



## THIS IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER VIA THE INTERNET

September 2003



Written by David McMillin

### Mediterranean Diet

With all the hoopla and controversy associated with fad diets these days, it's great to see a sensible, traditional diet receive strong support from major research studies. Previous issues of this newsletter have applauded the Mediterranean diet as a delicious and healthy approach to food that is essentially consistent with the Cayce diet recommendations. A new study has confirmed that people who eat a traditional Mediterranean diet live longer and have better health than those who don't.

The traditional Mediterranean diet varies somewhat from country to country, but typically emphasizes an abundance of vegetables, legumes, fruits, nuts, unrefined cereals, and olive oil. Moderate amounts fish and dairy (mostly yogurt and cheese) and alcohol (usually wine at meals) are consumed. Small amounts of red meat and poultry are eaten.

#### The Latest Research

Since the 1960s, scientists have noted low rates of coronary heart disease and certain cancers in Greece and other countries in the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean diet and related

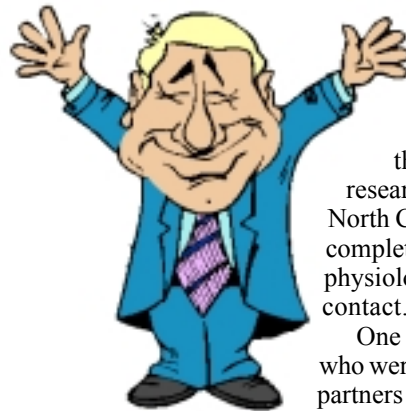
life-style have been mainly credited with these positive outcomes.

A major study published in the June 23 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) provides the strongest support thus far for a dietary role in these health outcomes. The study involving 22,043 participants began in 1994 with the recruitment of adults in Greece. Researchers excluded anyone already diagnosed with a serious medical condition.



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### Hugs Heal



Loving contact not only feels good but can provide protective benefits to your heart and blood pressure. This is the conclusion reached by researchers at the University of North Carolina who have recently completed a study focusing on the physiological effects of physical contact.

One hundred adult volunteers who were married or long-term partners held hands while watching a pleasant ten-minute video followed by a twenty-second hug. A control group of eighty-five participants rested calmly without partners. Both groups were then asked to discuss something stressful that had recently caused them to be upset or angry.

Usually talking about stressful experiences increases heart rate and blood pressure. That is exactly what happened to people in the control group who experienced twice the rise in blood pressure and an increase of heart rate by ten beats per minute compared to the "huggers."

This is just the latest in a long line of research studies linking loving contact with improved health. The Touch Research Institute (TRI) at the University of Miami Medical School has led the way in documenting the favorable outcomes of loving touch. One of the most powerful physiological indicators of the healing power of touch is the dip in the stress hormone cortisol that occurs when we experience loving touch. Gentle, caring touch has also been shown to boost immune function.

Some of the strongest research evidence for loving contact

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**RE: Colitis Tonic – In the article on *Toxic Medicine* you indicated that the commercial suppliers of the colitis tonic may substitute ingredients for one of the herbs in the tonic. How can I know if the tonic contains the original formula from the readings? If a substitute is used, how do I know if it will work like the original herb? Can I make the tonic on my own or does it require a pharmacist? C.E., email**

The herbal colitis tonic discussed in that article is derived from a formula from reading 2085-1. The commercial product based on this reading is sold by at least two suppliers, both of which list the ingredients on the bottle. For the herb in question, check that the ingredient list contains “wild ginger.” Even this may not necessarily guarantee an exact match since “wild ginger” is a common name rather than a precise botanical designation. If you really want to be sure, contact the manufacturer to verify that the ingredient is *Asarum canadense* (also called Canadian snakeroot), not culinary ginger or a European variety.

The suitability of a substitution is more difficult to ascertain. This issue has come up from time to time over the years with various Cayce health products. Most often it is simply a matter of certain ingredients becoming difficult or even impossible to obtain. As in the case of wild ginger, some substances or medical devices can face regulatory hurdles with the FDA or some other governmental agency. Perhaps basic business practices come into play as some ingredients may still be available but priced so high as to make the final product unaffordable to the consumer. Keep in mind that these dynamics were at play during Cayce’s era, too.

Clearly, Edgar Cayce did sometimes substitute ingredients or entire products based on availability and suitability. This can be confusing to a casual inquirer who focuses on several readings on a topic without paying attention to the chronology and the background information supplied with the readings. The variation in recommended treatments can sometimes be understood entirely in terms of availability of products rather than some exotic explanation.

Cayce occasionally explained the medicinal action of specific herbs which is especially helpful in understanding the why and wherefore of substitution. In a couple of readings (1019-1, 340-46), he gave rather vague descriptions of how wild ginger works with the digestive organs, especially the flow of the lymph through the alimentary canal. As far as I know, the readings did not mention a likely substitute for wild ginger in this context and I cannot think of a close match.

To further complicate the issue, it may be that the relatively mild toxicity of the wild ginger is helpful in cases of ulcerative colitis. In most instances the readings cite the after effects of “intestinal flu” as the primary cause of this condition. If there is some type of residual virus in the intestinal tract, the aristolochic acid in the wild ginger may be acting as a gentle form of chemotherapy to eradicate the virus. This is strictly conjecture, but points out the difficulty in substituting ingredients when the intended medicinal action is unclear.

As I pointed out in the article, the aristolochic acid in wild ginger is toxic. At this time it is difficult to compare this native herb with some of the Chinese herbs that caused problems in the European diet clinics. The dosage issue also complicates the discussion. I have been trying to track down more detailed information without success so far. The Cayce usage of herbal tonics is typically low dosage for brief periods of time in cycles of days or weeks. I simply don’t know how this compares with the amount and frequency of dosage for the Chinese herbs in question.

Many of the herbal tonic formulas prescribed in the readings can be made in the home setting. In fact, this clearly seems to be the intention in many of the readings. With regard to the formula in reading 2085-1, the main difficulty is in obtaining all of the ingredients as given. The two problematic ingredients in this formula are the wild ginseng and elixir of lactated pepsin. Wild ginseng is rare and expensive. Elixir of lactated pepsin was sold over the counter in Cayce’s era. I have been told that it is still available that way in Canada and in some European countries. Wild ginger and stillingia can be purchased on the Internet.

As a resource, I have posted the entire 2085-1 reading on the True Health web site along with some supplementary information on processing herbs. Basically, you will have to decide whether it is worth the effort to compound the tonic yourself. If you take this route, you will also have to make a decision about the possible risks and potential benefits of using ingredients such as wild ginger. D.M.

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Participants were asked to list the foods they ate, including frequency and portion sizes. Information on exercise and physical activity was also collected. The detailed questionnaires utilized a ten-point scale to measure adherence to the Mediterranean diet. An increase of two points on the scale (indicating an increased compliance with the diet) was associated with a 25percent reduction in the overall death rate, a 33 percent reduction in deaths from coronary heart disease, and a 24percent reduction in cancer deaths.

Interestingly, there was no significant association between individual food groups and total mortality. Previously, experts in this field had singled out certain specific foods, such as olive oil, as primary factors in the beneficial effects of the diet. Apparently it is the balance of healthy foods that produces the positive effect.

The Mediterranean diet actually matches closely the guidelines promoted by the American Heart Association. The key is paying attention to how much you eat. Watch portion sizes and get some physical exercise to maximize the benefits of the diet.

Also, don’t fudge on the types of foods you include. Regularly stuffing yourself with pizza doesn’t qualify as following the Mediterranean diet!

### The Basic Cayce Diet

I guess we shouldn’t be too surprised that the Mediterranean diet is so similar to the standard nutritional suggestions recommended in the readings. Cayce tended to draw upon the collective wisdom of traditional cultures in his health readings.

His frequent endorsement of olive oil, vegetables, fruits, whole grain cereals, and fish is consistent with the basics of the Mediterranean diet. Following the diet is the key! For those of you who work with the ideals exercise, this diet could be a delicious ideal to apply.

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# Big Food Fight Ahead?

Kraft Foods, the nation's largest food company, announced it will alter some of its recipes, reduce portion sizes, and eliminate promotions in schools. In a move intended to provide healthier snacks and fight obesity in children, Kraft is forming an expert advisory council to review products and suggest additional changes that can be put into effect over the next two to three years. Kraft's initiative is expected to push other food companies to make similar changes in the way they manufacture and promote their products, especially to children.

The trend is prevalent. McDonald's is testing a Happy Meal with an option to replace French fries with a bag of fresh, sliced fruit. Frito-Lay has committed to eliminating all transfatty acids from its chips and snacks. Kellogg's has purchased Kashi, a line of cereals with no highly refined sugars or preservatives.

The food companies claim that they are responding to the marketplace by providing health-conscious consumers with more choices. Clearly there is some truth in this assertion – health foods with reduced fat, salt, and sugar account for about \$5 billion in sales each year. However some observers believe that the changes are part of a preemptive legal strategy, rather than simply acts of benevolence.

## Legal Battles Ahead

The obesity-lawsuit movement surfaced last year when a New York lawyer filed suit, blaming McDonald's for a customer's obesity, diabetes, and related diseases. Then a California attorney sued to ban Oreos. The movement continued to pick up steam as more personal injury lawyers have gotten into the act.

I confess to having mixed feelings when these stories were first broadcast. I chuckled at the apparent silliness of the lawsuits while also inwardly hoping that something could be done to counter the power of the major food suppliers who often seem more focused on company profits than the health of its customers. I found myself rationalizing that people who get suckered into high-fat meals have only themselves to blame while also knowing that what we casually refer to as "free will"



is not always free. I'll come back to this inner dialogue a little later.

As this story has unfolded, I find myself more hopeful that constructive change can occur. Individuals are often powerless against huge corporations, but there is power in numbers.

As evidence of the power of class action litigation against a major food company, Hindu and vegetarian groups forced McDonald's to settle a suit for \$12.5 million because McDonald's had promoted its French fries as being cooked in vegetable oil without stating that beef flavoring had been used. The movement has gained further support from the recent declarations from the Surgeon General and Center for Disease Control ranking obesity as an epidemic affecting the nation's health status.

Kelly Brownell, director of Yale University's Center for Eating and Weight Disorders, has observed, "There is no difference between Ronald McDonald and Joe Camel [cigarette advertising directed at children]. ... We need to start thinking about this in a more militant way." Brownell and others including Center for Science in the Public Interest director Margo Wootan advocate for a "sin tax" on junk food and a ban on junk food advertising directed at children.

Some states are considering legal action similar to the tobacco litigation suits they successfully pursued several years ago. Just as in the tobacco cases, one of the major obstacles is proving causation – i.e., that a particular product is responsible for an individual's obesity and health problems. The apparent strategy is to follow the precedent of recovering Medicaid costs based on statistical analysis of market share and estimated effects of obesity on health conditions. Thus if it is determined by statistical proof that obesity causes a certain percentage of heart disease at a certain cost, states could theoretically recover those costs in court.

## Food Addiction

Major food companies have done their best to distance themselves from the "tobacco wars" scenario by insisting that choosing to eat certain foods is a matter of

choice – not an addictive behavior as was shown to be the case with tobacco products.

This defensive line of reasoning has been weakened by recent studies that indicate a possible addictive process in certain problematic foods. Research suggests that cheese, chocolate, sugar, and meat all trigger the release of opiate-like substances that stimulate the brain's pleasure center resulting in repetitive cycles of craving and indulgence.

For example when casein (the principal protein in cheese) is digested, it is transformed into morphine-like compounds called casomorphins. These substances may contribute to the mother-baby bond that occurs during nursing.

Naloxone, an opiate-blocker used to treat morphine and heroin overdoses, decreases the desire for chocolate, sugar, cheese, and meat. This research suggests that food-related cravings are linked to drug-like effects produced within the brain.

One question that lies ahead in potential future court battles is whether food manufacturers have intentionally manipulated the addictive qualities of its products as was proven in the tobacco cases.

Furthermore, if certain foods are recognized to have the potential for addiction, this changes the legal parameters of the issue, particularly with regard to marketing of such foods to children. Legally we accept that children do not have the same responsibility for their choices as adults. Thus children are usually viewed as not capable of making such choices and are protected by law, whereas adults can choose to indulge in self-destructive behaviors at their own peril.

This was a major issue in the tobacco lawsuits that focused on the ads targeting children and will likely be a key point as the food fight scenario plays out. Some experts claim that the recent changes in policy by major food companies are an attempt to address this concern before it becomes a legal matter.

## Soul Choices

I suppose one could view all this as simply the greed of the big food companies vs. the greed of lawyers. That does have a certain metaphysical dynamic to it – like attracts like. If it were not for the enormous suffering associated with obesity-linked diseases, I suppose the whole affair could be amusing – like choosing sides at a sporting event.

However there is another level of metaphysics at play here that has to do with soul choices – about our development as

**Food Fight** continued on page 4

# Health News



## B Vitamin For Depression

A study published in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* (2003;60:618-626) suggests that some people with depression might have difficulty metabolizing the B vitamin folate. The findings lend support to the usage of nutritional supplements to prevent and treat depression.

Norwegian researchers noted that depression occurs more often in people with high levels of the amino acid homocysteine in their blood, and in people with a gene that encodes a protein used in processing folate. Homocysteine is a normal by-product of metabolism. The folate acid contained in nutritional supplements aids in breaking down homocysteine.

The researchers concluded that a lack of folate and/or disturbed folate metabolism may partially cause or contribute to depression in some people. Apparently the body may need B vitamin to create neurochemicals in the brain, a shortage of which can lead to depression. Previous studies had indicated that folic acid supplements may increase the positive effects of antidepressants.

## Drinking Tea May Help Lower Cholesterol

Tea consumption has been associated with decreased cardiovascular risk, but potential mechanisms of benefit have not yet been clearly identified. Researchers at Vanderbilt University Medical Center indicate that there is a direct relationship between consumption of tea and lowered cholesterol levels. Their study reported in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* (2003;163:1448-1453) tested a 374-milligram tablet ("tea pill") that contained extracts from green tea and black tea that was enriched with the antioxidant theaflavin. The study participants were 240 men and women in China, all of whom had elevated cholesterol levels. Each day for 12 weeks the participants took the tea pill or a placebo. The tea pill ingredients were the equivalent of drinking 35 cups of high quality black tea and 7 of green tea.


The 16 percent drop in bad cholesterol (low density lipoprotein or LDL) among the subjects who took the tea pill was regarded as a "robust" effect by the researchers. Since the tea pill was a mixture of antioxidants, more research will be required to determine which ingredient(s) produced the effect.

## Hugs cont'd from page 1

has come from the study of infants who received a fifteen-minute massage twice per week. They cried less, gained more weight, showed greater sociability, and exhibited fewer signs of stress than infants who did not receive the massages. One particularly important TRI study on premature babies in neonatal units showed that "preemies" who received massage therapy several times daily gained weight forty-seven times faster and left the hospital six days sooner than those who did not get massage.

Clinical psychologist and TRI founder Tiffany Field believes that loving touch is especially essential for children. She observes, "The dose of touch is as critical as getting kids the right exercise and diet. Parents feel that they have a better feeling for what their kids are needing and respond to, a better sense of their relationship with their child from the physical intimacy of touching. We know it's great for

growth and weight gain (for premature babies), but full-term babies are also less fussy and sleep better."

Now that science has documented the health benefits of loving contact for children and adults, put that knowledge into action. Give and receive massages. Be sure to greet friends, family, and acquaintances more often with hugs, handshakes, and pats on the back. 

## Food Fight cont'd from page 3

individuals and as a species that we must acknowledge. We all chose to incarnate in flesh bodies. We all make choices each day about what we eat and how we live – cumulative choices that literally determine health and illness, life and death.

Coming to terms with the desires of a flesh body, the physical desire patterns and cravings that we take on and nurture, is part of our earthly experience. If these patterns overwhelm us and take control of our lives, they are addictions. But physi-

cal addictions are small change compared to the ferociousness of the spiritual rebellion that can underlie such patterns.


Edgar Cayce used the symbols in the book of Revelation to explain these powerful soul patterns. The animal beasts and related figures in the first chapters of the Revelation symbolize the carnal, earthy desires of the flesh body. The beasts of spiritual rebellion that rise up in later chapters of John's vision manifest an entirely different dynamic. They are part of our initial separation from the Source.

If you are like me, you will probably encounter both kinds of beast as you follow this story and apply it in your daily experience. You will likely sense (and it is a sensation) the visceral craving for an unhealthy snack – the addictive power of sugar, fat, and sensual flavors. This is the physical beast of our biology. Nurture it and the beast becomes stronger. Cravings are powerful biological urges.

The other beast will show itself only if we actually determine to subdue the fleshly desires. The beast of spiritual rebellion will rise up angrily from within to assert that no one has the right to tell us what we can eat and not eat. "Forget the food police and social do-gooders! I'll do what I want to do even if it kills me." Are you familiar with the call of this beast?

Big food companies know these beasts very well. They concoct foods to entice the flesh desires while subtly reminding us that we have free will – that no one has the right to tell us what to do.

As the possibility of big food fights plays out in our legal and political systems, pay attention to the inner battles that daily occur within your consciousness. Awareness is the first step in dealing with the beasts within us. Ideal-based conscious choice and action can then follow. That is truly free will – will that frees us rather than making us dependent on addictions.

On the bright side, even if the voluntary changes by Kraft and other big food companies are simply a strategy to limit future litigation, the result will likely be healthier children growing into healthier adults. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Mark McClellan noted that such changes could start an important trend. "That's the kind of thing that FDA ought to be encouraging. It can have an important public health impact." 

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