



Dear Reader,

My colleagues and I are delighted to bring you the 4th issue of the Prevention Research Center newsletter, *Speaking of Health*.

We are equally pleased to report that the Yale-Griffin PRC was recently refunded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the next 5 years. We are here to stay!

As the PRC grows, there is more and more opportunity for those of you with a health-related interest or concern, and/or a passion for contributing to well-being in your community, to find colleagues and support here. In health promotion, as in all things, there is strength in unity. Please let us hear from you.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter, and convey our best wishes to you and yours for a happy, healthy new year.

With warm regards,

David L. Katz, MD, MPH,
FACPM, FACP

CONTACT US!

We welcome your thoughts!



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Overweight Kids: Is TV the Culprit?

Meghan O'Connell, MPH

Children and adolescents watch an average of 3 hours of TV per day. Add this to the amount of time spent on the internet, playing video games and watching movies, and the amount of time spent "bugging out" in front of a screen is mind boggling.

Research suggests that TV viewing leads to decreases in academic performance and increases in violent behaviors, drug use and sexual activity. As if this weren't daunting enough, in recent years the link between TV viewing and obesity in children has been clearly defined, and the news isn't good.

It is clear that childhood obesity is directly related to time spent watching TV. Kids who watch about 5 hours of TV per day are almost 5 times as likely to be overweight than their peers who watch less than 2 hours. There are three ways that TV viewing contributes to weight gain among kids:

1. it takes time away from active leisure time fun;
2. children tend to snack while watching TV, but not while they are involved in other pleasurable activities; and
3. it exposes children to a host of advertisements for foods that simply are not good for them! Research shows that even brief exposure to commercials for snacks and sugary cereals can influence children's food preferences.



The good news is that one of the easiest things parents can do for their children (and for themselves) to reduce the risk of overweight and obesity is limit the amount of time the family spends in front of the TV. By simply reducing TV time, children naturally become more physically active without the need to focus on weight.

The Yale-Griffin PRC has made preventing and controlling the obesity epidemic a priority. A review of school-based programs aiming to prevent obesity among children was recently completed. The evidence suggests that limiting the amount of time children spend watching TV is a very promising solution.

For information on getting active and eating right, visit: www.kidnetic.com and www.verbnnow.com. Parents, for more information about childhood obesity visit: www.cdc.gov, and check out the "Parents' Place" at www.kidnetic.com.

Meghan O'Connell, MPH is a Project Coordinator at the Yale-Griffin PRC

CORNER

**Diabetes Prevention
in New Haven**



A team of local community based organizations, churches, and concerned residents are currently working on a diabetes education project in partnership with the Yale-Griffin PRC in the **Dixwell and Newhallville sections of New Haven**. The goal of this project is to find creative ways to prevent diabetes, and improve its control. The team recently held a Health Fair/Family Fun Day at the Wexler School in New Haven that included line dancing, yoga for children and health information for all ages. Over 200 people attended. Funding for this initiative is being provided by the Connecticut Health Foundation. We welcome your participation in this project. For more information, please call Karen at 203-732-1265.



Ask the Integrative Medicine Center...

I am receiving chemotherapy and radiation as treatment for cancer. What would be distinctive about the cancer treatment I would receive if I came to the Integrative Medicine Center?

At the Integrative Medicine Center, we provide comprehensive, holistic care in harmony with your conventional treatment. Drawing from our expertise in both naturopathic and western medicine, we can make recommendations that specifically meet your unique needs. For example, if you are dealing with nausea, fatigue, insomnia, or pain associated with your treatments, we can recommend nutritional supplements, herbs, acupuncture, or dietary changes that could help your symptoms. We could also discuss with you cutting-edge research looking at natural substances that have the potential to decrease the risk of cancer spreading. We can explore with you mind-body techniques such as meditation, guided imagery or yoga that also might be helpful. Finally, you can be confident that whatever we recommend will not interfere with your conventional treatment.

Call Lauren 203-732-1370 for more information

YALE-GRIFFIN PRC FINDINGS

SOY the Other Protein

Marian Evans, MD

Diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol that include 25 grams of soy protein a day may **reduce the risk of heart disease**. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Americans, and a primary target for prevention.

To learn more about the potential benefits of soy, the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center recently conducted two studies that examined the effect of soy on cardiovascular health in postmenopausal women. We focused on this group because they are at increased risk for heart disease. In both studies we found that soy significantly improved participant's lipid profile (cholesterol levels), but did not enhance endothelial function (a measure of blood flow related to heart health).

Other benefits of soy. . .

Soy is a good natural source of protein and a healthy alternative to meat, poultry and other animal based foods. In addition, whole soy foods supply fiber, B-vitamins, calcium and omega-3 essential fatty acids - all important food components in a heart healthy diet.

Soy is *not* a new "magic bullet" but rather a "functional food." A functional food is one that has benefits that go beyond basic nutrition and may reduce the risk of disease or other health concerns and conditions. Soy is one of the many foods in a varied and complete diet that can have a positive effect on health.



Ways to include soy in your diet:

- ♦ Try soy beverages, muffins, sausages, yogurt or cream cheese at breakfast
- ♦ Use soy deli-meats, soy nut butter and soy cheese on sandwiches
- ♦ Top pizza with soy cheese
- ♦ Grill soy hot dogs, burgers, marinated tempeh and baked tofu
- ♦ Stir fry tofu or tempeh and add to salad
- ♦ Use soymilk in smoothies, cereal or in cooking
- ♦ Try spicy bean curd and miso soup at Asian restaurants
- ♦ Eat roasted soy nuts or a soy protein bar snack
- ♦ **Experiment and have fun!**

Marian Evans, MD is a Clinical Research Specialist at the Yale-Griffin PRC

Help us Learn More...

Tell us why you don't eat fruits and vegetables and earn \$25!

We all know they are important for us, so why don't we eat them? For more information, call Karen at (203) 732-1265

Other opportunities: In the upcoming months, we will begin several new studies looking at the effects of various foods and nutrients, including eggs and chromium, on heart health. To participate, you must be over 18, have high cholesterol and be overweight. Please contact Hilary at (203) 732-1265 to talk about participating and to inquire about compensation.



To learn more about the Yale-Griffin PRC, call (203) 732-1265, or visit our website: www.yalegriffinprc.org

Special thanks to the Connecticut Health Foundation for their support of this newsletter



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No Sweet Dreams?

Many of us laugh at stories about loud snoring or criticize individuals who fall asleep during the day, particularly while at work or in school. Unfortunately, neither is a laughing matter. Today more than 50 million Americans are plagued with some form of chronic sleep or wake disorder.



Fortunately, most sleep disorders can be effectively treated. The first step is an accurate diagnosis of the problem. Sometimes all that is needed is a discussion session with a sleep specialist. In other cases, it is necessary to monitor a patient for one or more nights in a full service sleep center in order to identify the disorder. When nighttime monitoring is recommended, the patient stays overnight in a private room while being computer monitored throughout the night by a qualified sleep technologist.

Upon completion of the evaluation, a physician recommends treatment procedures, many of which can be carried out by the patient's own referring doctor. Some problems respond to simple behavior modification or relaxation techniques. Others might require minor surgery or drug therapy.

We all deserve a good night sleep to replenish our minds and our bodies. With today's locally available state of the art technology, there is no reason to settle for anything less than sweet dreams. *For information on the comprehensive services offered at Griffin Hospital's Sleep Wellness Center, call 203-732-7571.*

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