



## In Geoff's Words...

### Just because you are paranoid doesn't mean they aren't out to get you

Mel Gibson starred in a 1997 movie entitled "Conspiracy Theory". What was funny about the movie is that he had many far-fetched conspiracy theories like the new \$100 bills had tracking devices in them, or NASA had a satellite that could cause earthquakes. I always thought dietary supplement conspiracy theories stretched the imagination until I read the headline "*Vitamins 'may raise death risk from cancer'*". Vitamins? Bad for you?

We all know there are physicians who advise patients not to take vitamins, minerals and other dietary supplements because they feel (a) you get enough in the food you eat, or (b) they don't do any significant good. I'd like to think these physicians are not part of a conspiracy and just honestly have their head in the sand.

We all know there are publications biased against dietary supplements. Consumer Reports ran an article in the May 2004 issue sharply criticizing the Dietary Supplement industry. Entitled "Dangerous Supplements: Still at Large", it cast an inaccurate picture of dietary supplements in general according to the Council for Responsible Nutrition.<sup>1</sup> The American Botanical Council spends a lot of time fighting false and misleading information, too (see their website [www.herbalgram.org](http://www.herbalgram.org)). When I read articles in the mainstream press that attempt to scare me away from dietary supplements, like the recent ephedra reporting, I try to forgive editors because they are just trying to sell periodicals by sensationalizing issues, and I don't think they are part of a conspiracy.

We all know the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is biased against dietary sup-

plements because it sees them as a threat to pharmaceuticals. As recently as the Spring of 2003 the FDA proposed a redefinition of disease that would classify any deviation from a state of "normal" as a disease, even if that deviation is universal or a normal part of aging, such as onset of menses or menopause. Under the proposed new definition of disease, any dietary supplement with virtually any effect on the body could be reclassified as a drug.<sup>2</sup> Special interests influencing government isn't new, and doesn't prove there is a conspiracy.

But "*Vitamins 'may raise death risk from cancer'*" goes too far! No responsible editor in the mainstream press would publish such drivel unless pressured to do so, in my opinion. Read it for yourself and judge if the headline is merited.<sup>3</sup>

So who is behind this conspiracy? Who wants to mislead our health choices? I'm going to call up Mel Gibson and see if he wants to investigate with me....

### Connecticut school goes candy cold-turkey

I'm happy to report that the Nathan Hale School in New Haven, Conn., is junk-food-free. Candy bars are confiscated. Vending machines sell baked chips instead of fried; water, milk or juice instead of soda. The cafeteria serves baked chicken instead of nuggets and French fries. Even bake sales, traditional fundraisers, are being discouraged in favor of plant sales and penny drives. You go, Principal Johnsky!<sup>4</sup>

### Where is my order?

When we ask for your email address on our website, or on the phone when you order, it is not just to email you our health-related newsletter, the *Signal*. A more important reason is to send you an email with the tracking number of your order. Our website is at [www.shrc.net](http://www.shrc.net).

<sup>1</sup> for CRN's rebuttal see their website [www.crnusa.org/pdfs/CRNConsumerReports0504.pdf](http://www.crnusa.org/pdfs/CRNConsumerReports0504.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> as reported by [www.herbs.org/current/rsmdshea.html](http://www.herbs.org/current/rsmdshea.html)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk\\_news/story/0,,1317198,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,,1317198,00.html)

<sup>4</sup> San Diego Union Tribune, April 29, 2004 (AP).