

Vision from 19 to 40 years

Most adults, 19 to 40, enjoy healthy eyes and good vision. The most common eye and vision problems experienced by people in this age group are due to visual stress and eye injuries. By taking proper steps to maintain a healthy lifestyle and protect your eyes from stress and injury, you can avoid many eye and vision problems.



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

Here are some things you can do to help maintain healthy eyes and good vision:

- **Eat healthy:** As part of a healthful diet, eat five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Choose foods rich in antioxidants like leafy, green vegetables and fish.

- **Don't smoke:** Smoking exposes your eyes to high levels of noxious chemicals and increases the risk for developing age-related macular degeneration and cataracts.

- **Get regular exercise:** Exercise improves blood circulation, increases oxygen levels to the eyes and aids in the removal of toxins.

- **Wear sunglasses:** Protect your eyes from harmful ultraviolet rays when outdoors. Choose sunglasses with UV and UVB protection, to block both forms of ultraviolet rays.

- **Get periodic eye examinations:** Although vision generally remains stable during these years, some problems may develop without any obvious signs or symptoms. The best way to protect your vision is through annual regularly scheduled professional eye examinations.

DEALING WITH VISUAL STRESS

Here are some simple steps you can take to minimize eyestrain, particularly during computer work:

- **Workplace adjustments:** Position the top of your computer monitor below eye level so you look slightly downward when viewing the screen. This will help minimize strain on the eyes and the neck. If you are typing from copy, position the text at the same level as the screen. Adjust the screen brightness so it is most comfortable for you. Avoid glare on the computer screen by adjusting window curtains or blinds, repositioning the monitor, or using a glare reduction filter.

- **Proper lighting:** Examine the lighting in your work area. Overhead lights can be harsh and often are brighter than necessary. Consider turning some of the lights off for a more comfortable lighting situation. Use an adjustable shaded lamp to provide specific task lighting as needed.

- **Rest breaks:** Throughout the day, give your eyes a chance to rest. Take several minutes every hour to look away from the computer and allow your eyes to readjust. Consider standing up and walking around or doing alternate tasks that do not require extensive near focusing. Blink often to refresh the eyes and use artificial tear solutions, if necessary.

- **Posture:** When seated at a desk, make sure your feet are flat on the floor. Use a chair that is adjustable and provides adequate support for your back. When working at a computer, your arms should form a 90 degree angle at the elbows and your hands should be tilted up slightly to allow your fingers to travel freely over the keyboard.

Hit the drive-thru to lose weight?

By **ABBY ELLIN**

New York Times News Service

Can eating fast food help you lose weight?

Christine Dougherty, a 27-year-old business consultant in Pensacola, Fla., thinks so. "I don't like to cook, and I wanted to be realistic without changing my lifestyle too much," Dougherty said. She began replacing her usual fast-food lunch or dinner with meals from the Fresco menu at Taco Bell, which consists of items — including burritos and tacos — each with less than 9 grams of fat, compared with, say, 30 grams of fat in the Stuft beef burrito on the regular menu.

Dougherty said that she ate there five to eight times a week, exercised more and — over two years — lost 54 pounds. By December 2009, she was the spokeswoman for Taco Bell's new Drive-Thru Diet advertising campaign for the Fresco menu, which features Dougherty's story in TV and print advertisements, and online. The company began offering the menu in its drive-through kiosks, and not just inside the restaurants.

Taco Bell isn't the only fast-food business to have jumped on the reduced-calorie bandwagon, but it is one of the few to promote their low-fat offerings so widely. Over the last few years several chains have introduced lighter menu items with less fat: Dunkin' Donuts sells egg-white sandwiches. Quiznos offers a 500-calorie-and-under menu. Starbucks has panini sandwiches with 400 calories or less. In 2004, McDonald's briefly offered Go Active! Happy Meals for Adults (complete with pedometer), but these days sells items, like a grilled chicken sandwich, without promoting their low-fat attributes.

Then there's Subway, which, besides its 230-to-380-calorie Fresh Fit subs, claims that most of its sandwiches are low-calorie, provided consumers don't add high-fat condiments. The chain shot to diet fame 10 years ago when Jared Fogle

said that he lost 245 pounds by eating Subway fare for lunch and dinner.

Hoping to repeat that success, Subway recruited Shay Sorrells, a contestant on "The Biggest Loser," to be a spokeswoman. Sorrells lost 161 pounds on that show, but her weight still hovers around 315 pounds.

The recent promotional activity surrounding the weight-loss potential of eating at places like Taco Bell and Subway has drawn the attention of experts, who have conflicting opinions on whether fast food is a healthy dieting tool.

"Fast food in and of itself is not at all necessarily a problem or insult for developmentally mature or healthy adults," said Dr. Peter Pressman, an internist with the Navy Medical Corps in Jacksonville, Fla. "If the caloric input — regardless of composition — is not excessive, there's no inherent physiologic evil."

Dr. Stephen Sinatra, a cardiologist in Manchester, Conn., and the author of "The Fast Food Diet," agreed. "With fast food you get the good, the bad and the ugly," he said. "It's like weaving your way through the minefield. You can step on a mine and blow up."

He noted that a bean burrito provided fiber, protein and amino acids. "However, if you do the Fresco Burrito Supreme Chicken it's got an enormous amount of sodium — 1,410 milligrams — which is a disaster," Sinatra said.

The American Dietetic Association recommends adults consume fewer than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day. But a study reported in the January issue of The New England Journal of Medicine suggests that consuming less salt by even a small amount can reduce cases of heart disease and stroke as much as reducing weight, lowering cholesterol and stopping smoking.

Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, the lead author of the study and an assistant professor of medicine and epidemiology at the University of Califor-



Metro Creative Graphics

OVER THE LAST few years several chains have introduced lighter menu items, but health experts are asking if you can really eat fast food and still lose weight.

nia, San Francisco, said low-fat items offered at fast-food restaurants were often salty because sodium "makes things taste good."

She added, "When we take these other things out of food we often add back salt, and the salt is so far in excess of what would be considered a healthy quantity that it definitely counteracts any healthy benefits."

Rob Poetsch, a Taco Bell spokesman, said his company was hoping to reduce the sodium in its main ingredients without sacrificing taste.

Some nutritionists suggest that consumers be careful of anything the fast-food business has to say about reduced-calorie, or healthy, options. "Even if they're offering healthy fare, go into it with a wary eye — more likely they're tricking you," said Elizabeth Somer, the author of "Eat Your Way to Happiness," and a registered dietitian in Salem, Ore. "The fast-food restaurants have not led the troops in healthy eating yet, so there's no reason to believe they're going to change their colors now."

Morgan Spurlock, who dined at McDonald's for a month and documented his experiences in the 2004 film "Super Size Me," is agnostic at the notion of dieting on fast-food fare. His experiment resulted in a 25-pound weight gain. "When I first heard about this, I was speechless," Spurlock wrote in an e-mail message. "Everyone would rather take the easy way out instead of educating themselves and taking the time to eat the most nutritious food. I personally am holding out for the White Castle diet."

Others worry that the companies might not accurately report nutritional information, which is a legitimate concern. A study published in The Journal of the American Dietetic Association found that the caloric content of food from 29 Boston chain restaurants and 10 frozen meals sold in supermarkets averaged 18 percent more calories than the stated values.

Susan Roberts of Tufts University, the lead author of the study, planned to include some fast food and frozen

foods in her 2008 book, "The 'I' Diet." As research, she spent 10 days eating a variety of foods, including one fast-food meal a day, trying to lose weight. But she did not shed weight and attributes that largely to fast and commercially prepared food. "At first I thought it was just the sodium, but it went on," said Roberts, who is planning a more expansive version of the study.

Taco Bell argues that the Fresco menu is not a diet plan. "It is not a prescriptive diet in this case, more in style with the word 'diet' being your overall food intake for a day," Poetsch said.

Indeed, on Taco Bell's Web site, a disclaimer reads: "The Drive-Thru Diet menu is not a weight-loss program," and goes on to suggest that consumers interested in a healthier life "pay attention to total calorie and fat intake and regular exercise."

Dr. Kelly Brownell, director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale, does not object to Taco Bell's lighter meals per se. He believes fast food restaurants should offer leaner fare, "given the health of the nation."

"I don't think they're committing nutrition fraud," he said. "KFC has some grilled chicken, and you're better off with grilled rather than fried. If you go to Taco Bell, you're better off having something off the Fresco Menu."

But Brownell said marketing these foods as weight loss tools could be misleading. "Making it seem like a fast food restaurant is a place to go when you're trying to lose weight, and making the restaurant itself seem healthier than it really is a violation of the public trust," he said.

Ruth Carey, a registered dietitian in Portland, Ore., and a consultant for Taco Bell on the Drive Thru Diet menu, said that Taco Bell had no trans fats in any of its offerings, and that four of the seven Fresco items contained 350 milligrams of sodium or less. "Also, not everyone is sodium sensitive and has high blood pressure," she said.

BRIEFS

CLASSES

- **AARP Driver Safety Program** provides adults age 50 and older with a driving refresher class. Dates and times vary. For more information, call Excelsa Health at (877) 771-1234.

- **Active Parenting of Teens**, Center for Family Life, 125 N. Fifth St., Indiana (724) 463-8595.

- **Beginning Yoga**, 5 p.m. Wednesdays at IRMC, (724) 357-8088.

- **Children in the Middle** is a program started by the Center for Divorce Education. The parenting education class is effective at changing both parents' attitudes and behavior about divorce-related problems faced by their children. For more information, call the Community Guidance Center at (724) 465-5576.

- **Cyber CPR** is a new way to learn adult CPR and first aid through the American Red Cross. Participants are issued a user name and password and a link to the training website. They are then able to take the knowledge portion of the course online at their own pace. The CPR and first aid skills are then tested in the classroom with an instructor. The online portion must be completed before attending the skills session. For more information or to register, call the Indiana chapter at (724) 465-5678 or e-mail bburns@icarc.org.

- **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.

- **Drop 10 Pounds in 10 Weeks** is a new weight-management program designed to help you lose 10 pounds of your body weight in 10 weeks with regular exercise, balanced nutrition, lifestyle changes and group motivation. This innovative program shows you how to add a healthy balance to your life with the power of 10. Get the Drop 10 in 10 tool kit, which

includes all the tools you need to make real changes for real results. Classes begin at 11 a.m. Sept. 17 or 6 p.m. Oct. 4. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

- **Eat Well for Life II** is a four-week lifestyle improvement program promoting wellness and long-term weight management through balanced nutrition, cooking demonstrations and other hands-on experiences. The next class begins Thursday. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

- **First Step Joint Replacement Education** is for patients anticipating a hip or knee replacement surgery at Excelsa Health. This orientation program should be scheduled as close to the surgery date as possible. Morning or evening sessions are available monthly on a rotating basis.

- For more information, call Excelsa Health at (724) 689-0100.

- **HOPE** is a four-week lifestyle management program focusing on how to have stronger bones to live a longer, healthier life. The program provides an overview of osteoporosis, education on healthy nutrition, physical exercise, medication options, stress management and more. Call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

- **Introduction to Disaster classes** teach how American Red Cross fits in when there is a disaster and how you can help your community. For more information, call the Indiana chapter at (724) 465-5678.

- **Look Good Feel Better** is for women undergoing cancer treatment to learn how to cope with the appearance-related side effects of treatment, thus regaining a sense of self-confidence and control over their lives. This group meets the second Monday of the month at the Arnold Palmer Pavilion, Mountain View Medical Park, in conjunction with the American Cancer Society. Call (888) 227-5445.

- **Ornish Advantage** is a seven-week program to help prevent heart disease and improve health. The program focuses on nutrition,

stress management, exercise, nutrition and group support. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

- **Personal Nutrition Coaching** is a personalized program designed by a registered dietitian to address the needs of an individual seeking nutrition counseling relating to weight management, heart health or diabetes.

- For more information or an appointment, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

- **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.

- **Working with Total Diversity**, through American Red Cross, teaches how to assist service providers in providing for the needs of the changing populations in the communities served and how to overcome prejudices and stereotypes within communities. For more information, call the Indiana chapter at (724) 465-5678.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS

- **Adoption Support**, Catholic Charities, provides meetings based on need. For information, call (724) 463-8806.

- **Breathing Partners** is a support group for people with respiratory problems. Meetings vary based on need. For more information, call the American Respiratory Alliance of Western Pennsylvania at (800) 220-1990.

- **Cancer Support Group**, American Cancer Society, 1165 Philadelphia St., Indiana, offers a Phoenix Support Group at 6:30 p.m. every Thursday. For more information, call (888) 227-5445 or (724) 248-1814.

- **Community Psychiatric Center's Parent Support Group**, for parents of children with behavioral difficulties, meets at Homer City Methodist Church from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday. For more information or to RSVP, call (724) 850-7200.

- **Diabetes Support Group** provides a dietitian and clinical nurse specialists to help people with diabetes develop and practice self-management.

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

- **Mothers of Preschoolers**, or MOPS, provides Christian-based groups with opportunities to make friends with other moms and share encouragement and practical tips for surviving the preschool years. For mothers of preschoolers from birth to age 5 and expectant mothers. Groups meet as follows:

- Blairsville Free Methodist Church, 9:15 to 11:30 a.m., first and third

Tuesdays, with a \$25 registration fee for MOPS International (scholarships available). For more information, call (724) 459-5255.

- Blairsville Christian Missionary Alliance Church, 7 to 8:30 p.m. second Monday, child care provided, (724) 668-7056.

- First Assembly of God Church, Indiana, 9:15 a.m., second and fourth Wednesdays, (724) 349-8180.

Home Health Answers

VNA

Presented by
Linda Bettinazzi
President/CEO

MAKING A CHOICE

Selecting a home health care agency is an important decision. In determining which agency to use, a number of factors should be considered. Is the agency licensed by your state? How many years has the agency been serving the community? Ask if the agency holds any accreditations, such as from Medicare. Obtain any printed materials outlining the agency's services and costs. How many hours per day and days per week are agency caregivers available? How is the "master plan" for the patient's care developed and individualized, and how often is it reviewed and modified? Ask about the agency's hiring and training procedures. The goal is to select the home health agency that best meets your needs.

The Visiting Nurse Association has the unique distinction of being Indiana County's only non-profit community based agency. The VNA team is made up of the finest home care nurses, therapists and support staff in our area. VNA is one of the major employers in Indiana County, working to keep you safe and independent at home. Choose the home team that has cared for our community for 40 years! Affiliated with Indiana Regional Medical Center.

Call 724-463-6340 for more information.

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

New Procedure To Correct Bunions

A procedure called Mini TightRope is a new technique to treat bunions without the need for the standard invasive, bone-breaking surgery that is currently used to correct bunions. The standard surgery requires cutting and repositioning bone followed by two months of recovery on crutches. The Mini TightRope involves a minimally invasive toe-binding process that allows for crutch-free walking, less pain and half the recovery time. Patients can walk after the procedure with a special shoe or short walking boot. If you have bunions, talk to your doctor about this new option.

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