

## Keep spring in your step

Optometrists can help relieve eye allergy symptoms. Spring is officially in the air. And the mold spores, dust, pollen and a host of other allergens that come with spring are causing eye problems for many Americans.

Itchy, watery eyes and nasal congestion are not something that you just have to live with this spring. If you suffer from eye allergies and nasal congestion, see your optometrist to discuss options that can help you enjoy this wonderful season.



Dr. Rebecca Winck Bateson has a private practice at 678 Philadelphia St. and practices optometry with Dr. Mike Yuh and Dr. Greg Caldwell.

Spring can be particularly hard on contact lens wearers, but ocular allergies can also make non-contact lens wearers miserable. When allergy symptoms kick in, patients usually visit the local drugstore to pick up a systemic antihistamine for relief. While these medications can clear up systemic symptoms like runny noses, sneezing and coughing, they can make ocular symptoms worse by reducing tear quantity and quality.

For patients who experience dry eye and ocular allergy problems this spring, optometrists have a number of very effective medications.

Treating ocular allergy symptoms does not take a one-size-fits-all approach. There are many factors that go into getting the right treatment for your symptoms. When you visit your optometrist about your eye allergies it is important to accurately describe your symptoms so your optometrist can prescribe a topical medication that safely and efficiently relieves your symptoms.

If you notice your eyes becoming increasingly itchy, red, or watery, be sure to mention this to your optometrist at your next comprehensive eye exam.

Allergy sufferers can help themselves by controlling their ocular environment. Limiting exposure to environmental allergens (keeping the windows closed during the worst seasons, washing your eyes after being outside) can also limit the severity of symptoms.

For contact lens wearers, it is important to be mindful of the "surface environment" that contact lenses create. Extended wearing times, infrequent replacement of lenses, and use of potentially irritating contact lens care products can significantly exacerbate symptoms. Proper lens care is an important part of keeping contact lens wearers safe and comfortable.

Don't just endure the spring season with eye allergies. Visit your optometrist this spring, and enjoy the season free from eye allergy symptoms!

## Protein push: How much is enough for a healthy person?

By IRENE MAHER  
St. Petersburg Times

Scan food labels at the grocery store, and you might think protein deficiency is rampant in this country. Everywhere you look manufacturers prominently display the protein content of frozen pizza snacks, breakfast cereals, even jars of baby food.

Even protein powders and protein bars, once confined to gyms and health food stores, have gone mainstream.

The protein emphasis may have its roots in the Atkins and South Beach diet crazes that promised rapid weight loss by limiting carbohydrates and focusing on high-protein foods.

But neither plan ever pushed pizza snacks. So why the protein push today? Do we really need to search out and buy only the highest protein foods? Does anybody really need those powders and bars?

With the exception of two specific groups of people, the answer is no. Most Americans get all the protein needed in a day without even trying.

Protein is essential for the function or repair of just about every cell in the human body, from hair, nails and hormones to muscle, bones and blood. Because it can't be stored in the body like fat and carbohydrates, we need to replenish the supply every day. Yet the actual amount needed may surprise people accustomed to platter-sized steaks. Half a chicken breast and a couple slices of cheese supply all the protein that most healthy American adults need in a day. As vegetarians know, there are many good nonanimal sources of protein, especially if incomplete sources are combined to make a complete protein, as with rice and beans.

The Department of Health and Human Services says your need for protein depends on weight and activity level. A 130-pound average adult needs 47 grams, the amount you would get in 3 ounces of cooked chicken, 8 ounces of yogurt and 2 tablespoons of peanut butter. A 200-pounder needs another 26 grams, so he could add another 3-ounce serving of chicken.

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, beans, nuts and soy products are the most protein-packed sources.

Morton Plant Mease registered dietitian Nadine Pazder says it's best to spread out your daily protein intake across several meals. "We don't absorb much more than 20 grams of protein per meal," says Pazder, "so these people who are eating protein by the scoopful may not be getting the benefit of it."

Although extra protein won't hurt most people, some should limit their protein intake, including the estimated 20 million Americans who suffer from chronic kidney disease. Healthy kidneys flush out waste products produced by dietary protein. If the kidneys aren't working properly, eating too much protein can put additional stress on the kidneys and worsen the condition.

Kidney patients are usually instructed to keep track of their protein intake and choose lower-protein foods, such as oatmeal for breakfast instead of bacon and eggs or to use one slice of meat in a sandwich instead of two.

Protein intake has long been the subject of much debate in sports circles, especially among bodybuilders and weightlifters.



Metro Creative Graphics

**NUTS**, fish and eggs are all excellent sources of protein.

Men's fitness magazines are full of ads for protein products that promise to build muscle and improve strength faster than any exercise regimen alone. Some athletes who routinely compete in marathons, triathlons and other endurance sports also insist that extra protein gives them an edge.

But do they really need to buy expensive protein powders, shakes and bars to bulk up or cross the finish line first?

"Only if they want to increase the American economy, then yes," says Dr. Marc Hilgers, a sports medicine specialist at Florida Orthopaedic Institute in Tampa. "But if they want to improve their physical performance, no."

In fact, Hilgers says, protein bars and shakes can be high in calories, and consuming them in addition to regular meals may cost you more than money. Any calories the body does not need, and protein calories are no exception, are stored as fat.

Hilgers says the typical American diet provides plenty of protein and most athletes don't need to use supplements. "The one possible exception is vegetarian athletes," he says, especially those who don't consume eggs and dairy products and have a hard time getting enough vegetable protein.

Pazder says there's another group that may need to pay particular attention to protein intake: the elderly, especially the frail elderly who don't have much of an appetite.

They are at risk for a condition known as sarcopenia, a loss of lean muscle mass and muscle strength due largely to aging and inactivity.

It's a process that typically begins in the 40s but accelerates in the mid 70s.

Losing lean muscle can cause weakness and leaves some seniors without sufficient strength to carry out the activities of daily living.

It also puts them at risk for falls.

Exercising with resistance

bands and small hand weights and being careful to get enough protein every day can fend off those effects.

"We are now recommending that most seniors get at least 20 grams of protein at every meal," says Pazder.

That can be done easily by having a turkey sandwich with a glass of milk or a cup of yogurt or 3/4 cup of cottage cheese.

### PROTEIN, BY THE NUMBERS

To estimate how much protein you need in a day, use this equation:

Divide your weight by 2.2 to get your weight in kilograms. Multiply the result by 0.8 to get the grams of protein you need each day.

So if you weigh 130 pounds, divide 130 by 2.2 to get 59. Now multiply 59 by 0.8 to get 47 grams of protein. A 200-pound person would need 73 grams.

Growing children and teens need slightly more than adults, relative to body weight.

Athletes who are in training for endurance sports may need slightly more protein 1.2 grams per kilogram of body weight.

Here are some common foods and the protein they contain. Note, these are averages and more specific information may appear on a product label.

- Tofu, firm (½ cup): 10 grams
- Peanut butter (2 tablespoons): 8 grams
- Black beans, cooked (½ cup): 8 grams
- Almonds (½ cup): 15 grams
- Broccoli (1 cup): 5 grams
- Brown rice (1 cup): 4.5 grams
- Chicken, boneless, cooked (3 ounces): 27 grams
- Roast beef, lean, cooked (3 ounces): 24 grams
- Tuna, canned in water (3 ounces): 23 grams
- Yogurt, low-fat, plain (8 ounces): 12 grams
- Egg (1 medium): 6 grams
- Cottage cheese (½ cup): 14 grams

Source: Northwestern Health Sciences University

### CLASSES

■ **ABC's of Baby-sitting** is a class offered at IRMC as a two-day program for boys and girls 12 and older. Students will learn how to prepare for an interview for a baby-sitting job, keep a journal, and how to feed, entertain and care for an infant, toddler, preschooler and school-age child. Students will also learn first aid for emergencies, how to activate emergency services, do CPR and care for a choking victim. Cost is \$50. The next classes are from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 17 and 24.

For more information or cost, call (724) 357-7075.

■ **All About Baby** is a three-hour workshop that focuses on getting to know your baby, along with visits to the doctor, immunizations, bath time, fussiness, safety, child care and infant nutrition. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **Beginning Yoga**, 7 p.m. Mondays at IRMC, (724) 357-8088.

■ **Clear the Air** is a one-session program that can give you the tools you need to get prepared, take action, stay motivated and quit smoking for good. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **Diabetes Awareness Prevention** is a four-week program that provides the tools needed to lower the risk for diabetes, live well with diabetes, improve eating habits, increase physical activity, manage stress and live a healthier life. Cost is \$65, with no charge for Highmark members. The next class begins at 6 p.m. today. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **Discover Relaxation Within** is a four-week lifestyle improvement program identifying everyday stressors and specific techniques to evoke relaxation. The program also includes ways to reduce and manage stress. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **Family Caregiving Program** is a class with eight programs: Home Safety, General Caregiving Skills, Assisting with Personal Care, Positioning & Helping Your Loved One Move, Healthy Eating, Caring for the Caregiver, Legal & Financial Issues and Caring for a Loved One with Alzheimer's/dementia.

For more information, call American Red Cross, Indiana chapter, at (724) 465-5678.

■ **Home Alone & In Control**, for children age 9 and older, teaches home-alone skills and time management for \$15 at IRMC. For more information, call (724) 357-8088.

■ **Infant Massage** is a free three-part series for moms, dads, babies and toddlers that gives parents an introduction to the benefits of massage for baby and an opportunity to try some of the techniques that can be used. The next series is from 6:30 to 8 p.m. April 14 at IRMC's Private Dining Room 2.

For more information, call (724) 357-7075.

■ **Lamaze Birth of the Family** classes prepare parents for pregnancy changes, birth and par-

### BRIEFS

enting roles. Evening and day classes are available at IRMC. For information, call (724) 357-8088.

■ **Let's Talk for Girls** is a IRMC program for girls, ages 9 to 13, and their mothers to discuss the importance of communicating with daughters on topics such as puberty and awareness of the opposite sex. Information is also included on physical changes, childbearing and respect and empathy for changes occurring in both sexes. The class costs \$15. The next class is from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. April 15 at IRMC Outpatient Building, classroom A&B.

For more information, call (724) 357-8088.

■ **Low Impact Exercise**, through Aging Services Inc., is for people age 60 and older. Classes are conducted at five senior center locations by a trained instructor. You do not have to be a senior center participant to attend. For more information, call (724) 349-4500 or (800) 442-8016.

■ **Painting Classes** are offered at the Indiana Social Center, 1001 Oak St., Indiana, for people age 60 and older. Registration is required. Classes are at 10 a.m. the first and third Mondays of the month with instructor Betty Gattuso. For more information, call (724) 465-2697.

■ **Shelter Operations** teaches the process of opening and properly managing a shelter through the American Red Cross. Call the Indiana chapter at (724) 465-5678.

■ **Survey/Damage Assessment** teaches how to assess damage to homes and areas affected by disaster through the American Red Cross. Participants must have attended Introduction to Disaster classes prior to this training.

Call the Indiana chapter at (724) 465-5678.

■ **Yoga for Health** shows how yoga is suitable for most adults because of the non-strenuous nature and how it can be useful to help relieve symptoms associated with some conditions, such as cancer, arthritis and heart disease. Classes meet at 10:30 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays at IRMC.

For information, call (724) 357-8088.

### FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

■ **Alzheimer's Disease Support Group** will meet from 7 to 9 p.m. today at Excelsa Health Westmoreland Hospital. For information, call (877) 771-1234.

■ **Breast Cancer Support Groups** are available through IRMC. On the first Thursday of the month, women ages 20 to 50 meet at the Women's Imaging Center Library, with pizza and refreshments served. At 6:30 p.m. every third Thursday, a group meets at IRMC at Chestnut Ridge, Conference Room, Blairsville.

On the last Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m., a group for all interested women meets at the Women's Imaging Center Library. For more information, call (724) 357-8081.

### Got ideas, information?

Help us make the Health Page better.  
Call us  
(724) 465-5555 ext. 265  
e-mail us  
jwestbrook@indianagazette.net

## To prevent accidents, illness teach children well

By MOLLY BELMONT  
Albany Times Union

ALBANY, N.Y. — Teaching your kids about how to take care of their bodies can be one of the most important lessons you teach them — and also the hardest.

Every day we are bombarded with misinformation, and kids face the same onslaught — from commercials for sugary cereal to video game heroes — and it can be difficult for parents to combat all that misinformation.

"Parents have to really be cognizant of what their kids are watching," says Carrin Schottler-Thal, a pediatrician with Albany Medical Pediatric Group. Parents not only have to filter out that information, they have to re-educate their kids, and finding accurate sources of information is also difficult, says Schottler-Thal. Begin by finding a doctor you trust, one who can steer you and your children in the right direction, she says.

"There is so much information out there, it becomes a challenge

about what parents can do and should do," says Harry Miller, a pediatrician with Four Seasons Pediatrics in Clifton Park, N.Y. "First, don't be paralyzed by the information overload. I see some parents who get such misinformation from well-intentioned people or on the Internet."

Miller recommends gradual change with specific goals in mind: "Change a few things and do them well. Don't try to do everything all at once."

When it comes to helping your kids adopt healthy habits, you must take the lead. Parents have to be role models for their children, Schottler-Thal says. If you want them to eat healthy, you have to eat healthy. If you want them to exercise, you have to exercise. "Take care of yourself and your children will follow," she says.

"Children are sponges," Miller says. "They learn from what they hear, but learn so much more from what they see."

Here are some of the most important health lessons parents can teach their children:

**EAT HEALTHY:** To maintain a healthy weight and avoid long-term health issues, teach your children to avoid junk food and sugary drinks. Instead, the majority of their diets should be fresh fruit and vegetables, says Schottler-Thal. Children should eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables every day.

**GET REGULAR EXERCISE:** Children should get at least 30 minutes of activity every day, rain or shine. In nice weather, head outdoors; in cold weather, head to the YMCA for some indoor activities, or bundle up and go for a walk.

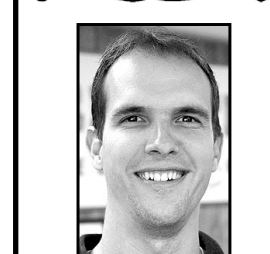
**LIMIT SCREEN TIME:** In order to encourage kids to play, parents should limit time spent in front of the television and computer screens. Kids should have no more than two hours of screen time every day, says Miller. "Children eat about 100 calories more for every hour of TV they watch," says Miller. "A study showed that BMI's 'Body Mass Index' fell into healthy ranges just by cutting TV time in half."

**SAFETY FIRST:** Teach kids to

avoid serious injuries by taking proper safety precautions. Children must always wear bicycle helmets when they're on bikes, seat belts when they're in the car and proper sports equipment when they're on the field. "I always tell parents, 'I can fix a lot of things, but I can't fix their

brains,'" says Schottler-Thal.

**LEARN TO SWIM:** To stay safe in the water, parents should make sure their kids learn to swim as early as possible, about the age of 4. Even so, parents should keep an eye on kids in the water. Schottler-Thal warns against having a sense of false security.



By Rob Kasisky, R.P.H.



### Omega-3 Fats May Slow AMD

People with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) should consider getting more omega-3 fats from fish. A clinical study following 1,800 people found that consuming more omega-3s may slow the progression of the disease. Those in the study who ate the most omega-3s (most of which came from seafood) were 30% less likely to see their AMD progress over a 12-year period compared to those who ate the least. Researchers think that the omega-3 fatty acids in fish may help reduce the inflammation related to AMD. Previous research also has shown a link between high omega-3 intake and a lower risk of ever developing AMD.

401 North 4th St., Indiana  
(Beside The Dairy Queen)  
Phone 724-349-9170  
Toll Free 1-888-463-9170

**Home Health Answers**

Presented by  
**Linda Bettinazzi**  
President/CEO

### IS IT TIME YET?

When might it be the appropriate time to bring someone in to provide home care for a senior? Perhaps the at-home senior has issues with forgetfulness and there is a concern over his or her physical safety. Family and friends may not be available during the hours when the senior needs assistance. Keep in mind that home care may be implemented over a period of time, starting with simple household duties and developing into more extensive services when the individual needs of the senior change. If home care is something that you have considered, contact a home care provider to schedule an initial confidential meeting to discuss your needs and learn about the range of services offered.

Home health aides can enrich the lives of elderly family members. Our personnel know the healing quality of being in the familiar surroundings of your own home. Our VNA Extended Home Care employees are bonded, insured, professionally trained and RN supervised. To learn more visit our website or call us at 724-463-1102. We are located in the Medical Arts Building at 850 Hospital Road, Indiana, PA. We are available to assist our patients and families 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Home healthcare aides help make it possible for seniors to continue living where they are most comfortable — in their homes.

P.S. People who view home care assistance as a convenience generally handle it better than those who view outside help as a necessity.

**VNA** Visiting Nurse Association OF INDIANA COUNTY  
Compassionate Care Right At Home  
www.vnaindianacounty.com