FDA Bans Trans Fats

The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday proposed banning artificial trans fats in processed food ranging from cookies to frozen pizza, citing the risk of heart disease.

Partially hydrogenated oils, the primary dietary source of the fats, have been shown to raise "bad" cholesterol. Reducing the use of trans fats could prevent 20,000 heart attacks and 7,000 deaths from heart disease a year, the FDA said.

"While consumption of potentially harmful artificial trans fat has declined over the last two decades in the United States, current intake remains a significant public health concern," FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg said.

Quality Supplements

When I introduce myself as a naturopathic doctor to people, many get a look of confusion on their faces. I'm used to it. So then I say, "Well I'm a doctor, and I use natural medicines with my patients." Then they often ask, "So does that stuff actually work?" This question is full of nuance, but the simple answer is "Yes, if you know what you're doing."

Admittedly, the quality of many natural products that are widely available is questionable, due to poor industry oversight. A recent article, in the New York Times, cited a study that highlights this problem. In the study they found only two of 12 companies tested contained 100 percent of the plant they claimed to have on the label. This goes to show, good products are out there, but you have to know what you're looking for.

Early Puberty in Girls

Girls are starting puberty at younger ages - a full year earlier than previously reported in some cases - and the main factor associated with early breast development is obesity, according to a new long-term study released Monday.

Researchers in the Bay Area, New York and Cincinnati have been following the sexual maturation of more than 1,200 girls - a third of whom were recruited from Kaiser medical centers in San Francisco, Oakland and San Rafael - since 2004. At the start of the study, the girls were between 6 and 8 years old.

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Pesticides & Endometriosis

The New York Times (nytimes.com) - Pesticides Linked to Endometriosis Risk - By Nicholas Bakalar - (Tuesday, November 05, 2013)

Why some women and not others get endometriosis - the growth of uterine tissue outside the uterus that can cause pain and infertility - is not known, but researchers have come up with one possible contributing factor: pesticide poisoning.

Scientists studied 248 women with surgically confirmed endometriosis and 538 healthy controls. They measured blood levels of two pesticides, mirex and beta HCH, which persist in some fish and dairy products even though their use in the United States has been banned for decades. The study appears online in Environmental Health Perspectives. Read More...

Bacteria & Arthritis

Science Daily (sciencedaily.com) - Intestinal Bacteria Linked to Rheumatoid Arthritis - (Tuesday, November 05, 2013)

Researchers have linked a species of intestinal bacteria known as Prevotella copri to the onset of rheumatoid arthritis, the first demonstration in humans that the chronic inflammatory joint disease may be mediated in part by specific intestinal bacteria. The new findings by laboratory scientists and clinical researchers in rheumatology at NYU School of Medicine add to the growing evidence that the trillions of microbes in our body play an important role in regulating our health.

Using sophisticated DNA analysis to compare gut bacteria from fecal samples of patients with rheumatoid arthritis and healthy individuals, the researchers found that P. copri was more abundant in patients newly diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis than in healthy individuals or patients with chronic, treated rheumatoid arthritis. Moreover, the overgrowth of P. copri was associated with fewer beneficial gut bacteria belonging to the genera Bacteroides. Read More...

Reversing Prediabetes

The Huffington Post (huffingtonpost.com) - 7 Ways to Detox to Reverse Prediabetes - By Sarah Cimperman, N.D. - (Wednesday, November 06, 2013)

Prediabetes is a worldwide epidemic. In the United States alone it affects 79 million people, or one in three adults and nearly one in four adolescents. Prediabetes is characterized by high levels of blood sugar and insulin and it increases the risk of five of the seven leading causes of death in the U.S.: heart disease, cancer, stroke, Alzheimer's disease and Type 2 diabetes.

Fortunately, the condition is reversible and personal changes are the best prescription. A landmark study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found that changes in diet and lifestyle reduced the risk of diabetes almost twice as much as the diabetes drug Glucophage, and that the benefits were still apparent a decade later. While diet changes and exercise are essential, there's another piece to the puzzle. Now that research studies have linked toxic chemicals in the environment to an increased risk of developing diabetes, it's time to recognize detoxification as an important part of permanently reversing prediabetes. Read More...