



In Geoff's Words...

Flurry Over Curry

At a meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research, investigators from Detroit's Henry Ford Hospital reported results of their experiments with human immune protein (HIP) and curcumin. HIP is found in high concentrations in our blood unless we have cancer. Curcumin is the compound that gives turmeric its characteristic color and flavor. The researchers found HIP slows the growth of human prostate cancer cells in the laboratory; curcumin quickly kills a lot of those cells; but both together are even more effective than each alone!¹

Here's the hope: that we enjoy curry dishes, the curry powder contains turmeric, the turmeric contains curcumin, the curcumin assists our own HIP to keep us cancer-free! Because curry has been eaten for centuries without adverse effects there is no reason not to indulge ourselves. Or is there?

In Britain curry dishes have exploded in popularity, and some scientists report evidence of a physical addiction as a possible explanation. Blood pressure rose 4.9% in subjects presented with tikka masala, versus just 1.8% for traditional food. Curry anticipation caused a larger increase in heart rate also. But other scientists attribute these phenomena to the simple fact that British food is boring. They say Brits crave curries, but it doesn't rise to the level of addiction.²

Mainlining Fast Food

Fast food is very popular in the United States. Is that because it's addictive, or just a craving? Researches say as you put on weight, you become more resistant to the hormone leptin, and this in turn causes the brain to lose its ability to respond to other eating-related hormones. So maybe getting fatter isn't just lack of self-control. Maybe an addictive change is taking place.

Many fast food "meals" let you consume all the calorie and fat content a person needs for a day in just a few minutes. One scientist speculated such an overdose might be capable of activating the dopamine system like addictive drugs do.³ Inconclusive, but interesting.

Hooking Our Kids

Whether it's a craving or an addiction, we parents should strive to keep fast food and junk food away from our children.

I wish we were more like Belmont Middle School in North Carolina. Susan Chase, the principal, removed all soda and snack vending machines except for two that dispense water. She said "I can make that money in other ways. We don't need to exploit the children by selling them drinks." Bravo! Their school superintendent Mike Ward sent information to schools that said "Fund education so that schools do not compromise the health of children and youth by raising funds through the sale of foods and beverages low in nutrients and high in calories."⁴ Bravo again!

It takes strength not to support a worthy group's on-campus fund-raising candy sale, but now you know you have to raise your voice like Ms Chase and Mr. Ward did!

New Products

We now carry anise seed, coriander, alfalfa, birch bark, rose hips, flax seed oil, and a few other new products, but the most exciting new product is **Super A!** We had been having trouble for over a year getting liquid vitamin A for our drops. So we chose a dry form and added anti-oxidants zinc, vitamin E, selenium, and beta-carotene. This is a powerful combination in a tiny, easy-to-swallow capsule.

¹ Science News, 161:317, 2002.

² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/988978.stm>

³ Scientists Question Whether Fast Food is Addictive, Reuters, Jan. 29, 2003.

⁴ Hendersonville Times-News (AP) Dec. 1, 2002.