



Holistic Medical Centre

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Protein

We have discussed protein intake with many of you and have mentioned its importance in relation to energy levels and low mood in previous newsletters. It is startling to us how many people we find protein deficient. The usual diet of toast and cereal for breakfast followed by a muffin then some sandwiches for lunch will be familiar to many of you. This means there is minimal protein until dinner. Adequate protein helps stabilise blood sugars, provides consistent energy levels and assists in weight loss but the individual amino acids that make up protein are also crucial. Tryptophan is an amino acid that is necessary for the production of serotonin and melatonin and is high in spirulina, meat and soy products such as tofu. Serotonin is important for mood and melatonin provides deep restful sleep as well as other important immune and antioxidant functions. Vasopressin (also called Arginine vasopressin) is another hormone that is also important for deep sleep as well

as memory, learning, concentration and it prevents excess urination. (Its other name is anti diuretic hormone and its deficiency is the cause of diabetes insipidus with frequent urination and increased thirst). This interesting hormone is made up of nine amino acids. Dopamine is another neurotransmitter that is important for mood, libido and is associated with feelings of euphoria. The amino acids that help this are phenylalanine (best source is soy foods but also in spirulina, meat and fish) theanine (in green tea), Acetyl-L-Carnitine made from Carnitine (beef and lamb are the best sources but seafood also has some) and tyrosine (made from phenylalanine). Noradrenaline also called Norepinephrine is made in the adrenal glands. It is a hormone in the blood and a neurotransmitter in the nervous system and is made from dopamine. Noradrenaline is important for mood, energy alertness, memory and the production of melatonin. It is

interesting to note that noradrenaline is used in the production of adrenaline so relaxation (i.e. a no adrenaline state) would make more noradrenaline available to the body. Back to protein!

Protein should be eaten with each meal and sorry a cheese sandwich wont cut it. Ideal sources are eggs, fish, meat, nuts or tofu. If vegetarian tempeh (Indonesian fermented soy product) should also be included. Legumes such as lentils and chickpeas should be combined with nuts and seeds for adequate protein such as lentil walnut burgers or hummus. You could try sardines or tuna on toast, an egg with breakfast or a tablespoon of almond butter in your smoothie. Lunch could be a lamb/tuna/egg/tofu salad with one of the many nut-based sauces available such as cashew and coriander pesto. If you are sensitive to Soy protein and dairy then any protein powder should be rice based. It would also be great to include nuts in your snacks.

Our favourite quote

Take a rest; a field that has rested gives a beautiful crop.
Ovid 43BC - 17AD

Health tips

A nice winter salad: Chopped watercress or mixed greens, sliced red onion, sunflower seeds (lightly dry-roasted then add a sprinkle of tamari), fresh cucumber and tomato (if available) and either boiled sliced egg and tuna or tofu that has been lightly fried in olive oil and tamari. Toss the whole lot with a little olive oil and add a few dollops of coriander and cashew nut pesto. Delicious!

Happy Patient file

We had a 15 year old boy visit us recently who had not recovered physically and emotionally after major surgery 2 years prior. This boy had been placed on antidepressants but he came to us exhausted with very disturbed sleep. He is now sleeping well and has much more energy. His vitamin D was the lowest we have seen so correcting this has been significant for this boy. General anaesthetics can have lingering effects on our emotional wellbeing so it is worth taking this into consideration in the post operative period.

News and more tips

Sadly this week we are saying farewell to Dr Inga Schader. Inga is leaving with her family for about a year to do rural locums. You may see her once in a while during that time but we will all certainly eagerly await her return to Auckland. In the meantime we wish her every happiness on her journeys.

Protein is needed to transport iron around your body. When doing a blood test it is very useful to get the whole four tests that make up the iron studies test. Often when testing for iron, only the iron stores

(ferritin) are tested. If the iron stores are normal then you will be told that your iron is fine. However we have noticed that people with a low protein intake have a low iron binding capacity (IBC). The iron binding capacity is a measure of something called transferrin. It is the molecule that binds to iron so that it can be transported through your body. There can be adequate iron in your body but if the IBC is low then that iron will not be transported around the body efficiently. If your protein is low, it is more likely that you have

problems with fluctuating blood sugar levels along with symptoms that mimic anaemia. These people will often feel anaemic but by increasing the protein intake, the IBC levels improve and these symptoms resolve. Another tip with iron; it is useful to measure the blood iron as well as iron stores (ferritin). Ferritin can increase when there is inflammation present Even though the stores are ok, the blood iron can still be low. In summary. Doing all four tests gives you a fuller picture and that is why we prefer doing

things this way.

Just to remind you that the products we prescribe at the clinic are practitioner-only products. This means they are potent and not available over the counter. For this reason they can only be prescribed in the context of a consultation. We are not able to sell these products to your friends and family without a consultation. We apologise if this causes any inconvenience but it is important to do thorough investigations before recommending a treatment or supplement.