June 2010

Volume 100

Food and Fitness

Defeating Dementia with Exercise

Inside this issue:

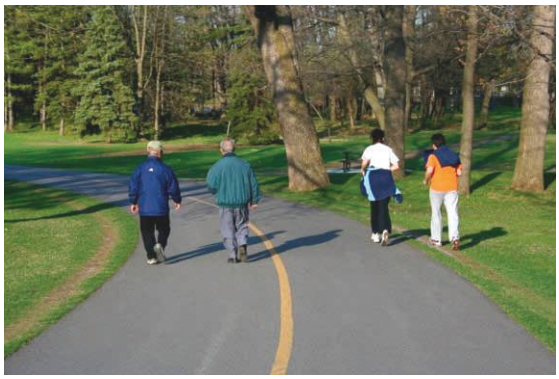
Blasted Belly Fat! 2

Lemon Verbena 3

Recipe Corner 4

Multiple studies over recent years have indicated that even small amounts of exercise can help to reduce the risk of dementia. A study conducted by the Group Health Cooperative in Seattle, WA found that exercise may reduce the risk of dementia as much as 40%.

The researchers found that exercise improved cognitive function, improved blood flow to the brain, and prevented brain tissue loss in the part of the brain that affects emotions and memory. These researchers also found that the benefits of exercise related to dementia were realized for persons who exercised as little as 15 minutes 3 times per week.



What can this mean for the average person? It means that in addition to exercising to burn calories, increase strength and fitness, improve ability to perform activities of daily living, and look good, your daily walk can also help prevent or delay age-related memory loss. And, it also means that to realize these benefits you do not have to be an Olympic athlete.

Web sites of interest

- alz.org
- aicr.org
- webmd.com
- super-herbs.net

Blasted Belly Fat!

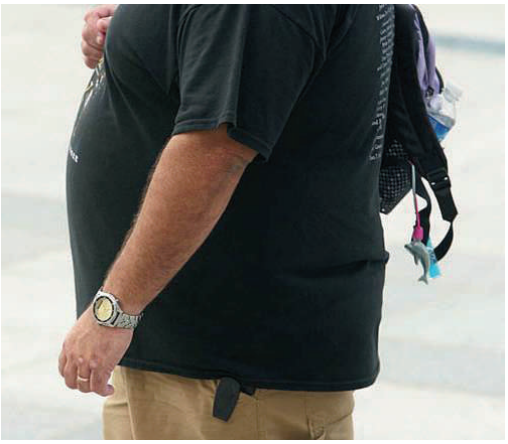
Belly fat has been linked with a higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and, not surprisingly, this week, dementia. A study from Boston University School of Medicine examining the medical records of 733 people found a connection between having excess visceral fat in middle age and dementia in later life.

Visceral fat is the type fat found deep inside the abdomen surrounding vital internal organs. It is active rather than passive, as was once believed. Visceral fat pumps out pro-inflammatory cytokines which lead to chronic inflammation and elevated insulin levels. Excess visceral fat is associated with pancreatic, colon, breast, and endometrial cancer.

Men usually start out with more visceral fat than women. But as women age and reach menopause excess fat tends to be deposited viscerally rather than subcutaneously, or just under the skin. The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) warns that a waist measure of 31.5" (80 cm.) or higher for women and 37" (94 cm.) or higher for men is indicative of increased risk.

Aerobic exercise and simply eating less seem to be the best way to get rid of belly fat The aerobic exercise doesn't have to be extreme. Walking on a daily basis is the easiest way to effectively reduce belly fat.

It has long been known that calorie restriction in



(Continued on page 6)

Lovely Lemon Verbena for the Summer

Rub a leaf of lemon verbena between your thumb and forefinger and lose yourself in its lovely scent. Yes, it's lemon, but it's more than just a captivating fragrance. Actually, lemon verbena is the ultimate in aromatherapy. Its scent almost instantly relaxes you!

Experienced herbalists use it to make a wonderful massage oil. A lemon verbena compress can reduce puffiness around the eyes. A floral vinegar can soften and freshen the skin.

The lemon verbena plant, Aloysia triphylla, is native to South America and grows as high as 10-15 feet in Chile and Peru where it is found on roadsides. The Spanish brought it to Europe where it was used in perfume.

Lemon verbena has been a favorite for garden rooms in North America since its introduction here in the 1800's. For trivia lovers, lemon verbena is mentioned as the favorite plant of Scarlet O'Hara's mother in Gone with the Wind.

In addition to its use as a beauty aid, lemon verbena can be used in almost any recipe where you would include lemon zest. As a culinary treat, lemon verbena makes a delightful tea, especially when blended with mint. It is particularly nice in baked goodies and fresh fruit salads. It can also be used to brighten the taste of fish, poultry, salad dressing, jellies, and vinegars. Finely crumbled dried leaves can be added to the batters of carrot, banana, or zucchini bread.

Lemon verbena leaves can be sewn into sachets to lightly perfume a room.

Lemon verbena grows well in pots during the spring and summer months. In fact, you can harvest sprigs all summer. For your main harvest though, cut back the plant halfway in midsummer and once again before the first frost. Bring the plant indoors for the winter. Leaves fall off but will return in spring.

Recipe Corner

Lemon Verbena Scones

1 c whole wheat flour

1 c all purpose flour
1 1/2 cups rolled oats
2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt

1/.2 tsp. cinnamon

1/4 cup raisins

1/4 c brown sugar
1/4 c soft margarine
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh lemon verbena leaves
1/4 c egg substitute, beaten
1/2 cup plain nonfat yogurt
1/4 cup 1% milk

Preheat oven to 425º F.

In a large bowl, combine flours, oats, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and brown sugar. Cut in the margarine with a pastry cutter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add the lemon verbena leaves and raisins; mix until just combined.

Mix the egg substitute, yogurt, and milk together. Make a well in the center of flour mixture. Add the egg, yogurt, and milk mixture, stirring to form a soft dough.

Line a baking tray with parchment paper. With floured hands, pat the dough into a ten to twelve inch circle. Cut with a sharp, serrated knife into eight wedges. Bake at 425º F for 15-20 minutes, or until lightly browned.

Serve warm. Makes 8 scones.

Above recipe adapted from "Growing and Using Lemon Verbena" by Brenda Hyde, http://oldfashionedliving.com/lemonverbena.html

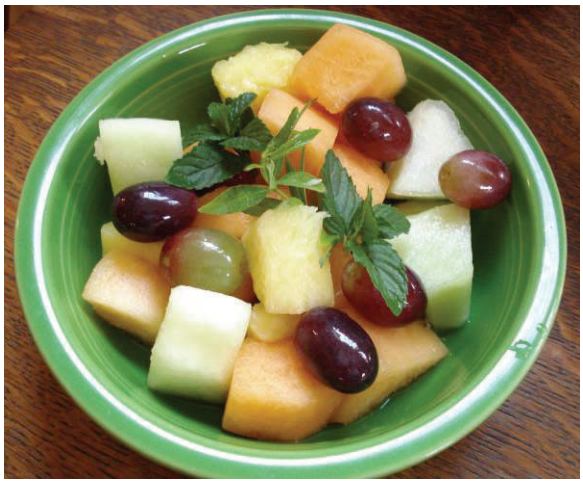
Fresh Fruit Compote

3 cups seasonal fresh fruits, such as cantaloupe, pineapple, honeydew melon, grapes, watermelon and strawberries

Two sprigs fresh mint, chopped

Two sprigs lemon verbena, chopped

Chop the fruit into bite sized pieces. Sprinkle with herbs and serve as a light dessert or breakfast treat.



Recipe Corner

Summer Berry Delight

This looks and tastes like a berry cobbler with less sugar, less fat and more flavor. Substituting blueberries for one half the blackberries lessens the "seediness" of the traditional blackberry cobbler.

Preheat oven to 400.

3 Tablespoons sugar free grape jelly

3 Tablespoons flour

½ cup warm water

Stir jelly and flour into warm water and set aside.

1 ½ cups blackberries

1 ½ cups blueberries

1 Tablespoon lemon verbena leaves, finely chopped

2 tablespoons soft margarine

2 packets Splenda sweetener

½ tsp. cinnamon

Place fruit and all other ingredients into a small saucepan. Stir in flour mixture. Cook slowly over medium heat until mixture thickens, about 15 minutes.

One 8 inch circular prepared pie crust

Spray pie pan or casserole with non-stick cooking oil. Place prepared pie crust dough into baking dish. Trim crust to fit pan. Pour in warm berry mixture.

Decorate the top of the dessert using trimmings from crust. Dust crust strips with milk then sprinkle lightly with one tablespoon granulated sugar. Bake at 400 degrees for approximately thirty minutes. Best when served warm.

Puzzled over what else you can do with the lemon verbena plant? Use it as a hair rinse!

3 tablespoons lemon verbena leaves
1 cup boiling water

Pour the boiling water over the lemon verbena leaves. Steep for about an hour. Strain the mixture, discarding herb. Use as a rinse after shampooing and conditioning your hair. Your hair will shine and smell wonderful, too.

Nautilus/Heartfit Building
3200 Chesterfield
Charleston, WV 25304

Phone:304-744-6466
Fax: 304-388-9422

wvseniorservices.gov

This newsletter is created by Susan M. Poindexter, MS, RD, LD, CDE, Nutrition Consultant to the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services, and is funded in part by The West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services.

Contributors Catherine Townsend (reference http://www.superbherbs.net/Lemonverbena.htm) and Betsy Greer

Blasted Belly Fat! (continued)

Cover more than half your plate with plants. Add a chicken breast or a salmon filet. With a whole wheat roll on the side your belly-fat-busting meal is complete.

(Continued from page 2)

test animals is one of the most effective dietary interventions to lower their cancer risk. Researchers are currently studying how calorie restriction in humans works relative to tumor suppression.

The number one way to reduce calorie intake is to put more plants on your plate. Vegetables and fruits added to the diet tend to crowd out higher calorie food choices. There is only so much room on the plate after all!

In addition, eating colorful vegetables and fruits has an extra bonus. The bright colors in plants contain protective substances called phytonutrients that are in themselves health promoting.