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## June Newsletter

### Men and Wellness *The Gender Gap*

*By Heather Fox, PhD, DAc, RMT, SA*

Canadians are an increasingly aging society interested in health more now perhaps, than at any other point in our history. Our access to information and awareness of healthy choices should result in higher levels in wellness in our overall population. Are we seeing a trend toward improvement in men's health care or are men increasingly falling through the cracks when it comes to preventable disease?

The majority of health research over the years has focused predominantly on men and has established many baseline 'norms' by making use of male subjects in a vast array of studies. Yet despite the accumulation of important science based data, men die at higher rates than women from the top 10 mostly preventable causes of death - heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, accidents, pneumonia and influenza, diabetes, suicide, kidney disease, and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis.

On average, women survive men by six years. Canadians' life expectancy at birth is estimated at approximately 76 years for men and 81 years for women. In 1920, women outlived men only by one year. In fact, according to recent studies in a variety of populations, the death rate in all age groups from birth through the age of 84 is significantly greater for the male population.

In other words, men die an average of 5 years earlier than women. According to *Statistics Canada* and as we see in the table below, the ratio of men to women changes radically across age groups. We begin in early life with men outnumbering women at

a rate of 105 males per 100 females. By the age of 65 there are now only 70 males per 100 females, and at 85 only 35 males per 100 females.

These are the facts leading many health professionals to seriously question how health care to men can be improved in a meaningful way. First we must look to how lifestyle and social gender stereotypes may impact health care and health choices.

In March of this year a first Canadian Conference on Men's Health was held in British Columbia. The goal of the conference was to raise the standard of men's health through awareness and to work towards the development of policy and health care practice that will support a healthier male population. This conference, considered long overdue, featured presentations on topics such as Healthy Living and Prevention; Men's Sexuality & Reproductive Health; Mental Health, Healthy Environments & Working Conditions and more.

It is a fact that men do not seek health care at nearly the same rate that women do with often disastrous consequences. For instance HIV and Hepatitis C screening is performed on less than half as many men as women. Men are far less likely to have their blood pressure checked leaving hypertension as a potential 'silent killer' affecting men who remain unaware of the fact that it has become a problem for them. There can be alarming consequences to delays in health care.

*Men lead women in 14 out of 15 leading causes of death. Not only are men 29 percent more likely to get cancer, they are 52 percent more likely to die from it. The most likely cancer to kill men between the ages of 15 and 30 is testicular*

*cancer, but most physicians don't talk to boys about doing a testicular self-examination (Underwood, 2004)*

Men often struggle with the perception that illness, or at least a state of unwellness will threaten their sense of security, strength and even their ability to be successful in their life endeavors. In fact men are often encouraged to engage in a so called 'manly' lifestyle including things risk taking, overworking or ignoring pain and other symptoms that may flag a health problem.

Women have become more vocal in their demands for a whole person approach to health care. It is time for us to remember that men also need to be cared for within the entire context of their lives. Men's lives include their roles as father, lover, worker and member of the community with all of the anxieties and concerns these bring. Age also carries a variety of specific concerns that may impact wellness and the decisions a man makes to seek the support and care of a health care provider. It is critically important that we create a comfort zone in health care for men.

Natural Medicine has made many contributions to holistic health care and has much that may be beneficial in terms of improving the overall levels of wellness in men. Holistic medicine today includes the application of assessment techniques using modern, traditional, scientific and empirical methods. Some of the main principles guiding the use of natural medicine lie in the belief that the body has a natural ability to heal, commitment to treating the whole person, to first do no harm, therapeutic intervention when necessary, informed choice and prevention with optimal care.

When the client or patient is well informed and encouraged to take personal responsibility for her health and wellness decisions there is generally a healthier outcome for all concerned. The original word for doctor is in fact 'docere' which means teacher.

The old adage 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' is the best way of stating the importance of recognizing how our life choices will impact our health and the importance of making good decisions before we become ill. Prevention is our best 'good medicine'.

#### **\*NATURAL SUPPLEMENTS For Optimal Health in Men**

**NOW Liquid Multi Gels** Vitamin and Mineral Supplement

**NOW Prostate Support**

**NOW Omega 3 Fish Oil** Lemon Flavoured

**NOW Tru C Biocomplex** Vitamin C with Amla Berry

*End*

*Water is fluid, soft, and yielding.  
But water will wear away rock,  
which is rigid and cannot yield. As a  
rule, whatever is fluid, soft, and  
yielding will overcome whatever is  
rigid and hard. This is another  
paradox: what is soft is strong.*

*Lao-Tzu (600 B.C.)*

## **THYROID HEALTH WITH NATURAL MEDICINE**

*By Heather Fox, PhD, DAC, RMT, SA*

According to the World Health Organization nearly 200 million people worldwide suffer from Thyroid Disease in one form or another and thyroid dysfunction is a probable risk factor for 1 to 1.5 BILLION people due to simple iodine deficiency. In Canada, 1 in twenty are diagnosed with Thyroid Disease and of these there are 5-7 women to every 1 man. While there are several possible thyroid conditions the most common are hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism.

The thyroid gland – a butterfly shaped gland located at the base of the neck - produces thyroid hormones and the two most critically active hormones are tetraiodothyronine (thyroxine or T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). These hormones affect every cell in the body and are essential for life. They have multiple effects on body metabolism, growth and development as well as on other functions.

**Metabolism:** Thyroid hormones stimulate metabolic action in most body tissues such as an increase body heat production. Specifically, this can include fat or lipid metabolism. Concentrations of cholesterol and triglycerides are correlated with thyroid hormone levels. In fact one diagnostic indication of hypothyroidism is an increase in blood cholesterol concentration. Thyroid hormones also stimulate almost all aspects of the way we metabolize carbohydrate. The delivery of glucose and other essential nutrients into the cells by insulin is enhanced by thyroid hormones.

**Growth:** Thyroid hormones are vital to normal growth in children and young animals and there is considerable evidence of slowed growth observed in those who are thyroid deficient. Thyroid hormone seems also to have an important relationship with growth hormone.

**Development:** One classic experiment in endocrinology demonstrated that tadpoles deprived of thyroid hormone did not complete metamorphosis into frogs. We know that normal levels of thyroid hormone are essential to the development of the brain in the human and newborn human brain.

**Cardiovascular system:** Thyroid hormones increases heart rate, cardiac strength which improves the output of blood. They also promote enhanced blood flow to many organs by dilating blood vessels. Women with untreated hypothyroidism are more than twice as likely to have a heart attack. One study reported in the Annals of Internal Medicine noted that hypothyroidism "contributed to 60 percent of cases of myocardial infarction (heart attacks)

among women affected by subclinical or mild hypothyroidism".

**Central nervous system:** Too little thyroid hormone affects mental state and can leave the individual feeling mentally slow and foggy. Too much on the other hand can result in anxiety and nervousness. Learning disabilities are also associated with hypothyroidism. Children born to hypothyroid mothers are over twice as likely to have learning difficulties resulting in their having to repeat a grade. Millions of people have Fibromyalgia and tens of millions more have chronic muscle pain.

**Reproductive system:** Hypothyroidism is commonly associated with infertility. Hypothyroidism has been connected to over 4600 miscarriages per year after 15 weeks of pregnancy with unknown numbers in the first trimester. A full six percent of miscarriages are associated with hypothyroidism.

According to a comprehensive list compiled by Michael Schachter M.D., disorders associated with hypothyroidism include headaches, migraines, sinus infections, post-nasal drip, visual disturbances, frequent respiratory infections, difficulty swallowing, heart palpitations, indigestion, gas, flatulence, constipation, diarrhea, frequent bladder infections, infertility, reduced libido and sleep disturbances, with the person requiring 12 or more hours of sleep at times. Other conditions include intolerance to cold and/or heat, poor circulation, Raynaud's Syndrome, which involves the hands and feet turning white in response to cold, allergies, asthma, heart problems, benign and malignant tumors, cystic breasts and ovaries, fibroids, dry skin, acne, fluid retention, loss of memory, depression, mood swings, fears, and joint and muscle pain.

Iodine plays a central role in the function of the thyroid gland. It is the chief component of thyroid hormones, and is essential for their production. Iodine from the diet is absorbed throughout the gastrointestinal tract. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

tracks areas in the world where iodine and selenium deficiency have marked impact on the thyroid health of whole populations. In areas of the world where there is an iodine deficiency, iodine is typically added to the salt or bread.

While iodine supplementation can be critical to thyroid health it should also be noted that taking excess amounts of iodine in foods like kelp can aggravate autoimmune thyroid disease. Thyroid cells are the only cells in the body that can absorb iodine. These cells combine iodine and the amino acid tyrosine to make T3 and T4. T3 and T4 are then released into the blood stream and are transported throughout the body where they control metabolism (the conversion of oxygen and calories to energy). The normal thyroid gland produces about 80 percent T4 and about 20percent T3, although however T3 seems to be several times more active or potent than T4.

Many agricultural areas in Canada are extremely deficient in selenium. Research has linked selenium with thyroid function and may be a factor in the often depleted immune response of some individuals. A recent study in Belgium used selenium (20-60 mcg per day) to treat 18 children with congenital hypothyroidism. Supplementation with selenium caused normalized the levels of TSH in these children.

Typically, conventional medicine uses synthetic hormones like Synthroid/ Levoxyl/ Levothroid (levothyroxine) to treat hypothyroidism. These products only contain T4 hormone, they have no T3. There are many people however, who cannot convert the T4 to the more active form of thyroid which is T3.

#### **Desiccated Thyroid -- The Natural Alternative**

When one has low T3 levels, which are typical with synthetic hormone use, the brain does not work properly. Desiccated thyroid has both T3 and T4. In 1999 a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine showed that desiccated thyroid offered significant benefit to patients in terms

of overall mental functioning, including concentration, overall mood, memory and a general feeling of well being.

#### **NATURAL SUPPLEMENTS**

Natural supplements for thyroid support can include:

**Vitamin A** - 10,000 IU

**Coenzyme Vitamin B complex** - daily

**B12 with Folic Acid** – 1000 to 5000 mcg B12 daily

**B6** – 100mg

**Vitamin C** – 2500 – 6000 mg

**Advanced Gamma E** – 400 IU

**Coenzyme Q10** – 200 mg

**Liquid Calcium/Magnesium with D** in a 2/1 ration up to 1200mg daily of Calcium (Avoid taking at the same time as your Desiccated Thyroid)

**Selenium** - 200mcg daily

**OptiZinc** - 30 mg daily with copper added

**L-Tyrosine** – 1000 mg daily

**Kelp** - 60 mg

Deficiencies of any of these can prevent the conversion of T4 to T3 and should be corrected. Sufficient protein, iodine and especially the amino acid tyrosine are necessary to make T4 in the thyroid gland.

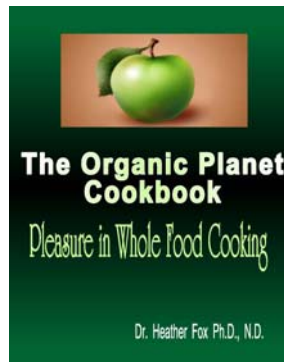
#### **Soy**

Soy supplements should be avoided by hypothyroid patients. A statement released by the United States FDA states *"there is abundant evidence that some of the isoflavones found in soy, including genistein and equol, a metabolize of daidzen, demonstrate toxicity in estrogen sensitive tissues and in the thyroid. This is true for a number of species, including humans. Additionally, isoflavones are inhibitors of the thyroid peroxidase which makes T3 and T4. Inhibition can be expected to generate thyroid abnormalities, including goiter and autoimmune thyroiditis. There exists a significant body of animal data that demonstrates goitrogenic and even carcinogenic effects of soy products. Moreover, there are significant reports of goitrogenic effects from soy consumption in human infants and adults."*

**End**

## HEALTHY COOKING With WHOLESOME FOODS

From *The Organic Planet Cookbook*  
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### Creamed Crab and Spinach Soup

**6 ounces crab meat (up to 8 ounces) or imitation crab**  
**2 cups fresh spinach leaves coarsely chopped**  
**3 tablespoons butter or NOW® brand coconut oil**  
**1/2 cup chopped onion**  
**2 tablespoons unbleached white flour**  
**1/8 teaspoon pepper**  
**1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg**  
**2 cups Purely Bulk® mock chicken soup base no MSG reconstituted**  
**2 cups light cream or milk or dairy substitute of your choice**  
**Tabasco®**

1. Slice crab; reserve liquid.
2. Bring 2 cups of water in a medium saucepan to a boil. Add spinach and cook briefly, only until limp. Remove from heat and put aside.
3. Melt butter in large saucepan. Add onion; sauté until tender. Blend in flour and spices. Gradually add chicken broth, stirring constantly; heat to boiling. Purée spinach mixture in blender or food processor. Add spinach to broth along with cream or milk, crab liquid and crab. Heat thoroughly. Do not boil. Add a dash of Tabasco if desired.

Creamed Crab and Spinach Soup can be served chilled.

### Plum Ginger Chicken Rice Salad

**2 cups Inari® basmati rice**  
**2 cups cooked boneless chicken breast cubes**  
**1/2 cup sliced green onions**  
**4 plums, sliced**  
**2 tablespoons NOW® brand coconut oil**  
**2 tablespoons lemon juice**  
**1 tablespoon soy sauce or low sodium tamari sauce**  
**1/2 teaspoon ground ginger**  
**OR**  
**1 teaspoon of finely grated fresh ginger root**

1. Prepare rice by bringing 4 cups of cold water with 2 cups of dried rice to a boil on medium heat. Reduce heat to medium low when rice starts to boil. Cover tightly with a lid. Gently lift with a fork (do not stir) once or twice as cooking. Cook until tender and water is absorbed into the rice. Cool to room temperature.

2. Combine rice, chicken, green onions and sliced plums in large mixing bowl.

3. To prepare dressing, combine oil, lemon juice, soy sauce and ginger; pour over rice mixture and toss lightly. Chill until serve

### Honey Yogurt Apple Dumplings

**1 cup all-purpose flour**  
**4 teaspoons baking powder**  
**1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**  
**1/8 teaspoon sea salt**  
**1 egg**  
**6 tablespoons plain yogurt**  
**1/2 cup honey**

**PLUS**

**1 tablespoon honey, divided**  
**1 tablespoon heavy cream**  
**1 teaspoon grated orange peel**  
**4 cups apple slices**  
**2 cups Just Juice® cranberry juice**  
**1 cinnamon stick**

**OR**

**1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon**  
**1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg**

1. Combine flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt in large bowl. Combine egg, yogurt, 1 tablespoon honey, milk and orange peel in separate large bowl; stir into

flour mixture to form moist batter. Combine apples, juice, remaining 1/2 cup honey, cinnamon stick and nutmeg in heavy large skillet; mix well. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low. Drop tablespoonfuls of batter over hot apple mixture. Cover and simmer 15 to 20 minutes or until dumplings are cooked through and wooden pick inserted near dumpling center comes out clean.

*End*



*Coming Soon!!*

### Zhen's Gypsy Tea Iced Tea Blends!

- **Goji Berry Pomegranate**
- **Pineapple Green**
- **Mango Ginger White**
- **Blueberry Acai**
- **Strawberry Osmanthus**