

Editor's Letter



I am sure many of you have been hearing a lot about Ephedra lately. I know I started hearing it when the baseball player died lately from an Ephedra-related incident. What I wonder is, does anyone know what Ephedra is? I am going to tell you.

Ephedra refers to several related species of herbs growing in desert areas, including ephedra sinica, a Chinese herb used as a folk medicine for millennia. When chemically synthesized, it becomes pseudoephedrine, a less potent decongestive agent that is found in many over-the-counter cold and allergy medications.

What does Ephedra do? It's an adrenaline-like stimulant that works on the sympathetic nervous system. It suppresses the appetite, stimulates the thyroid gland, constricts blood vessels, elevates blood pressure, and raises the heart rate. In many ways, ephedra mimics the effects of exercise in terms of heat production. Thus making the heart work twice as hard.

Who is using it? Ephedra use has skyrocketed in the past decade, primarily due to the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994. This allowed supplements to be sold as food, not drugs. The three main categories of users are: people trying to lose weight, competitive athletes at all levels, and "kids trying to get a buzz."

Most importantly, is Ephedra dangerous? It depends on many factors such as the dosage, the amount of pure Ephedra in the supplement, whether or not you combine it with other thermogenic stimulants that enhance its effects, and your health of course. Most scientists and government officials believe that Ephedra is dangerous enough to be regulated like a drug.

Hope this educates you a little more on Ephedra. I know there is a lot of controversy out there about it. As you see, it is very dangerous. Be careful when it comes to your usage of this or anything similar. ACE Fitness Matters. June 2003. Page 10.

Monthly Fitness Tips



Ever wonder if an injury should keep you from doing your workout? I know I have wondered that before. The first thing you should do in this situation is check with your doctor. Have him or her make

sure you are cleared to do any sort of exercise. Then, head for the pool. Deep water safely supports your muscles and joints without impact.

Not into getting wet? In that case, cross-train with a different activity to keep your fitness level up while you're recovering. Choose a different workout that doesn't involve the injured area. If you have a sore knee from running, hop on the elliptical machine. If you're a swimmer with an injured shoulder, try walking or using a stair-climber. The important thing is to maintain your fitness level until you're back at your full ability.

Monthly Nutrition Tips



Stop for a minute and think about what you eat throughout the week. Is every day an exercise in food *deja vu*? You are not alone. Many Americans eat only ten different food combinations in a month. Yes food ruts are boring, but they can also set the stage for nutritional disaster. Food ruts limit your intake of hundreds of different disease-fighting phytochemicals. Even if you take a multivitamin that contains one or more isolated phytochemicals, it won't equal the disease protection you get from eating a wide variety of whole fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. To break free from food ruts, try one of these strategies.

Number one: **colorize your meals.** The more colorful a food is, the more phytochemicals it may contain. That is because many of these protective plant compounds are primarily responsible for giving certain foods their colors. Add a different colored fruit or vegetable to your meals each day. If your diet is already somewhat colorful, set your sights higher by making sure each meal contains three or more colors.

Number two: **get out of the kitchen.** Dining out is an excellent way to shake up your diet. Skip the old standbys and try something new. If you are at an Italian restaurant, try the fish special instead of pasta. Go completely vegetarian at an Indian restaurant.

Number three: **spice up your shopping trip.** The average supermarket contains more than 30,000 products. Many of these could easily add variety to your diet. Instead of whizzing through the store on your normal path, stroll through a section you haven't been to before. Choose one or two new

foods here. Start in the center aisle and move outward on one of your shopping trips.

Start this month and try to break your food rut by the end of the summer. You will be much healthier and happier too!

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Mom's in Motion

Many pregnant women think that once they have their baby, the weight will come off quickly. Unfortunately, this isn't always true. During the first few postpartum weeks, you can expect to lose about four or five pounds due to reduction in blood volume. However, most new moms are still left with an average of 12 to 21 pounds that can only be lost with exercise and a reduced-calorie diet.

Here is a tip. Aim to lose a pound a week by cutting 500 calories a day. Reduce portion sizes and boost your intake of fiber-rich produce and whole grains. Try to get at least five servings of whole fruits and vegetables daily. Also, keep high-fat foods and sweets to a minimum.

By doing this and adding some exercise into your day, you will be back to your pre-pregnancy weight in no time. Remember that it takes nine months for a baby to develop and it takes nine months for you to fully recover after having your baby.

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Monthly Schedule



Want to get in shape for the summer? I am always accepting new clients here in the Cedar Rapids/Marion area. If you or someone you know is interested, please call me at (319) 447-1946. We will set up a consultation appointment and be on our way to working out. I am available on both weekdays and weekends. I look forward to hearing from you really soon.

Web Site

Are you one of those people who love to surf the Internet? If so, have you been to my web site lately? It has lots of information on it from monthly fitness tips to old newsletters. The address to my web site is www.fitbyjanel.com. Be sure to tell your friends and family about this address too if they are interested in their health. Also, if you ever have any fitness-related questions, feel free to call me at (319) 447-1946. Happy surfing!

