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GUTS UPDATE SPRING 2006

Dear Participants,

GUTS is entering its 10th year. We want to thank you for your participation and congratulate you on the crucial role you have played. We know that completing the GUTS questionnaire may not be at the top of your to-do list. Please realize that by spending a couple of minutes filling out the questionnaire, you make it possible to study important health issues that affect you and many others. Thanks again for your participation.



Graham A. Colditz, M.D., DrPH



Alison E. Field, ScD

FAD DIET TIME LINE



This issue of GUTS Update focuses on diet. For fun, we thought we would look back on the checkered past of dieting and fad diets. Fad diets are nothing new, and some have just been repackaged for the new millennium.

1864

The first diet book, the best-selling "Letter on Corpulence" by William Banting is published.

1917

"Diet and Health" teaches readers about "calories," a term previously used only in physics.

1930's

Slimming soaps were the rage, with products like "Fatoff" and "La Mar Reducing Soap"

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GROWING UP TODAY STUDY



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RECENT FINDINGS FROM GUTS

During the past 10 years The Growing Up Today Study has produced more than 40 scientific papers on everything from stress fractures to dieting. Here are just a couple recent, important findings. A complete list can be found by visiting www.gutsblog.com and clicking on **Publications**.

Thinking about Thinness

The relationship between the weight of children and their parents is known to be influenced by both genetic and cultural factors. Less is known about how parental attitudes affect their children's feelings about weight. In GUTS we found that 33% of girls and 8% of boys thought frequently about wanting to be thinner. Girls who believed (correctly or incorrectly) that their weight was important to their mother were two to three times more likely to think frequently about wanting to be thinner. Regardless of their weight, participants who knew their weight was important to their mothers were twice as likely to be frequent dieters, compared to participants who didn't feel their weight was important to their mother.



The Skinny on Milk

A major advertising campaign sponsored by the dairy industry claims that milk and other dairy products help people burn more fat and lose more weight. A recent study using GUTS data from 1996-1999 indicates this may not be true in adolescents. GUTS participants who had more than three servings of dairy products per day over a one-year period were 25 percent more likely to become overweight than those who drank 2-3 servings per day. The weight gain was probably attributable to the additional calories in milk. Although milk can be part of a healthy diet, adolescents should not be drinking milk solely to lose weight. It's also important to remember that getting enough exercise is a key ingredient for maintaining a healthy body weight.

Ipod Shuffle Winners

We want to congratulate all the winners so far:

<i>Catherine from Michigan</i>	<i>Katrina from Ohio</i>
<i>Daria from Connecticut</i>	<i>Brieanne from Indiana</i>
<i>Andrew from California</i>	<i>Laura from California</i>
<i>Laura from Michigan</i>	<i>Julia from California</i>
<i>Katy from Pennsylvania</i>	

If you have returned your questionnaire, you may still win! As soon as we receive your response via mail or the web (www.gutsweb.org) you'll be automatically entered in the drawings.

Keep Us Up to Date

Whether you're going away to college, making a local move, or changing your email address we'd like to know about it. We will be sending study updates, notifications (such as the winners of our Ipod shuffle raffles), as well as the surveys themselves, so having current contact information is important. If you do move or change your email address, please keep us up to date by going to www.gutsblog.com and clicking on "Update Your Information" or send us an email at guts@channing.harvard.edu.



1930's



Movie stars popularize the "Hollywood 18-Day Diet": grapefruit, melba toast, green vegetables, and boiled eggs.

1951

The New York Times claims overweight is our number-one health problem.

1966

The "Atkins Diet" is published in Harper's Bazaar. Eggs, bacon, even pork rinds allowed; broccoli is restricted.



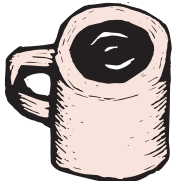
1982

John Hopkins University researchers calculate that Americans have swallowed more than 29,068 "theories, treatments and outright schemes to lose weight."

DIET MYTHS, MISUNDERSTANDING, OR UNTRUTHS

We asked GUTS Nutritionist, Helaine Rockett, what she thought were the 5 biggest misconceptions about diet.

1. Coffee is bad for you.



Other than getting too much caffeine and thus getting jumpy or jittery, based on current research, drinking 1-3 cups of coffee a day will not do you any harm.

2. Drinking coffee, tea, or other caffeinated drinks will dehydrate you.

If you don't normally drink coffee, tea, or other caffeinated drinks and you drink it when you are thirsty, you will lose more fluid than you would with non-caffeinated drinks (about 1/3 cup for a cup of coffee). HOWEVER, if you do normally drink coffee, tea, or other caffeinated drinks, you lose little, if any, fluid.¹

3. You need to drink 64 ounces (8 glasses) of fluid (preferably water) a day.

To be honest, no one knows where this number came from, but it should NOT be considered a minimal daily requirement. Kidney specialists recommend 1 liter (about 4 cups) of fluid per day for the average adult in a moderate climate as a minimum. Of course, people who are exercising or living in a hot environment will need to drink more to stay adequately hydrated.

4. You shouldn't eat fish because of all the mercury and PCBs in them.



There are fish that have high levels of mercury and PCBs but not all fish. Large fish that eat smaller fish such as shark, swordfish and tuna have high levels of mercury. Check out www.fda.gov for a complete listing². Some farm raised salmon (European & Icelandic) have higher levels of PCBs than wild salmon. Chilean farm raised salmon (where most of our salmon comes from) has low PCBs. But if you want to make sure you have the lowest level of contaminants, remove the skin³. As always, if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breast-feeding be extra cautious with mercury and the PCBs in fish.

5. Weight loss can be made easy with over-the-counter products.

Weight loss is hard work, and there is no such thing as a magic pill. Any product that promises to, block the absorption of fat or carbohydrates, let you eat high calorie foods and still lose weight, or help you lose weight without dieting or exercise is a rip-off; the only thing you will lose is your money!⁴

1. Grandjean AC, Reimers KJ, Bannick NA, Haven MC. The effect of caffeinated, non-caffeinated, caloric and non-caloric beverages on hydration. J Am Col Nut 19:5, 591-600.
2. FDA-EPA Advisory: What You Need to Know about Mercury in Fish and Shellfish (March 2004)
3. ADA Times (ISSN 1545-3871) – Mar/Apr 2004. Volume 1, Number 4.
4. Blumberg S. Liar Liar: Federal Trade Commission rooting out false diet advertisers. JADA 105:12 1850-53.

Read about the next 5 biggest diet myths according to Helaine Rockett by going to www.gutsblog.com and clicking on **Participant Area**. There you'll find the rest of this story and much more including polls, a forum for study participants, biographies of all the researchers and an explanation of what happens to your survey after you mail it in.

2002

Low-carb diets become the new trend in weight loss as Atkins returns along with "South Beach."

2003

Ephedra-based products are banned in California and other states as research points to overuse and abuse causing serious injury and/or death.



2005

"Atkins Nutritionals" files Chapter 11 Bankruptcy.

Throughout the years, fad diets have promised everything and delivered almost nothing. To lose weight and keep it off, you want an eating plan that you can live with and an exercise program that becomes routine. Also, cut down on portion sizes and replace high-calorie foods with low-calorie, more nutritious foods.





"I think some of the smoking questions should be revised. Though I'm not a smoker, I smoke randomly, for instance at a party or while I'm drinking or around certain friends. I just felt it was hard to explain my current situation."

We are currently tailoring several questions to allow for more options for people who smoke only occasionally or in certain situations. We are trying to understand how smoking and quitting patterns relate to other health behaviors, even among occasional smokers. The responses we offer may not exactly capture your individual situation regarding smoking, but we hope that you will answer the questions as best you can.

"I was diagnosed with melanoma in a mole. I also know of another friend who had the same thing within 3 months of me. You asked a lot of questions about skin and sun protection, but never asked about actually having skin cancer."

When you were younger, the GUTS survey asked about medical conditions often found in childhood and adolescence, such as asthma. On the next survey, you will begin to see more questions regarding health outcomes such as cancer. One of your most important contributions is helping us to see how childhood behaviors relate to health in early adulthood.



"I am surprised there weren't more questions after being asked if I've been pregnant or breast feeding. I have a 10-month-old son."

Upcoming surveys for female participants will ask more questions on reproductive health related to pregnancy and childbirth, along with follow-up questions on birth control. You might be interested to know that the original Nurses Health Study, the predecessor to the study your mother is in, was originally begun to study the effects of birth control pills. You are the next generation, and data collected through GUTS will be used to improve women's health for years to come.

"Why don't you ask about our relationships with our fathers? In my case, my father had more of an impact on me than my mom."

It is true that, over the past few years, we have asked many questions about your mother. We realize that these questions can be awkward (if you do not live with your mother or if she is no longer alive) and hope you answered them as best you can. We also realize that fathers, siblings and other family members can play an important role in your life and we hope to learn more about their influence in the future.

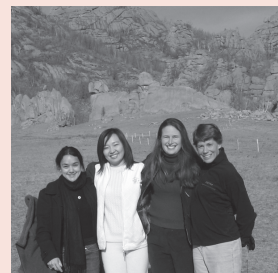


LINDSAY FRAZIER RESEARCHER CLOSE-UP

Whether she's working on GUTS or another project, a passion for understanding the causes of cancer fills Dr. Frazier's professional life. She has investigated behaviors we know are associated with cancer including smoking cigarettes, getting sunburns, and HPV infection. At the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, she works as a pediatric oncologist, taking care of kids with cancer. Although she describes her work there as intense and difficult, it strengthens her determination to uncover the underlying causes of the disease.

This quest recently took Dr. Frazier all the way to Mongolia! She has been studying the relationship between diet and cancer; some studies have associated an increased risk of breast cancer with dairy intake. In Mongolia, the milk comes directly from the cow, which means it is not fortified with the vitamin D that all children need (75% of Mongolian children under 5 have rickets, a disease affecting normal bone growth), but it also lacks the added hormones and growth factors present in Western milk. It's possible that these additives actually bring on puberty sooner and may be associated with cancer.

When she is not traveling the world, Dr. Frazier enjoys rowing and playing competitive tennis, and she has run the Boston Marathon 3 times.



Lindsay and the team in Mongolia