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## *The Natural Athlete Newsletter January 2010*

### **Cosmetic Safety (guys read this too!)**

A friend of mine came across this great website to help women determine how dangerous their personal current cosmetic brands are to their body. Not only that, but it has great information about a lot of common household chemicals. Please use this link to test your personal cosmetic and hygiene items as well as your entire family's items. [www.cosmeticdatabase.com](http://www.cosmeticdatabase.com)

If the link does not work in your browser, please put it into your search engine. Ignorance is not bliss! I help far too many women that have hormone and toxic burdens from cosmetics in my clinical practice. And now we are seeing these problems in children as well.

So...lets make it a point of helping as many friends and family members as possible. PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION and forward this e-mail.

There are a lot of cosmetics and self-care products out there that are trying to capitalize on the whole 'natural' trend. While these products use meaningless, but catchy, terms like "pure", "safe", "natural", etc. they actually contain well-known harmful substances. These days, manufacturers can put almost any kind of wording on the label to sell an item...but that doesn't mean that those words describe the ingredients!

### **Is Running Bad For Your Knees?**

Perhaps because it seems intuitively true, the notion persists that running, especially when done long-term and over long distances, is bad for the joints. Granted, with each foot strike a runner's knee withstands a force equal to eight times their body weight. A 150-pound person exerts about 1,200 pounds of impact with each step. It's no wonder people think that running will wear the joints out, leading to osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is a condition in which the protective cartilage thins and the bones in the joint now rest on each other.

However, nothing could be farther from the truth. Newer evidence shows that running does quite the opposite – it can actually protect people from developing joint problems later in life. There is no connection between running and arthritis.

Several long-term studies lend support to the theory that osteoarthritis (which affects 20 million Americans) is most often caused by genetic conditions and obesity. Obese people have 4 times the chance of developing osteoarthritis than their lean peers.

A healthy joint – one that functions normally – can withstand plenty of wear. Cartilage is the spongy material within joints that serves as a shock absorber. Because cartilage has such poor blood supply, it relies on the 'pumping' motion of the joint under weight to get its oxygen and nutrients found within the fluid in which the cartilage is bathed. As the cartilage is compressed, fluid is squished out, and when it is unloaded, fluid is sucked in. The motion created by a daily run or other weight-bearing workout serves to keep the cartilage healthy.

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Interestingly, these studies looked at runners who ran as little as 200 miles per year and those who ran 2,000 miles a year. There were no differences in joint wear between these runners, but the differences were pronounced between non-runners and runners as far as wear and tear.

And if this weren't good enough news, the study also noted that runners experienced less physical disability and had a 39% lower mortality rate than non-runners.

But remember, running is something that should be eased in to if you are just starting. Running is a rigorous exercise and injuries are common when large increases in mileage occur without proper training. If you are starting to run, adhere to the 10% rule – do not increase your distance by more than 10% each week. I also recommend getting with a coach or other training program if you are just starting out to avoid injury.

### **Vitamin D for Asthma**

By now you've heard how important it is to have healthy Vitamin D levels. Well if you have asthma it is even more important to make sure your levels are adequate, and that you maintain those levels.

Researchers found that low vitamin D correlated with poorer lung function, increased airway constriction, and reduced effectiveness of steroid treatment in asthmatics.

For every 1-point increase in blood vitamin D levels, lung function increased by a significant amount (I have spared you all the technical jargon here but if you are really interested send me an email). Additionally, it was found that in asthmatic adults with vitamin D insufficiency (below 30), they had almost twice the airway hyper reactivity than asthmatic adults with sufficient vitamin D levels.

If you have asthma (and even if you don't – adequate vitamin D is super important for many health conditions) you need to have your blood levels tested, and if you are below 40, it's important to supplement with vitamin D, especially in the winter. Don't just go out and start taking vitamin D – it is toxic if taken in excessive amounts. Get a test first, then work with a doctor to determine the amount you will need based on your lifestyle (indoor vs outdoor, time of year).

### **Sports Nutrition Consultations**

I am hoping that spring is right around the corner...I can feel it, especially after the great winter we've been having! At any rate, this is the time of year when people start planning their sporting activities. It's also the perfect time to get your nutrition plan squared away.

Dr. Barker provides nutrition consultations for active and athletic people looking to get their season underway. Nutrition is a cornerstone of fitness, and your training will definitely benefit from having a solid nutrition plan backing it. Knowing what to eat, when, and how much are keys to sports nutrition so you can derive the health benefits and not gain weight as your craving increase from increased training. Schedule an appointment so you can get the year started out right!

P.S. we also have a lot of expertise when it comes to supplements. We can direct you to those that truly make a difference, and avoid all the hype out there surrounding all the others.