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WHAT YOUR SKIN SAYS ABOUT YOUR LIVER HEALTH

You can't live without your liver. Livers help clean blood, ensuring your body is free from toxins. It also produces bile, an acid that digests waste. Unfortunately, livers can be damaged in a myriad of ways. Catching liver disease early allows doctors to treat it quickly, so it's crucial to check for any symptoms of liver problems, especially if you are at risk.

Yellow Skin

Commonly called "jaundice," a yellowing of the skin and eyes is a telltale sign of liver disease. The liver's inability to filter out bilirubin causes this unseemly syndrome. This important yellow substance is made during the breakdown of blood cells and used by the body to help digest food. A healthy, functioning liver filters out most bilirubin.

Itching

Besides jaundice, a common symptom of bilirubin buildup is itchy skin. Bilirubin

creates "bile salts" that are deposited into the skin. The result is intense itchiness. Note that itching can be from a variety of causes, including allergies.

Spider Angioma

These superficial red marks appear like a mass of tendrils centering around one point and look like a spider. While they are relatively common, an excess of spider angioma can indicate liver problems. Having three or more at a time can be a sign of a more significant issue, including hepatitis, rheumatoid arthritis, or cirrhosis.

Red Palms

Rashy red palms — or palmer erythema — can point to many problems. Excess estrogen causes this symptom, so hormonal changes are often the culprit. Nonetheless, liver disease makes it difficult for the body to break down estrogen.



Easy Bruising

Clotting proteins, which help the body repair injuries, are produced in the liver. If the liver is diseased or damaged, it may produce fewer proteins. In addition, liver disease lowers the amount of blood platelets. This also can cause easy bruising.

Everyone needs their liver to live, so protect the health of your liver. Drinking in moderation, taking vitamin B, and getting regular exercise can promote a healthy liver.

From Fruit Pouches to Carbohydrates

How Eating Habits Affect Dental Development

I've always been passionate about helping my patients achieve optimal oral health, not just with treatment but also with proper education. That's why I have this newsletter! March is National Nutrition Month, so I thought I would share a bit of knowledge not everyone knows: The foods we eat and how we eat them can significantly impact our dental health. Now is the perfect time to delve into the vital connection between nutrition and dentistry.

When it comes to nutrition, it's not just about the nutrients in our foods but also about the way we consume them. Take, for example, those convenient fruit pouches we often give to our kids. While they may seem harmless, the act of sucking on them can actually affect the development of a child's jaw and teeth. The same goes for bottles and sippy cups!

Think about it: When babies nurse from the breast, they use different muscles and motions compared to when they drink from a bottle or eat from a fruit pouch. **This difference in delivery can impact the shape of their jaw and even lead to issues like tongue thrusting and open bites, which can cause lisps and other speaking difficulties down the road.**

Pacifiers and thumb-sucking can also play a role in jaw deformation, as can the continuous sucking motion some adults exhibit. Even habits formed in the first six months of life can have lasting effects on dental development well into adulthood.

But it's not just about how we eat; it's also about what we eat. While

sugar often gets the blame for cavities, acidic foods can be just as harmful. **Foods like bread and milk containing fermentable carbohydrates can lead to cavity formation if not adequately managed.**

That's where saliva comes in. Our saliva plays a crucial role in breaking down food particles in our mouth and neutralizing acids to prevent cavities. What we eat directly impacts the composition of our saliva and how well it can break down food particles and acids. Two surefire ways to keep your saliva healthy are having a well-balanced diet and drinking plenty of water, which can help promote healthy saliva production and protect our teeth from decay.

As if we needed another reason to prioritize our health, right? But it's essential, especially for children. Many parents focus solely on getting their kids to eat without considering the impact of how they eat. By paying attention to their food and the delivery of it, we can help prevent dental issues before they even start.

So, let's make National Nutrition Month a time to focus not only on eating nutritious foods but also on how we consume them. Let's encourage healthy eating habits and proper dental care from an early age so our children can enjoy a lifetime of healthy smiles. After all, prevention is always better than treatment, and when it comes to our dental health, it's never too early to start!




PLEASE, HAVE A SEAT

The Many Benefits of the Imaginary Chair



As we age, exercise becomes more and more critical. A strong core and legs maintain muscle and bone strength all over the body, which helps prevent falling injuries as we age. Falling can result in hip, forearm, humerus, and pelvis fractures, which immediately affect mobility and personal autonomy. So, it's no wonder that exercising and maintaining strength, balance, and flexibility are so important.

One of the oft-overlooked exercises for strengthening the whole body is the imaginary chair or wall sitting. While it may look easy, it can be intense. This single exercise works the calves, glutes, hamstrings, core, and quads. However, practicing just over a minute a day can increase your endurance, joint stabilization, and strength. Before long, you'll notice a real improvement in your stamina.

Why are wall sits uniquely suited for older adults?

Exercises such as squats, calf raises, walking, stair climbing, hiking, and biking benefit body strength. However, these exercises require mobility, which not all people have. Because the wall sit is an isometric exercise, a type of workout holding a static position, it is recommended for people with limited mobility in their knees, ankles, and hips because squatting increases joint stability. But even if you are fully mobile, there are plenty of reasons to try this exercise:

A Massive Calorie Burner

In just a few seconds of attempting a wall sit your heart rate increases, burning a higher number of calories. As you progress, the amount of calories burned will increase exponentially.

Increased Flexibility and Muscle Strength

A strong lower body and core are essential to building up overall strength. This exercise concentrates on the bottom half of the body and boosts power and stability. It also improves your posture, which is good for increased stability.

Improved Focus

Holding a wall sit takes a lot of concentration and willpower. No

matter how long you've been doing them, they get more challenging as you tack on more seconds. Putting all your energy into maintaining a proper pose helps you build focus and concentration, which can benefit you in other areas of your life.

Perform wall sits correctly.

Wall sits are simple, and you don't need any special equipment to do them; all you need is a sturdy wall and to follow these simple steps:

1. Lean your back against a wall and slowly walk your feet out in front of you, keeping your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Slide down the wall and sink into a squat position until your legs are at a 90-degree angle.
3. Keep your abs tight and hold this position as long as you can.
4. Push off with your feet and slide up the wall to return to a standing position.

If you're just beginning, you don't have to get into a full 90 degrees, as it may be too difficult. Just slide far enough down for it to be challenging but not impossible. Also, try to hold the position for about half a minute. You can increase your time as you gain strength, and then you can slide a little closer to the full 90 degrees to continue challenging yourself. If you want to include upper-body exercises, add dumbbells to perform shoulder raises, lateral raises, and bicep curls to break up the monotony of wall sits and get an all-body workout.

Wall sits are a challenging exercise you can do just about anywhere. They are perfect for maintaining flexibility and strength as you grow older. You'll reduce your chance of injury and live a longer, more fulfilling life.

Don't Shelve Vitamin B12

Getting your daily intake of vitamin B12 is crucial, as it keeps blood and nerves healthy. It even helps build DNA! B12 supplements and a vitamin-rich diet provide many advantages. While most people get enough vitamin B12 from their regular diets, vegetarians, adults over 50, and people with underlying conditions must ensure they get enough of this powerful vitamin for these five reasons.

Keeps Blood Cells Healthy

Vitamin B12 is very good for your blood cell health. It helps keep them small, round, and flowing smoothly. Meanwhile, a deficiency can make them larger and oddly shaped. The malformed cells have much more trouble flowing from the marrow to the bloodstream. This slowness is one of the causes of anemia, making you tired and weak.

Protects Eyesight

As we get older, our risk for macular deterioration goes up. Our retinas start to lose their effectiveness until our eyesight diminishes. Vitamin B12 reduces this retinal loss. Experts say that B12 might reduce the amount of a particular amino acid, which may contribute to macular deterioration.

Helps Heal Depression

Serotonin is a hormone responsible for our moods, thoughts, and brain power. Depression is linked to B12 deficiency, and many anti-depressants work by increasing the hormone. People with lower B12 levels can feel less depressed by taking supplements.

Keeps Your Skin, Nails, and Hair Healthy

Getting the right amount of B12 is essential for the health of your skin, nails, and hair. Vitamin B12 deficiency can cause hair loss, discoloration, and dry skin patches. These issues may be because proper blood flow is necessary for keratin growth, a protein that is essential to all three.

Helps Fight Memory Loss

As we get older, brain deterioration is one of our biggest worries. Memory loss is a natural consequence of aging. Vitamin B12 deficiency correlates with memory loss and even brain atrophy. Once we get older, getting one's B12 levels checked is extremely important.

If you're worried about your B12, consult with your primary care doctor. Doing so is especially important if you're experiencing symptoms like fatigue, memory loss, and anxiety. There are many ways to combat B12 deficiency, so long as you know about it. When it comes to your health, knowledge is power!



TAKE A BREAK!



Bell Pepper Sandwich

Inspired by [TheSpruceEats.com](https://www.thespruceeats.com)



INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium bell pepper, any color
- 2-3 tbsp cream cheese
- 1 tsp whole-grain mustard
- 2 oz ham (or other deli meat), thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 oz Swiss cheese, thinly sliced
- 1/2 small cucumber, cut into 6-8 thin slices
- 2 tbsp guacamole or a few slices of avocado
- Dash of salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS

1. On a cutting board, remove the stem of the bell pepper with a sharp knife. Cut the pepper in half lengthwise and remove the ribs and seeds.
2. Lay the pepper halves on the cutting board and spread cream cheese inside each half. Spread whole-grain mustard on top of the cream cheese.
3. Layer your deli meat, cheese, cucumbers, and guacamole on each bell pepper half. Add a dash of salt and pepper, then combine both halves and serve!