gov

Power up your portfolio: Leading independent site on mutual funds offers experts' insights...rankings...fund managers' profiles...more. www.brill.com

Antiques and collectibles: Vast directory of on-line sources for coins, porcelain, militaria, vintage toys, tools, etc. www.curioscape.com

Everything you wanted to know about movies: Giant look-it-up guide to old and new films—plots, casts, etc.—plus links to reviews and show times across the US. <http://imdb.com>

Woodworking wisdom: Building safely...tool reviews...furniture plans...helpful postings from other craftspeople. www.woodworking.org

Source: Bottom Line Personal, February 15, 2004

Did you know that...

...every two hours of TV watching per day raises diabetes risk by 14% and obesity risk by 23%? *Source: Frank Hu, MD, PhD, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston*

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A few years ago, a study said microwaving in plastic was dangerous. Is it any safer now?

Yes, if you use plastics with recycling codes that indicate they are safe for the microwave. Plastic containers labeled number 1 (*polyethylene terephthalate*) and number 5 (*polypropylene*) can be used. Number 6 (*polystyrene*) may be microwaved only if it is covered with a barrier film, such as a microwave-safe plastic wrap. Most baby bottles and disposable liners are safe to microwave. Anything labeled *nylon*, *dual ovenable* or *microwave safe* also can be put in the microwave.

Don't microwave plastic containers labeled number 2 (*high-density polyethylene*)...3 (*polyvinyl chloride*)...4 (*low-density polyethylene*)...or 7 (*which is made of other resins*).

Also: Don't microwave plastic wrap or plastic bags—except those specifically labeled *microwave safe*. Wax paper and paper towels are fine to use in the microwave.

Better: Glass or ceramic bowls made for the microwave—they usually have a plastic top with a steam vent. *Source: Clair Hicks, PhD, professor of food science, University of Kentucky, Lexington*

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