

CERTIFIED WOMEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE: SESSION 15

- Health and Beauty

Health and Beauty Secrets From Around the World

How do Filipinos get such shiny hair? What do Indians do to lose weight and how do Egyptians have such soft skin? To live healthier and to look even more beautiful, follow these tips from around the world.

Aloe Makes Hair Shine – Philippines

In order to achieve a smooth, glossy shine, Filipinos massage fresh aloe into their hair. If you have an aloe plant, break off one of the leaves and squeeze out all of the juice and rub it into your scalp and hair. Rinse afterward.



If you don't have an aloe plant, try a remedy that the Italians use. They combine one teaspoon of olive oil and one cup of yogurt to keep their hair shiny and healthy. They also use a mask of egg whites to protect their hair from the harsh heat of the sun.

Greeks use rosemary water to keep their hair shiny and people in Singapore use coconut oil to keep their hair smooth and frizz-free.

Grape Paste Keeps Your Skin Glowing – Chile

Chileans know that the antioxidants in grapes can do wonders for the skin. They use this knowledge to their advantage by making a paste of crushed grapes and two tablespoons of white flour. They leave the paste on for 10 minutes and wash it off with soap and water.



Another treatment that's full of antioxidants is rice water, which the Chinese use for their skin. Just soak a bag of Chinese rice in a bottle of water for 10 minutes, and then drain the rice from the water. Soak a washcloth in the liquid and leave it on your face for another 10 minutes. If you do this consistently, your skin should be radiant in no time.

Garlic Strengthens Nails – Dominican Republic



If you have paper-thin nails that constantly break or tear, take a note from the Dominicans. They add fresh garlic to their nail polish to prevent their nails from becoming brittle. This concoction works best after stewing for a week to 10 days, and if you're worried about whether your nails will smell, know that the smell will dissipate.

If you want to try something less smelly, soak your fingers in a mixture of olive oil and vitamin A oil, like the Romanians do.

Bathing in Milk Can Keep Your Skin Soft – Egypt

Cleopatra started the trend of bathing in milk and it's still used in Egypt today. Milk can help women wash away dead skin cells as well as soften skin and leave it feeling smooth and silky. If you want to take a bath fit for a queen, add two cups of powdered milk to your bath.



Yarrow Extract Can Prevent Stretch Marks – Australia

There are many creams and lotions that claim to diminish the look of stretch marks, or erase them completely. But the majority of them don't really work.



Once the skin has ripped, there's no magical cream that can repair it. The only way to avoid stretch marks is to prevent them and Australian Aborigines may have discovered the secret to doing just that – yarrow root extract. Yarrow root has anti-inflammatory properties and keeps skin hydrated, which is the key to preventing stretch marks. Some creams do contain yarrow root as a key ingredient, but if you prefer, rub a few drops of pure yarrow extract oil on the area you wish to

protect.

Yoga Can Help You Lose Weight – India

Yoga is a great way to clear your mind and relieve stress. But Indians commonly use yoga as a weight-loss remedy because it speeds up your metabolism. Nordic walking is also good exercise and is a great way to keep trim. Nordic walking involves the use of walking poles for balance and works the arms, shoulders and torso. It's a common exercise in Sweden and Finland.



Naps Are the Key to Energy – Japan



The Japanese often take naps during the day as a way to recharge their batteries. Studies show that a 30-minute power nap can reduce your risk of heart disease as well as help you feel refreshed. The Greeks and the Spanish also take siestas during the day, particularly after lunch, to help with digestion.

Eating Nuts Can Keep You Healthy – Gambia

Citizens of this African country are said to have the lowest incidences of cancer and weight problems. What's Gambia's secret? Nuts and lots of them. Nuts are one of the main sources of omega-3 fatty acids and are full of vitamin E and heart-healthy monounsaturated fats. Although nuts contain a lot of fat, ironically, people who eat a lot of them tend to be thinner than those who don't.



Golden Root Can Boost Your Mood and Your Immune System – Russia



The Golden Root, or Arctic Root, is used to treat a plethora of problems. Studies show that Golden Root can improve mood and endurance while decreasing stress and fatigue levels. Golden Root is also used to fight infections and other common ailments such as altitude sickness. If you want to boost your mood or fight off a cold, pick up this herb at a natural food store and brew it in a pot of tea.

Don't Eat Until You're Full – Japan

Stuffing your stomach makes you feel bloated and of course, overeating leads to weight gain. So do what the Japanese do and eat until you're only 80 percent full. This Japanese practice is called *hachi bu*, and the key is to eat slowly and savor each bite so you don't overeat. Even if you don't feel full, your stomach probably is because it takes a full 20 minutes for your brain to register that you've eaten enough. This will also get you into the habit of properly chewing your food, which is very important.



Summer Health Myths Debunked

Thanks to the excessive heat and lots of outdoor activities, the summer lends itself to plenty of claims about health and safety. However, many of these adages simply aren't true.

Don't Swim Right After Eating

This classic myth claims that going swimming within 30 minutes of eating will cause you to cramp up. In addition to being uncomfortable or painful, the condition is potentially dangerous since it could compromise your swimming abilities and put you at risk of drowning. Fortunately, there's little truth to this myth – you can usually swim for fun right after eating and experience no cramps whatsoever. However, you may want to take a short break after eating if you plan to swim for exercise (like doing laps in the pool) to avoid a stomachache or any indigestion. There is more blood drawn to your gastrointestinal tract after eating, so vigorous activity afterwards could cause discomfort.

You can wear a T-Shirt over Your Swimsuit Instead of Sunscreen

A t-shirt isn't sufficient for blocking out UV rays from the sun. In fact, a white t-shirt has an SPF of only about 3. Always wear waterproof sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher and reapply regularly while outdoors to protect your skin from sun damage.

Poison Ivy is Contagious

Poison ivy is certainly a pain, but the rash it causes isn't actually contagious. The rash is caused by the oil from the plant, so once you wash your skin after exposure you won't be contagious. To be safe, consider washing your arms, legs and feet after walking in any area where poison ivy may be growing.

Coolers Keep Food Safe to Eat for Hours

Bringing a cooler to the beach is a great way to keep water, sodas and other beverages cool, but it isn't sufficient for many perishable foods. If you plan to pack turkey sandwiches, for example, you'll need to keep the cooler's interior below 40 degrees in order to prevent the growth of bacteria. Use plenty of ice packs when transporting food and don't assume that perishable foods can be in a cooler for more than an hour or two. When traveling with a cooler, store it with you in the car (so it's exposed to the air conditioning) rather than in the truck. You may also want to get a thermometer to let you know whether the food is safe to eat or not.

When Grilling Burgers, a Brown Color means it's Cooked Sufficiently

It's not safe to assume that any burger that's brown on the outside is sufficiently cooked. According to the USDA, burgers need to reach an internal temperature of at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit before they're safe to eat. Get an instant-read meat thermometer to check each burger before you serve it.

You Can Get Sick from Going in and out of Air-Conditioned Buildings

If you get the sniffles during the summer, it's likely due to allergens and not a cold. Use HEPA air purifiers and clean out your air conditioner's filter to reduce the allergens in your home. In addition, check the weather forecast and consider staying indoors on days when outdoor allergen levels are high (which is usually on very hot and humid days).

Flip-Flops are Easy on your Feet

Many people think the freeing feeling of wearing flip-flops give their feet room to breathe. Unfortunately, flip-flops generally don't have enough arch support, shock absorption or cushioning, so wearing them puts your feet at risk of heel pain, strained arches, pinched foot nerves and tendinitis. Buy sandals which have at least a cushioned sole with arch support, and avoid thong flip-flops if possible since they cause your feet to clench in an unnatural way while walking.

Saltwater in the Ocean can help Clean out a Wound

If you get a cut, scrape or open wound at the beach, some might suggest that you dip it into the ocean since the saltwater can help clean and heal it. This isn't true. In fact, you can actually spit on cuts and scrapes to help clean them up when clean water isn't available. An enzyme in your saliva will help kill microorganisms found in the wound. Once a wound is cleaned, place a waterproof or liquid bandage on it until it heals.

How to Whiten Teeth Naturally

A big part of a confident smile involves the color of your teeth. Bright, clean and dazzlingly white teeth are a mark of good hygiene and superior health. The truth is, as one ages, teeth may become dingy or stained as a result of a variety of external influences and environmental factors. Stained teeth are nothing to be ashamed of, but returning your teeth to their original, white color is important for boosting self-esteem and protecting your teeth against further damage. With a few simple tips, you can naturally whiten your teeth without having to resort to using harsh chemicals or bleaching agents.



Boost Your Confidence with a Naturally Whiter Smile

There is no reason to suffer anymore with a dingy, dirty or stained smile. Even if you are uncomfortable with using whitening strips or whitening gel to powerfully remove surface stains, you can achieve a whiter smile naturally by following these easy steps. A whiter smile will boost your confidence and help you stand out in a crowd.

Avoid Foods that Stain Teeth

Prevention is, by far, the best medicine when attempting to keep your teeth looking beautiful and white. It is important to try to avoid consuming large quantities of food that will stain your teeth and cause discoloration as much as possible. Common foods with the most staining potential are coffee, tea and wine. Coffee and tea can give teeth a dingy brown coloration and wine has actually been proven to cause a bluish or greenish tint in teeth if consumed in large quantities.

Consume Fibrous, Tooth Whitening Foods

Surface stains on teeth are often embedded in a layer of plaque or tarter. When this layer of grime is removed from the surface of the teeth, most stains are scrubbed away along with the dirty layer. You can help to buff your teeth to a beautiful shine by consuming larger quantities of fibrous or abrasive foods. Foods that have fibrous properties and that can help to naturally eliminate stains are apples, broccoli, celery, cauliflower, and pears.

Sip Drinks through a Straw

One great tip for preventing or reducing staining from certain liquids is to sip drinks using a straw. When drinks are consumed with a straw, the bulk of the liquid is deposited behind the teeth unlike drinking from a glass which deposits the liquid in front of the teeth where it is moved by the tongue to the back of the throat. Consuming drinks through a straw will reduce the amount of liquid that comes into contact with the front of your teeth, thereby reducing the potential for these liquids to deposit stains.

Add Baking Soda to Toothpaste

Baking soda has long been touted as the greatest cleaning aid in the grocery store. With baking soda, you can remove stains from carpets, bathtubs, clothing, and yes, even your teeth. By adding a little baking soda to your toothbrush before you brush your teeth, you can achieve a whiter smile in just a few weeks. Baking soda is abrasive, which helps to remove surface stains, but its chemical properties also react with stains to lift them from inside the dentin on your teeth and whisk them away.

Floss Regularly for Healthy Gums

Flossing may not seem like a solution for achieving whiter teeth, but healthier gums can actually make your teeth look brighter, more defined and therefore whiter. Gums that are unhealthy are often grimy and loose which can make teeth look worse than they actually are.

Stop Smoking

Smoking causes tooth staining, and a habitual smoker will constantly deal with unsightly staining on the surface of his or her teeth. To avoid having to deal with stains that keep coming back, it is important to stop smoking completely. The tar and tobacco mixture in cigarettes deposits one of the toughest stains to remove on teeth.

Invest in an Electric Toothbrush

An electric toothbrush will make a world of difference in the health and beauty of your smile. Electric toothbrushes powerfully swift back and forth and have a circular motion that can scrub away stains without damaging precious tooth enamel. Switching to an electric toothbrush will provide a whiter smile in just a few weeks.

Brush Teeth Immediately After Eating

One way to prevent stains from accumulating is to brush teeth immediately after eating or drinking a food with staining properties. Often, stains are created when food remains on the surface of the teeth and is absorbed by the enamel coating. When you brush immediately after eating, food is quickly removed from the teeth before it can cause staining.

Choose the Right Lipstick Shade

The right shade of lipstick may be able to make your teeth appear whiter than they actually are. Bold shades of lipstick that complement your skin tone. Such as bright red or dark pink, will make teeth visually pop in the mouth. A muted color of lipstick may cause teeth to look dim or dingy.

Use a Skin Bronzing Lotion

One of the easiest ways to make your teeth appear brighter is to make your skin darker. While extensive tanning in the sun is not recommended because of adverse health effects, a moisturizing skin bronzer may make your skin just dark enough to cause your teeth to appear whiter.

The Relationship between Fingernails and Your Health



Some of the best health tips can come in the most unexpected places. For example, did you know that your fingernails can actually tell you a lot about your current state of health? While they aren't a surefire way to diagnose certain conditions, they can be a very good indicator of your health in many cases. Below we explain what healthy nails should look like and what any differences in their appearance might be saying about your health.

What Healthy Nails Look Like

Before you learn what signs to watch out for with your nails, it's important to know what healthy nails look like in order to give yourself a reference point. Healthy nails are, first and foremost, strong; they should not feel brittle or thin or break easily. Ideally, they will also be pretty smooth, exhibiting no jagged edges, dents or bumps. That smoothness should extend to the cuticles as well, which should not be cut, peeling or jagged. Finally, color is also critical to healthy nails. Any discoloration, whether it's streaks, spots or yellowing, may be cause for concern.



What to Look for In Your Fingernails

Here are some of the key things to watch out for when you examine your nails:

- **Yellowing:** If your nails have a yellowy discoloration on them, it may be a sign that you are suffering from a respiratory condition. Chronic bronchitis and other respiratory problems may slow down the growth of your nails, which causes them to thicken and become yellow in color. In some cases, the nails may even detach from the nail bed in certain areas. Yellow nails can also be caused by other conditions, such as swollen hands, but it's important to figure out the cause regardless of whether it is or is not respiratory in nature.



- **Brittleness:** When nails become thin and brittle, allowing them to break easily, it may be a sign that the nails can't hold onto moisture. This is often a side effect of an under-active thyroid, which often causes dry skin and nails, or an iron deficiency. However, if your hands are exposed to water for long periods of time every day, the constant wetting and drying of your nails may also cause this condition.

- **Loose Nails:** This condition involves nails that become loose from the finger and may separate from the nail bed. When nails look as though they are becoming detached in this way, it may be a sign of infection, reaction to a drug, psoriasis or thyroid disease.



- **Clubbing:** This term is used to describe a condition where the tips of the fingers enlarge and the nails grow around the fingertips. The result is a nail that looks too big for the finger on which it is found. Clubbing can be a sign that an individual does not have enough oxygen in their blood, which could indicate that they have lung disease. However, clubbing has also been associated with other conditions, such as liver disease, cardiovascular disease and inflammatory bowel disease.



- **White Spots:** For the most part, the tiny white spots that appear on your nails are just a result of an injury to the nail and are not a serious problem. However, if you notice white spots appearing in areas where you know that no trauma to the nail occurred, it could be a sign of psoriasis, eczema or a zinc deficiency.



- **Dark Tips:** This condition, which is also known as Terry's nails, is indicated by opaque nails which exhibit a dark band towards the tip. While this may occur naturally due to aging, it could also be a sign of diabetes, malnutrition, congestive heart failure or liver disease.

- **Dark Lines:** If you see dark lines appearing under your nails, see a dermatologist right away. This could be an indicator of melanoma, which is the most dangerous type of skin cancer.



- **Horizontal indentations:** When horizontal indentations form across the nail (also known as "Beau's lines"), it can be a sign that severe illness has interrupted nail growth. Some of the conditions associated with these horizontal indentations include diabetes, circulatory diseases and malnutrition. It may also occur with illnesses that involve a high fever, such as pneumonia, scarlet fever, mumps or measles.

- **Depressions:** Small dents or depressions in the nails, also known as "nail pitting" is often associated with skin conditions such as psoriasis or chronic dermatitis. In some cases, it may also be associated with alopecia areata, which is an autoimmune disease that causes hair loss. Pitting can also result from an injury to the nail itself.



- **Spooning:** Spooning occurs when the outer edges of the nail begin to curl up towards the top of the finger. In some cases, the spoon-like scoop formed by the curled nail may even be able to hold a drop of liquid. Spooning can be a sign of an iron deficiency.

Though the changes may seem minor, something as simple as a streak of color or peeling of your nails can signal more serious health conditions.

Potential Hazards in a Beauty Salon

When you go to a beauty salon, you want to come out feeling pampered, relaxed and looking your best. What you don't want to leave with is a fungal infection, burns or lice. However, that's exactly what you'll end up with if you go to a salon that doesn't adhere to health and safety standards. To avoid ruining your look, and your health, be on the lookout for these potential health hazards the next time you go to the beauty salon.



Uncertified Technicians

Before you get settled, make sure that the technicians or hairdressers are properly certified. If a license isn't on display, ask to see it. Inexperienced technicians can, not only give you a bad dye job, but they can easily botch a facial or gel manicure, leaving you with burns, nerve damage or other injuries.

Tools That Are Not Properly Sanitized

When you sit down and have a consultation with the hairdresser or technician, this is the time to check out the tools that will be used on you. Are the heat-styling tools clean or are they covered in baked-on hair products? Are the brushes and combs full of hair? All instruments, including nail files, combs and cuticle clippers need to be sterilized after each and every use.

The best way to do this is through heat sterilization, or autoclaving, but chemical sterilization is acceptable in most states as well. Just be sure that the label on the sterilization jar is marked "germicidal," since some salons use glass cleaner to save money, and that the tools have been left in the solution for at least 10 minutes.

Dirty Sinks and Towels

If the tools aren't clean, the sinks and the towels probably aren't clean, either. Always check the sink for hair and overall cleanliness before dunking your hair into it. Check the towels or robes that they may give you to be sure it wasn't just used on the person before you. Things to look for include stains, rips and even hair.

If you're getting your nails done, look at the soaking bowls and foot baths. Both are breeding grounds for bacteria – foot baths trap hair and skin cells, and soaking bowls can easily collect germs from clients who have unclean hands. Be sure that they're being disinfected or at least cleaned between customers. Ideally, salons should use plastic liners for this equipment, but if they don't, ask for them to be lined with a plastic bag before soaking your fingers or toes.

Skin Infection

Sometimes potential health hazards at beauty salons can be a two-way street; this is the case when it comes to a skin infection. If you wax or shave your legs before getting a pedicure, you've now created entry points for any germs from the foot bath to enter, which can lead to a skin infection. If you know when you're getting a pedicure, avoid removing the hair on your legs one day beforehand.

Fishy Feet

A relatively new type of pedicure, called the fish pedicure, can also lead to infections. The fish pedicure consists of Garra Rufa fish, also known as doctor fish, which eat the dead skin cells off your feet. However, putting your feet and legs into a fish bowl full of dead skin and other debris, particularly if you have cuts or sores on your legs, could lead to infection.

Hidden Chemicals

People always say that you want what you don't have, and this is the case for many people with curly hair. They want straight hair and they want it permanently. The way to achieve this is through a technique known as the Brazilian Blowout, which straightens the hair for a long period of time by using chemicals.

However, the straightening solution contains formaldehyde or chemicals that can break down into formaldehyde. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued an alert for those who work with this product and are exposed to the chemicals in it. OSHA has also cracked down on some manufacturers of the product that failed to label formaldehyde as an ingredient. Although it's best to skip this procedure, if you decide to get it done, ask to read the ingredient label first. The same goes for any other product at the salon that you may feel leery about.

Poor Ventilation

With all of those harmful chemicals floating around in the air, it's important that the salon has a good ventilation system. When those chemicals mix with the heat from the hair dryers, it can create fumes that irritate allergies, asthma and can cause headaches.

Double-Dipped Wax

If double-dipping a nacho chip in salsa is considered unsanitary, double-dipping a waxing stick in wax must be downright filthy. Germs and bacteria, not to mention skin and hair, can be transferred from the stick to the wax each time the stick is dipped. Always make sure that the person giving you the wax uses a new stick each time he or she dips.

UVA Exposure

The gel manicure has risen in popularity, but the problem is that it can do more harm to your health than it can do good for your appearance. Early studies show that the UVA lights used during the manicure can potentially increase your risk of developing skin cancer.

Filthy Hands

If you haven't seen the technician wash her hands before starting on your nails or preparing the wax, ask her to do so. Look at the technician's hands and if you see any cuts or sores, ask her to put gloves on.

It may seem intimidating to ask these questions or make all of these requests, but it's important to remember that you are the client and you're paying the people in the salon to do a service for you. If you wouldn't eat in a dirty restaurant, you shouldn't be willing to receive any type of beauty treatment from a potentially hazardous salon.

Health Risks and Benefits of Eating Red Meat

Many people argue over whether red meat is actually beneficial to your health. While there certainly can be a few downsides to this meat, do the benefits outweigh the negative impacts that red meat can have on your health? Furthermore, what is the best way to include red meat in your diet?



What Are Red Meats?

In general, red meats are any meats that are reddish in color when uncooked. For the most part, this consists of meat from mammals such as cows and sheep. However, the meat of some birds is considered red as well, such as duck and goose. Red meat gets its color from myoglobin, a protein which helps the body utilize oxygen more efficiently in aerobic respiration. The higher concentration of myoglobin in red meat makes it distinguishable in color from white meat.

Benefits of Red Meat

Although many experts attempt to steer individuals away from eating red meat, this type of food does provide a few health benefits for the body that should not be overlooked. Those benefits include:

- Boosting the immune system through high levels of zinc.
- Providing a good source of iron that the body is better able to use than iron from other sources.
- Helping to lose weight when lean red meat is eaten on a high-protein diet.
- Providing a good source of complete proteins, which is essential for muscle and organ health.
- Helping to maintain nerve cells through high levels of B vitamins.

Health Risks

Unfortunately, red meat also comes with a few risks to your health. The reasons that doctors advise people to avoid or cut back on red meat include:

- **Increasing the risk of bowel cancer.** This is one of the key negative health effects noted by experts when explaining why red meat can be bad for you. However, this risk generally applies only for those who eat at least two servings of red meat each week.
- **Raising cholesterol levels.** Many cuts of red meat contain high amounts of cholesterol, which can certainly lead to negative health impacts over time. Most notably, excessive cholesterol in the body is linked to heart disease and heart attacks.
- **Gaining weight.** Although this appears to contradict one of the health benefits of red meat, it's important to note that certain cuts of this meat are high in saturated fat, which can lead to weight gain.

- **Increasing the risk of osteoporosis.** Some studies have found that excessive amounts of red meat may be linked to osteoporosis. That's because the acid byproduct required to digest the significant amount of protein in red meat can have a negative impact on bones and joints.
- **Increasing the risk of breast cancer.** One study has found that women who ate red meat every day had twice the risk of developing breast cancer. Although further evidence is needed to prove this link, this reputable study has caused many women to think twice about eating red meat regularly.
- **Causing food poisoning.** According to The Independent, about one in six cases of food poisoning are caused by red meat. Many people should be more cautious about preparing and eating this type of meat since it has a higher risk of causing this illness.
- **Increasing the risk of Alzheimer's disease.** This link to red meat is less straightforward than those previously mentioned, but still worth noting. Those that eat a diet that contains mostly plants and fish and hardly any red meat (also known as a Mediterranean diet) have a much lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. That has led many researchers to believe that eating too much red meat may increase the risk for this disease.

Tips for Eating Red Meat

Many of the negative effects caused by red meat have scared people away from eating it. However, because red meat does offer some great health benefits, you don't necessarily have to cut it out of your diet entirely. Instead, you can cut back on your intake of red meat, be more cautious about which cuts of meat you consume and prepare your meat in healthy ways. First, try to make red meat only an occasional part of your diet rather than a daily habit. The recommended intake of red meat varies according to which source you look at, but the World Cancer Research Fund suggests limiting the amount of red meat you eat to no more than 17 ounces a week. Some sources have that weekly amount set even lower, so you may want to stick to just two or three small servings of red meat a week in order to protect your health.

Next, focus on which cuts of red meat you eat. Look for lean meat which contains very little fat. In general, processed meats will contain more fat and additives than fresh cuts of meat. You can also look for meats from animals which have been raised naturally rather than given growth hormones, which may increase the risk of cancer.

Finally, eat meat that has been prepared in a healthy fashion. According to The Independent, a rump steak which is grilled and has the fat trimmed off has 5.9 grams of fat with 2.5 grams of saturated fat. The same rump steak without the fat trimmed that is fried rather than grilled has 12.7 grams of fat with 4.9 grams of saturated fat. Making sure the cuts of red meat are as healthy as possible will reduce the risk for the negative health impacts associated with red meat.

Health Benefits of Drinking Green Tea

Tea is the second most widely consumed drink in the world, with only water beating it for the number-one spot. Green tea happens to be one of the most popular varieties of tea, largely for its clean, refreshing taste. However, a large number of people are also turning to green tea as more evidence of its health benefits appears in studies and research.



Antioxidants

Perhaps what green tea is most known for is its high concentration of antioxidants. This is a result of the way in which green tea is formulated. Green tea is actually made from unfermented leaves, which are the type that contain the highest concentration of a type of antioxidant called polyphenols. These antioxidants can provide a variety of great health benefits for those who consume green tea.

Antioxidants are substances that help the body fight off damaging compounds in the body called free radicals. By getting rid of these compounds, antioxidants protect the body's cells and DNA by reducing or preventing the damage that the free radicals can inflict. In addition, the antioxidants are also believed to help slow the aging process.

Heart Health

Many researchers have investigated the links between green tea and heart health. What they've found is significant, but the link isn't totally clear. For example, studies have shown that drinking green tea reduces the risk of heart attack and may help to prevent atherosclerosis. In fact, the studies show that the rate of heart attack decreases by about 11 percent for those who drink three cups of green tea per day.

In addition, green tea also contributes to better heart health by helping to lower total cholesterol and triglyceride levels. In fact, green tea doesn't just lower total cholesterol levels – it actually can help the level of HDL or “good” cholesterol in the body. Though more studies are being conducted, it appears that the polyphenols present in green tea may help block cholesterol from being absorbed in the intestines and get rid of excess cholesterol. Unfortunately, the FDA has not endorsed these findings just yet, partially because the link between green tea and heart health is still blurry. Some researchers believe that the high concentration of antioxidants is responsible (at least partially) for the ways in which green tea helps to prevent atherosclerosis and reduce the risk of heart attack.

Cancer Risk Reduction

Green tea has been thought to help protect against several types of cancer. Many studies on the matter have been prompted by the fact that researchers noticed significantly lower cancer rates in countries where green tea is regularly consumed, such as Japan.

Some specific studies have shown various findings regarding green tea's link to reduced cancer rates. For example, women who drank at least a cup of green tea a day lived longer with ovarian cancer than those who didn't. Meanwhile, those who drink green tea were found to have a smaller chance of developing pancreatic cancer (particularly women, whose risk was cut in half by drinking green tea).

These studies continue to show promise when it comes to linking green tea to a reduced risk of cancer, but there is still more research needed to confirm this link. Again, antioxidants (which help fight off potentially dangerous free radicals) are thought to play a role in this association.

Other Health Benefits

Research has also been conducted which links green tea to the following health benefits:

- **Diabetes:** Green tea may help control blood sugar levels and can help prevent or slow the development of type 1 diabetes.
- **Weight loss:** Some studies suggest that green tea could help boost metabolism rates. This is usually attributed to catechins, a substance in green tea which may help to burn fat faster.
- **Dental Health:** Though more research is needed, one study suggests that drinking green tea may help prevent dental cavities from forming.
- **Inflammation:** Several studies have linked green tea to reduced inflammation. For example, green tea can help those with arthritis by reducing inflammation and slowing the breakdown of cartilage in the joints. Green tea may also help reduce the amount of inflammation caused by gastrointestinal conditions, such as Crohn's disease, irritable bowel disease and ulcerative colitis.

Bottom Line

Although some of the health benefits of green tea require more research and studies before they can be positively linked, there is no doubt that green tea is a healthy beverage option besides water. It definitely provides your body with a good dose of antioxidants, which is always good for your overall health, and regular consumption has been linked to good heart health and a reduced risk for many types of cancers. If you're thinking about drinking green tea to help improve your health or to treat certain conditions, make sure to talk to your doctor about adding this to your daily health regimen.

Mental Health and Violent Media

Mental health has been big news recently in light of recent incidents of mass violence, prompting people to evaluate the effects of violent media on mental health. While the subject still remains an ongoing debate, numerous studies show a correlation between violent media and a person's mental disposition.



Early Warning Signs

First, one must understand there are over 200 different types of mental health problems currently recognized. There are also profound differences between people who have developmental problems, such as autism spectrum disorders, and those who have serious psychological or emotional problems, such as dissociative disorder or paranoid schizophrenia. Not everyone with mental health problems should be painted with the same brush.

It is nearly impossible to predict who is going to have serious mental problems that may cause them to harm themselves or others before they begin to exhibit signs. When an act of violence occurs due to a mental health condition, the circumstances can widely vary from person to person. However, there are some warning signs that parents, teachers, clergy, other family members, friends and other authority figures need to be aware of, including:

- A history of traumatic events
- Previous violent behavior or threats, both towards themselves and others
- Violence towards animals
- Mood changes
- Weight loss
- Difficulty concentrating
- Substance abuse

While this is not a universal list, these signs are the most significant indicators that someone could have mental health struggles. Research has also shown that people who are maltreated as very young children typically display developmental problems early on, accompanied by social and/or emotional problems later in life.

The Effects of Media on Mental Health

While not everyone agrees, there is evidence that suggests the images people see in various types of media have a lasting effect on their mental health, both in the short term and long term.



“Companies spend over \$3,000,000 for a 30-second Super Bowl advertisement so you will run out and buy their product, but watching hours of violence will have no effect on you?” asks Dr. David Reiss, M.D., a psychiatrist who spent time assisting in Newtown, Connecticut after the Sandy Hook school shooting when asked if violent images in media had any effect on mental health.

Dr. Reiss went on to say, "A psychologically healthy, stable and ethical person is not going to be enticed in any manner to commit a serious violent act due to media representations of violence of any type. Period. On the other end of the spectrum, a psychotic individual may incorporate any experience or information into a delusional system, and if decompensated severely enough into psychosis, may act upon that information." He adds that it isn't just violent imagery from games or movies that can cause this, things like other tragic events or natural disasters can have the same effect.

A study published in the *Journal of Health Communication* on October 29, 2010 supports Dr. Reiss's position. The study found that children in particular who have a mood disorder are particularly affected by violent, anti-social media.

Psychotherapist Edie Raether agrees, "When someone is not emotionally or mentally stable, those boundaries become even more blurred." She continues, "In a recent report, James Holmes, the Dark Knight killer in Aurora, CO, disclosed that when he was on stage killing 12 people, he felt like he was in a 'video game'."

Aggression and Violent Media

A study conducted by Iowa State University published in *Psychological Science*, the journal of the Association of Psychological Science, in September 2001, found that violent games increase aggressive behavior in children and young adults as well as increasing physiological arousal and decreasing pro-social behaviors.



Another study published in the *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* in April of 2006 came to the same conclusions. In addition, it found that these types of violent media decreased helping behaviors in children.

Raether says that daily bombardment with violent media is "not only causing us to be desensitized to killing and murder, but it is teaching our children to solve problems by eliminating the person associated with the problem, not by avoidance but by a gun. The massive exposure is literally rewiring brains and developing new neuropathways that weave violence into the fabric of our lives."

Boys versus Girls

There seems to be an interesting phenomenon when it comes to violence in the media, where boys are more affected than girls. A study published in the May/June 2008 journal, *Aggressive Behavior*, found that after playing a violent video game, boys behaved more aggressively.



However, this was not seen in girls who played the same game.

Indeed this lines up with the most highly publicized incidents of violence. Virtually all of the school shooters or other mass shooters in the last three decades have been male, with one exception being the Goleta Postal Shooting in January of 2006. A study out of Wright State University looked at six school shootings that occurred between January of 1996 and April of 1999 and found remarkable similarities between all of the events. All were carried out by males

between the ages of 11 and 18 years old and all but one of the shooters, the youngest, exhibited the same patterns of behavior including having an intense interest in violent media and violent writing.

What's The Solution?

When considering what can be done to prevent further violence moving forward, experts agree that education and responsibility are a must. They also say that a more effective mental health system is needed to break down barriers to treatment.

According to Raether, "The true answer lies in prevention and character education at an early age, as violence is becoming the 'new norm.'" She continues, "It is about parents showing and teaching respect and compassion, and becoming more actively engaged in the well-being of their children. Entitlement, narcissism and instant self-gratification destroy any sense of community, which must be restored."

Dr. Reiss offers several suggestions including, "Better distribution of information to the public and to families regarding warning signs that suggest a need for evaluation and/or mental health treatment; improved availability of treatment for the severely mentally ill;

improved monitoring of the mental status of the severely mentally ill by mental health professionals; improved, humane, safe environmental containment of the severely mentally ill, ranging from hospitalization to supervised living situations." He defines improved treatment as "better tracking of the status and circumstances of patients," instead of "15 minute med checks' every several months."

The unfortunate truth is that violence will continue to happen in our society. However, with improved mental health care and more responsibility on the part of the media when it comes to violence, we may in fact be able to reduce the amount of violent incidents within this country.

Valentine's Day Activities That Will Burn Calories

Perhaps one of the most popular New Year's resolutions is to get more active and improve one's health. So this Valentine's Day, spend some time doing these activities to improve physical health, emotional health and have a little fun at the same time.



Romantic Hike

What better way to spend time with that special someone than a romantic hike through a beautiful location, especially if that special someone prefers to spend time outdoors instead of in front of the TV or computer. Hiking is a great way to build muscle in the lower body and increase heart rate, and the more varied the terrain, the more challenging the workout is on the body. For an extra touch, pack a picnic along so that when the hike is over, you can refuel and spend some time appreciating each other and their mutual accomplishment in completing the challenge.



Beach Yoga

Aside from the beach being a calming place for many, yoga on the beach has a number of health benefits. According to the Mayo Clinic, yoga reduces stress and increases fitness through greater strength, better range of motion, better flexibility and improved balance. Yoga can also help manage some health concerns and aid in weight loss. Yoga on the beach makes the yoga practice more challenging (it's harder to maintain balance in the sand) and also more peaceful and romantic, especially when done at sunset.



Love Tag



This one is great for the whole family. It doesn't matter if the weather is good or bad, although if the weather is good it can certainly be played outside. It is a simple game of tag with a twist. When someone is caught or tagged, whoever caught them gets to give them hugs and kisses. Playing these types of games is a great way to be active and spend some quality time with the family, which is so important in the busy world we live in.

Dance Party

This is another great way to be active with the entire family, and the little kids usually find it fun. It's really simple. Put on some music and get up and dance. To keep it interesting, try some fun or goofy music, play dress-up or pretend to be a silly dancing character. All that matters is that the family gets moving. On average, half an hour of dancing will burn about 150 calories and strengthen the cardiovascular system.



Sweet Peas in the Garden



It may be surprising to learn, but gardening is a great way to be active, and it can produce healthy fruits and vegetables to eat. Gardening actually provides cardio benefits, strength training and improves flexibility. If the plants are edible, they can improve the diet by adding extra flavor, thereby reducing the consumption of salt and sugar, and increasing the consumption of nutrient rich fruits and vegetables.

Paddling With the One You Love

Any sort of water sport that requires a paddle is a great way to be active. It takes a significant amount of effort to paddle a kayak or canoe, and it's also a great way to see some beautiful scenery with that special someone. Paddling sports are a great form of cardiovascular exercise, as well as increasing range of motion and working most of the muscles in the body. Just be sure to follow safety guidelines to ensure that the paddling experience is a positive one.



Take a Dip



While some people may be a little reluctant to swim due to weather conditions, swimming is a great way to get active. If it is too cold on Valentine's Day, look for an indoor pool or any outdoor pool that's heated. Swimming is a low-impact form of cardio and is great for those who have problems with their joints. The motion involved in swimming can also increase flexibility and range of motion as well.

A Labor of Love

Believe it or not, everyday housework is a great way to be active. Things like sweeping floors and hauling laundry up and down the stairs are great ways to increase activity in one's life. While it may not be as strenuous as other forms of exercise, housework is something that people have to do anyway, so doing it vigorously can provide cardio and strength benefits while crossing things off the to-do list. In addition, families can bond with each other while doing the housework together, and then have more time to do some other activities.



Whirl around the Pond

Ice skating is a great way to be active outdoors in the winter. Ice skating is a cardiovascular activity that also increases endurance and muscular strength. It's also a lot of fun for the whole family. Because ice skating is done in a cold environment, it's important to dress warmly and be mindful of how much time is spent outdoors to prevent hypothermia, even though it's easy to lose track of time when having that much fun.



Sex

This may be every adult's favorite physical activity and the reason why is fairly obvious. But there is also a number of health benefits associated with sex. Multiple studies point to sex helping people stay healthy by boosting the immune system, helping people look younger, and helping people slim down. Sex burns about five calories per minute, so 20 or 30 minutes of loving could burn off breakfast. Sex could also help people live longer as well. Whatever the physical benefits are, the emotional benefits of sex are just as great, and those with a healthy sex life often have a better quality of life.

Better physical health, mental health and emotional health is as simple as being active with the one's we love. So spend some time with loved ones, get moving and, most importantly, get healthy.

**CERTIFIED WOMEN'S HEALTH COUNSELOR ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 15
QUESTION & ANSWERS**

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP, PC: _____
PHONE: _____
FAX: _____
E-MAIL: _____

Please be sure to fill out the information above, complete the test and e-mail or mail it back to us at iridology@netzero.net or P.O. Box 485, Weimar, CA, 95736-0485. We will grade your question & answer session and will let you know if we have any questions or concerns. **Please use a separate sheet to do this assignment.**

Note: Any answers you give in this lesson and any lessons will be held in strict confidence.

1. Why would anyone want to bathe in milk?
2. What else can the Aloe Vera plant be used for besides making hair shiny?
3. A 30-minute power nap can reduce the risk of _____
4. Does wearing a T-shirt over your bathing suit protect you from the UV rays of the sun?
5. Are flip flops good for your feet?
6. What are the healthiest ways to brighten your teeth?
7. What can it mean when the fingernails are yellowing?
8. When would someone have clubbing fingernails?
9. Do you know anyone with brittle fingernails? What would you tell them to do? Please describe your answers.
10. How often do you go to a salon? When you are there do you go through their sterilizing treatments with them? Do you pay attention to their instruments they use? How many times per year do you visit a salon? What do you have done in the salon in a year's time? Have you ever gotten an infection or had a problem with a treatment you've received at a salon? Please describe your answers.
11. How much red meat do you consume per week? Based on this lesson, do you believe you are eating too much red meat to be safe for your body? Please describe your answers.
12. Do you drink green tea? Decaf or with caffeine? How does it make you feel? Do you believe it is helping your health over the long term? What side effects do you experience if you don't drink it for a week? Please describe your answers.
13. How do you feel about the violent media out today? What do you think it does to the young children who are watching violent movies and playing violent video games? Do you know anyone who is watching violent movies and playing violent video games? Do you notice any changes in that person? Please describe your answers.