

# Ithaca Health Alliance Newsletter

## Fad Diet Fiascos

by Sylvester Johnson

Let's examine the pros and cons of popular diets, and then create one that supports robust health and healing. The plethora of diets that Americans have tried for the last few decades fit into two broad categories: high fat or high carbohydrate.

Side effects develop with the high fat Atkins or Zone diet for many reasons. The heart is stressed as arteries harden with saturated fat and cholesterol. Sexual impotence worsens as hardened arteries restrict flow to organs. High animal protein tends to promote cancer cell growth and reproduction (see Fig. 1, on pg. 3). Osteoporosis worsens because the high sulfur content of any animal protein can result in acidic byproducts being buffered by drawing alkaline calcium phosphate from bones—also an effect of ingesting milk protein. A diet consisting of so few carbohydrates fails to energize the brain, with the potential result of grogginess. The kidneys are stressed by processing ammonia from high protein. Constipation worsens due to a lack of fiber. And, finally, ketones formed by metabolizing fat produce halitosis, or “rotten-apple” breath.

With the high fat diet, weight loss may occur when water is initially drawn from tissues to dilute toxic metabolites and hydrolyze carbohydrate stores, which is not a long-term benefit. Then ketones reduce appetite, so that on average a person usually eats fewer calories. Because weight gain often recurs on returning to a conventional diet, all of the associated side effects of the diet may have been suffered in vain.

On the other hand, the high carbohydrate diet is often a diet high in refined carbohydrates and low in fiber. With a low fiber diet, the stomach generally



becomes full only after eating too many calories. The high glycemic index of refined carbohydrates increases blood sugar levels, along with the risk of type II diabetes. Excessive circulating insulin amplifies appetite as well as cholesterol. If any weight is lost, it often returns with a vengeance after resuming a conventional diet.

My primary credential for writing about a healthy diet is in having lost 50 pounds, then keeping the weight off. Here's how I did it.

The American Cancer Society guidelines emphasize plant-based foods. I insert “unrefined” into the description because fibrous, high nutrient foods can satisfy appetite without the ingestion of too many calories. This diet also provides the phytonutrients missing from refined foods. For example, even olive oil is a junk food because it doesn't contain the phytonutrients and fiber in the olives. One can limit fat intake to 20% of calories by eating the filling olives instead of oil, which comes at a high cost of 120 kilocalories per tablespoon. Instead of oily salad dressing, try vinegar and olives to get the phytonutrients missing from the oil. You can soak olives to reduce salt. A

*continued on page 3*



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## ITHACA FREE CLINIC HOURS AND OPERATIONS

Mondays: 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Tuesdays: 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Thursdays: 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Located upstairs at 225 South Fulton Street,  
Suite B, Ithaca, NY • (607) 330-1254

The Ithaca Free Clinic is a project of the **Ithaca Health Alliance**. More than 90 percent of our work is done through volunteer efforts. Whether you're interested in working with the Clinic or the Health Alliance, if you're looking for a volunteer opportunity, call the Clinic Coordinator at 607-330-1254.

### The Ithaca Health Alliance

IHA was founded in 1997. Our mission is to facilitate access to health care for all, with a focus on the needs of the un- and under-insured of New York State.

### Become a member of the IHA!

IHA members receive discounts from participating health providers and are eligible through the Ithaca Health Fund for grants and loans that pay for emergency and preventive care. To learn more about membership, call 607-330-1253 and ask to speak to IHA's office manager.

### Information about the IHA

PO Box 362, Ithaca, NY 14851  
Phone: 607-330-1253 • Fax: 607-330-1194  
Email: [office@ithacahealth.org](mailto:office@ithacahealth.org)  
Web site: [www.ithacahealth.org](http://www.ithacahealth.org)

This quarterly newsletter is a production of the Ithaca Health Alliance.

## Butternut Squash Risotto

Serves 8

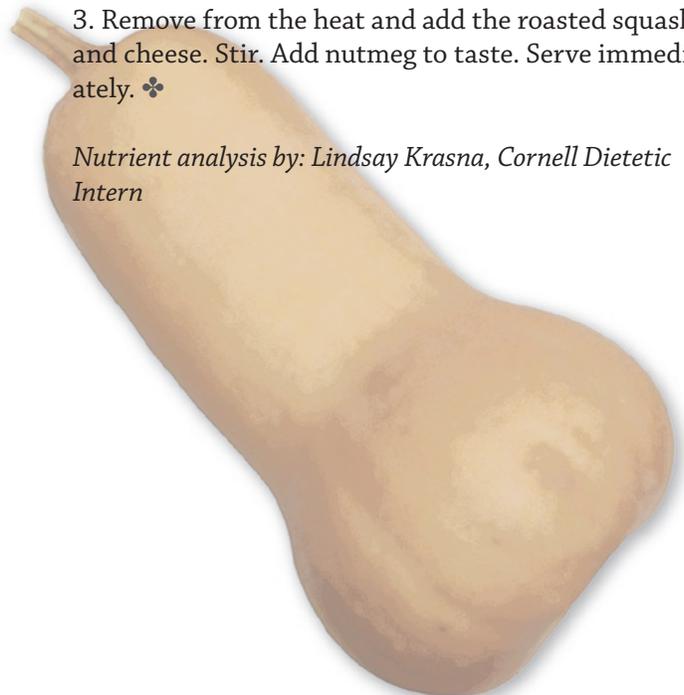
1- $\frac{1}{2}$  cups of roasted butternut squash puree  
(or other winter squash)  
1 tablespoon of olive oil  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1- $\frac{1}{2}$  cups of Arborio rice  
1 teaspoon of turmeric  
3 cups fat-free/low-sodium vegetable broth, kept hot  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Parmesan cheese  
Pinch of nutmeg

1. Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan over medium high heat. Add onion and sauté for 4 minutes or until tender. Add garlic and cook for 2 more minutes. Add rice while stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, cook for 2 more minutes. Add the turmeric and cook about 2 more minutes, stirring often.

2. Add 1 cup of the hot broth and cook, stirring frequently, until the rice absorbs the liquid. Continue adding the broth in  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup increments and stirring often until the rice is creamy (not soupy) and soft but still al dente, about 25 minutes.

3. Remove from the heat and add the roasted squash and cheese. Stir. Add nutmeg to taste. Serve immediately. ❀

*Nutrient analysis by: Lindsay Krasna, Cornell Dietetic Intern*



## Diet Fad Fiascos, *continued from pg. 1*

water-based sauce plus chopped walnuts also makes a good dressing.

Include carbohydrates to stimulate the production of the neurotransmitter serotonin, shown to alleviate stress and reduce appetite. Eat moderate amounts of a wide variety of unrefined plant-based foods. For robust, long-term health, limit animal-sourced foods to condiment-sized portions, if any. And supplement your diet with the crucial vitamin B12.

For more useful tips on eating a healthy weight-loss diet, see the summary in the introduction of my free ebook, *Healthspan*. The book was written as a public service and is available at [climatehealth.org](http://climatehealth.org).

After eating the maintenance version of this diet for many years, I've found that a healthy side effect is that I hardly ever get sick. I want your life to be robust and healthy, too!

A few words of caution: for those who take insulin, less may be needed as your diet improves. The insulin sensitivity of cells may increase, which is good, but maintaining the same dose of insulin can result in a low blood sugar crisis, otherwise known as a hypoglycemic reaction. And anyone taking cardiotoxic or antihypertensive medication needs to know that blood pressure can drop as vasculature becomes more elastic, thus requiring a lower dose of medication. It's

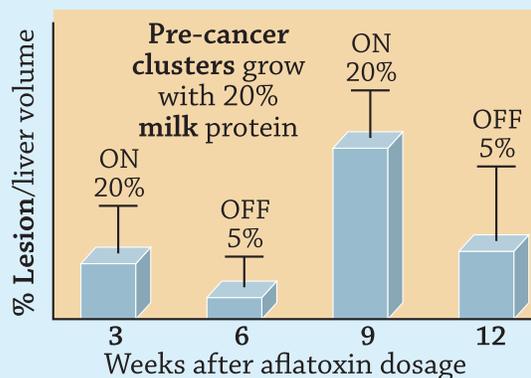


Fig. 1. This graph shows cancer being turned on and off, and on-off again in the same rats, depending on whether 20% or 5% of kilocalories fed to the rats consisted of the milk protein casein, and following exposure to a carcinogen. The graph was taken from a slide deck available free from [www.climatehealth.org](http://www.climatehealth.org).

This slide and several others were donated by T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., co-author of *China Study*, [www.tcolincampbell.org](http://www.tcolincampbell.org). (Data are from Youngman, L. D. & Campbell, T. C. *Journal of Nutrition*, 1991, 121, 1454-1461; *Nutrition and Cancer*, 1992, 18(2), 131-142.)

safest to improve your diet under the supervision of a health professional. ❀

*Sylvester Johnson, Ph.D., is a health educator living in Brooktondale, NY. His web site is [www.climatehealth.org](http://www.climatehealth.org).*

## Volunteer of the Month



IHA's volunteer of the quarter is the lovely and talented **Diane Ospina**, who, according to her colleagues at the Clinic, exemplifies genuine care for patients. Diane invariably learns new practices and policies when needed, while retaining the values and mission of the IHA and the Clinic. Whether she's singing opera after hours to practitioners or assisting Spanish-speaking patients with translation, Diane is considered one of the gems of the Clinic. She's unique among volunteers in her ability to relate well to all Clinic patients, helping them to feel welcome, while at the same time she's able to identify tasks that must be done to keep the Clinic functioning smoothly. We all thank Diane for her ongoing work with the Ithaca Free Clinic! ❀

## SUPPORT THE IHA AT THE 2008 ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

For the first time, The IHA will participate in this year's Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair, which offers an opportunity to give charitable donations as holiday gifts to friends and relatives. The Fair will be held from 11 a.m.–7 p.m., Saturday, December 6, at the First Presbyterian Church, 315 North Cayuga Street. Thirty organizations will be represented at the Fair, which started in 2004 and has grown each year. Gifts at the Fair start at \$5, and each gift you purchase comes with a free greeting card and insert about the organization that your purchase supports. All of the money collected at the Fair goes directly to the participating organizations. Credit cards are accepted, but cash and checks are preferred. The Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair is sponsored by the CRESP Center for Transformative Action and TCAction.

### IHA gifts at the Fair include the following:

- \$5 Health Snacks for patients during their wait at the Ithaca Free Clinic
- \$5 Holistic Medical Supplies for volunteer providers and patients at the Ithaca Free Clinic
- \$10 Donated Ithaca Health Alliance Membership for a low income community member with no medical insurance
- \$15 Prescriptions for patients whose medicine is not covered under the Urgent RX Program
- \_\_\_\$ Supports access to health care for uninsured New York residents

We hope to see you at the Fair. It's a wonderful way to learn about our community, share holiday cheer with others, support the IHA, and give gifts that have less impact on the environment.

Questions about the Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair can be directed to Betsye Caughey, 330-1253 or by e-mail at outreach@ithacahealth.org. ❖

## FREE CLINIC UPDATE

We have now re-instituted employee physicals on the third Tuesday (3–7 p.m.) of the month. Appointments for the physicals are preferred. Call 607-330-1254 and ask to speak to the Clinic Coordinator about an appointment.

Nutrition consultations continue to be available by appointment every other Thursday into December. Call the Clinic Coordinator at 607-330-1254 to secure an appointment. We expect nutritionists to be at the Clinic after the holidays once again, so call for an appointment if you're interested in some post-holiday food information.

In collaboration with Ithaca College, we are offering occupational therapy services at the Free Clinic on Tuesdays from 4–7 p.m. If you're interested to learn more, call 607-330-1254 for an appointment.



On Veteran's Day, November 11, the Free Clinic began to sponsor a program called the **Ithaca Veteran's Acupuncture Clinic (IVAC)**. IVAC will be held every Tuesday from 5–7 p.m. at the Clinic. Services are provided by local acupuncturists, who follow a 5-needle treatment protocol developed by Acupuncturists Without Borders. Services are free to all veterans and their families. The treatment is designed to help alleviate anxiety and stress and to improve energy, performance, and sleep. For more information about the IVAC program, contact Abigail Thomas-Costello, Lac, at 607-274-7520, or Free Clinic Coordinator Sadie Hays at 607-330-1254. ❖

## HANNA SOMATICS

Hanna Somatic Education is a natural, gentle, and safe way to end chronic pain, increase flexibility, and relieve stress. It is a system of neuromuscular education (mind/body training). It is best described as a Western Form of Hara Education.

This 8-week guided movement class runs February 26 through April 16, 2009. We will meet Thursdays from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. A place to meet will be determined by class size. Cost is \$120. Here's what you get when you sign up:

1. A membership in the IHA (Ithaca Health Alliance).
  2. An opportunity to learn a "Way" to become Whole.
- Sign up now by contacting Richard Eshelman at 607-280-6788, or by e-mail at [upstatehse@gmail.com](mailto:upstatehse@gmail.com).

### SOME COMMENTS ON HANNA SOMATICS

by Mary Alm

Earlier this year, Richard Eshelman offered a course in a form of movement education/bodywork known as Hanna Somatics. He asked participants for the price of an Ithaca Health Alliance membership and some contribution towards space rental, i.e., no income for himself.

Richard and I went to massage school together many years ago, and Richard told me about Hanna Somatics when we ran into each other at the Farmers' Market one year. His description made me quite interested in the work but I didn't pursue it more at the time.

Last fall a friend of mine came back from a retreat and told me of his positive, productive experience receiving a type of bodywork called Hanna Somatics there. I contacted Richard and bought some more sessions for this friend for a Christmas present. More feedback on the efficacy of this work subsequently came from my friend. So, when Richard offered this course I jumped on it, even though my life was in severe chaos at the time. I did not regret that choice.

Hanna Somatics grew out of a type of movement education/bodywork called The Feldenkrais Method, also known as Awareness Through Movement. In

Hanna Somatics work, the process of paying close attention to specific movements results in increased health and elongation of the involved muscular tissue, achieved via the nervous system-muscular interface, and a change in the neuro pathways involved with the muscle(s). This resulted in my muscles being "not-so-locked-up," more ease in movement, and a more balanced, solid feeling in my body. Each time I attended class I experienced these benefits, as I did when I practiced. I could tell that had my life been less in crisis, allowing me to practice more regularly, the benefits would have been compounded.

Richard has a calm, relaxing, accepting teaching style. He accepted each student's awareness level and provided an easy going environment. Richard also gave significant individual attention/instruction, sometimes offering a fair amount of after-class-hours for individual attention. When this series of classes ended, Richard went away for a month, but not before offering to lend his series of tapes on the class contents to his students, further confirming his generosity and commitment to sharing this work. This class really worked for me, and my body did elongate. I was calmer and stronger and more at peace. I recommend it. ❀

## ASK THE ALLIANCE

**Question: How will the Health Alliance respond to an Obama election?**

**Answer:** We plan to keep doing what we do every-day as well as we can. We hope that the country's leaders will be able to build a more equitable health plan that includes care for everyone. Nonetheless, the package hasn't been delivered. We routinely hear about the needs of local and state residents who are either un- or under-insured, without a safety net of any kind to help with health expenses. For \$100 a year, the Health Fund offers an array of grants and loans that can ease the worry over health-related expenses. We see it both as a duty and a privilege to focus on the ongoing development of our programs and the attention to members' needs that mark the IHA as a unique service. Visit our web site for more information: [www.ithacahealth.org](http://www.ithacahealth.org). ❀

Compiled and reported by Brooke Hansen, Julia Lapp, and Bethany Schroeder

## Be Wary of Heavy Metal Wines

You may be getting more in your glass than fermented grapes and health promoting anti-oxidant compounds—you may also be drinking dangerous heavy metals such as vanadium, copper, manganese, zinc, nickel, and lead. Scientists at Kingston University, London, tested wines from fifteen countries to measure “target hazard quotients” (THQs). A THQ above one is classified as a health risk, and many of the wines tested ranged from 50–200 THQs per glass. Serious health outcomes are unlikely to impact occasional drinkers but could be a concern to even moderate drinkers, especially in cultures like France where drinking wine is a daily event. Countries with the highest levels included Hungary, Spain, Germany, Greece, Serbia, France, and Austria. Countries with little contamination included Italy and Argentina.

Unfortunately, North American wines were not included in the study. Consumers must pressure the industry to get this testing done and make the results available, so we can make better informed choices. This is yet another example that environmental health must move forward as a priority as contamination from industry and agrochemicals inevitably accumulates in the ecosystem, including the human body. The study can be found Oct. 29, 2008 issue of the open-access *Chemistry Central Journal*. ❀

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/food-poisoning/news/20081029/heavy-metals-found-in-wine?page=2>

## Trans Fats Risk More Than Heart Health

Nutrition experts have known for many years that trans fats (also known as hydrogenated oils) are bad for cardiovascular health. They increase the “bad” LDL cholesterol that contributes to clogged arteries

and heart attacks. However, recent results from a study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* indicate that trans fats may be as treacherous for your DNA, and cancer risk, as for your heart health.

French researchers compared trans fat levels in blood samples collected in the 1990s from women who were later diagnosed with breast cancer, with samples from women who had no breast cancer. Women whose blood levels of trans fat were highest were almost twice as likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer over the following 7 years as those who had the lowest levels. Take home message: Trans fats are predominantly found in processed foods. Read ingredients lists and choose products that don’t have hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredients lists. Why take risks when you don’t have to? ❀

Source: Thiebaut, V. C., Rotival, M., et al. (2008). “Association between serum trans-monounsaturated fatty acids and breast cancer risk in the E3N-EPIC study.” *American Journal of Epidemiology*, June 1, 167, 1312-1320.

## Green Spaces Improve Health!



It may not be just your imagination if you find yourself feeling better in a park or other green space. Researchers at two Scottish universities concluded in their study recently published in *The Lancet* that city parks protect against strokes and heart disease. They credited the reduced stress experienced in green spaces along with the exercise required to get there as factors in their findings. Whereas the investigators noted that disadvantaged people reported lower incomes and less access to healthy food, regular exercise, and quality medical care, the investigators also found that even this segment of the population

*continued on page 7*

## News U Can Use, *continued from page 6*

had better health outcomes when they resided near a park or other open, green spaces. Research included the medical records of more than 360,000 people, all of whom died between 2001 and 2005. In this retrospective study, investigators were able to correlate the proximity of green space to the participants' risk of and response to fatal diseases. They wrote, "The implications of this study are clear—environments that promote good health might be crucial in the fight to reduce health inequalities." The investigators have called on city planners to include more greenery in the development of cities as a way to improve the lives of residents. ❀

Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7714950.stm>

*Brooke Hansen is associate professor of anthropology at Ithaca College and a long-time IHA supporter. Julia Lapp is assistant professor of nutrition at Ithaca College and a member of the Education Subcommittee since its inception in 2007. Bethany Schroeder is a local writer, who volunteers in a number of ways with the IHA and the Free Clinic.*

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## Take Good Care of Your Back

by Bethany Schroeder

Did you know that workers' compensation case managers view the diagnosis of "low back pain" as a red flag? They know what many of us who have had a back injury suspect: managing back trauma is a complex, challenging process that requires collaboration and ongoing education.

You are at risk for a back injury if you aren't yet familiar with prevention techniques. Maintaining good posture; planning how to move a load of any type; staying fit with moderate exercise and a sensible diet; and using the large muscle groups in the hips,

thighs, and abdomen, rather than the more delicate back muscles, are all good ways to prevent damage to your back.

Preventing back pain is presently a concern throughout industry, no matter how small or large the workplace. According to ergonomics specialists, for example, a woman should lift weight consistent with the 90th percentile of her strength, which means about 46 pounds. Doing so allows for a reserve of energy and ensures against unnecessary muscular strain.

Along with maintaining a fit body, good posture, and an acute awareness of how to maneuver a load, you can be proactive in other areas of back care by following a few expert suggestions.

If you're having a problem with back mechanics on the job, ask your manager to arrange for training. Be sure that all your work spaces are ergonomically friendly. If you're driving, your seat should be adjusted to your girth and leg span. If you're writing or using a computer at your desk, adjust your chair to support your back, arms, and legs while you work. If you're cooking, you may need step stools to support a leg or help you to move safely between counters and cupboards.

Equipment needs attention too. Build maintenance into your routines so that any assistive devices you use are in good condition.

If employees in your work setting have experienced a number of recent back injuries, your company may want to track the results of training efforts, as well as other measures taken in behalf of staff at prevention. If you have injured your back at home, consider how you sustained the hurt and how you might have prevented it.

In an age of decreasing resources, none of us can afford to spend any of them on injuries. Whether you're on the job or at home, planning how to lift or move objects or others improves your chances of preventing an injury. ❀



**Ithaca Health Alliance**

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Find us online at

[ithacahealth.org](http://ithacahealth.org)



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*Late Fall 2008*

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**Diet Fad Fiascos • Heavy Metal in Wines  
Hanna Somatics Classes  
IVAC Opens • More Trans Fat Risks  
Back Care • Butternut Risotto**