

YEAR IN REVIEW



We stand up to sitting

Sitting habits became a hot topic this year. While researchers have been sounding the alarm about sedentary behaviour for years, recent reports suggesting that smokers and “prolonged sitters” share common health risks seem to have changed the conversation.

What many scientists now believe is that sitting more than six hours a day elevates the risk of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and other conditions, in large part due to the body downshifting into a dormant mode that compromises our ability to break down fats and sugars. There is also mounting evidence that even if you meet the recommended levels of daily exercise, you may still be at risk if your sitting-time approaches the average (unfortunately, we continue to spend close to 40 per cent of our day in a chair).

So, if your employment places you behind a desk, look for opportunities to interrupt your sitting. Drop your daily sit-time under six hours. By bringing movement into your day, you give the body a chance to “reset.” Each extra step becomes important and builds on the last. For example, if you enjoy the rest of this article while standing, your heart rate will increase by around 10 beats per minute, which will burn about 50 calories more an hour versus sitting. Over a year, this habit will burn 30,000 more calories or eight pounds of fat.

– *Dwight Chapin*

MEDICAL MARIJUANA

Pediatricians say evidence doesn't support cannabis prescriptions

CARLY WEEKS

There is little evidence supporting the use of medical cannabis in children and most front-line doctors should not be prescribing the drug to young people, the Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) warns in a new policy statement.

Michael Rieder, chair of the society's drug therapy and hazardous substances committee and author of the new statement, says the federal government should “revisit” the status of medical marijuana to improve how it is prescribed and research what regulatory system would work best.

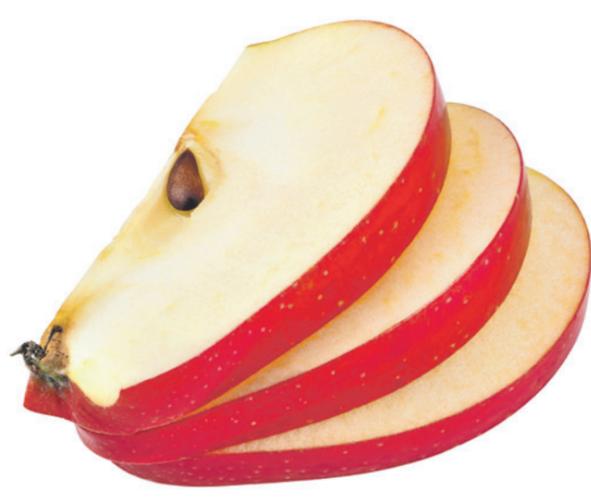
The CPS decided to publish a statement because of the growing interest in the potential of medical cannabis and the discussions surrounding the legalization of marijuana. Although some anecdotal evidence paints a rosy picture of cannabis's ability to treat epilepsy or other serious conditions in children, the drug can also cause serious side effects. For that reason, the CPS is urging caution until more research can be used to make informed decisions around what cannabis can effectively treat, who should get it and what the dosing should be like.

“To imagine that medical marijuana is risk-free is delusional,” Rieder said. “Is it an option for some children? Probably. But drug use should be guided by best principles of use and risk.”

“The number of kids who are going to benefit ... is probably very small,” Rieder said.

Cannabinoids such as tetrahydrocannabinol are the compounds in cannabis that are believed to have therapeutic effects. The cannabinoids work by acting on receptors in the body. Yet, there is little comprehensive scientific data on the effects of cannabis as a therapeutic agent with the potential to treat many diseases.

Infants nibble solid food earlier – and that's okay



Long gone are the days when parents were urged to start their baby on solid food after the age of 1. New guidelines released this year by Health Canada, the Canadian Pediatric Society and the Dietitians of Canada (among other expert groups) now recommend introducing all foods (save for honey) by six months of age – including allergens such as nuts, eggs and wheat.

Five years ago, when I began feeding my son solids at four months of age, I felt like I was being a bad mom. Everyone around me told me “exclusive breastfeeding till six months.” But he seemed hungry and cried out when we ate, so I started him young. I'm a pediatrician, but like many new parents, I worried that he might have a reaction, belly pain or become constipated. I didn't even tell our own pediatrician I had started solids. The experience went well of course and was liberating. It wasn't scary after all and was quite fun, as food should be!

This winter, with our youngest baby, we followed the same principle and started solid food when he was ready, around four months of age. It was fun, and better yet, we now understood that research shows that introducing allergenic foods early can help to lower your baby's chance of developing allergies. Double win. – *Dina Kulik*

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VITAMIN C and LYSINE

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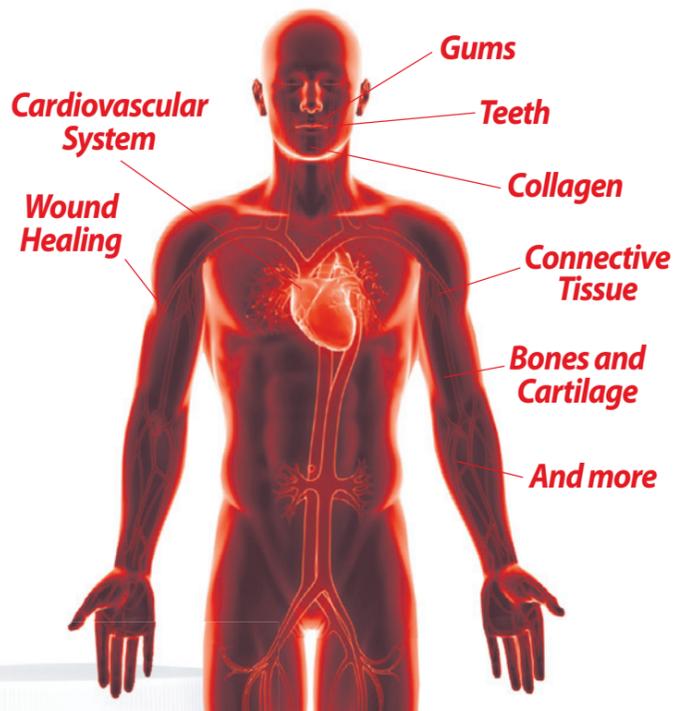
W. GIFFORD-JONES, MD | Vitamin C is the single most important water soluble antioxidant in the human body. Aside from supporting immune health, Vitamin C is needed to manufacture collagen, the major component of the body's connective tissue, including cartilage, tendons, ligaments, bones and blood vessels. As we age, the body's production of collagen slows down, which can result in aging skin, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and many other conditions including declining cardiovascular health.

High doses of vitamin C and lysine support healthy arteries and overall cardiovascular health. Vitamin C is required to manufacture healthy collagen, the glue that holds coronary cells together, just like mortar is needed for bricks. Lysine, like steel rods in cement, makes collagen stronger. Together they provide healthier arteries and reduce risk of heart attack and atherosclerosis.

inflammatory reactions in joints. This also goes for teeth – teeth fall out when gums lacking collagen lose their grip. Patients are surprised when I tell them that vitamin C will help them keep their teeth.

The essential amino acid lysine is best known for its use with herpes simplex infections but also has favourable effects on blood pressure and stroke prevention as well as a positive influence on mood and anxiety.

This is why I've been taking high doses of vitamin C and lysine for 17 years following my heart attack – I am turning 92 soon and I'm glad I did! I believe it saved my life. Look for Medi-C Plus™ at your local Health Food Retailer or Specialty Pharmacy.



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