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VEPACHEDU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

TIACS-subscribe@yahoogroups.com (The Indian American Chemical Society)

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Issue 168 Contents:

Alzheimer's Detection

Alzheimer's, Cardiovascular Disease, Stroke and Your Diet

Meat and Cancer

Obesity, Cancer and Diabetes

Salt

Smoking, Obesity, and Your Offspring

Soy to Treat Cancer

Condom for Erections

Keep Sinks Clean

Yoga to Fight Fatigue

Recipes

Vegan Bruschetta with Garlic

Basil and Bean Bruschetta

Vegan Cranberry Cookie

Vegan Bruschetta with Tomatoes

Quinoa Salad

Issue 168

5113 *Kali Era* , *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
2069 *Vikramarka Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
1933 *Salivahana Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
2011 AD, December

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Alzheimer's Detection

Parts of the brain's outer layer, the cortex, may become thinner before people develop symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, a new study published in *Neurology* suggests. Researchers were able to see the difference on a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan. About 12% of the people showed thinning of the cortex. This was seen in areas that also become thinner in people with Alzheimer's disease. Most people had a cortex of average thickness. About 15% had a thicker cortex than average. People in these 3 groups did not differ in their results on brain function tests. But about 3 years later, 21% of the group with the thin cortex had lower scores on brain function tests. Only 6% of the average group and none of the group with the thicker cortex showed any decline.

Alzheimer's, Cardiovascular Disease, Stroke and Your Diet

Plant foods are full of nutrients that may help ward off chronic diseases like [heart disease](#) and some [cancers](#), stroke and Alzheimer's disease. As many as 5.4 million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's, according to the National Institutes of Health. More than 16 million will have the disease by 2050, according to Alzheimer's Association estimates, resulting in medical costs of over \$1 trillion per year. So far, the drugs developed to treat the disease, such as Aricept, Razadyne and Exelon, only produce fleeting memory improvements and do nothing to slow the overall course of the disease. To date, all amyloid-based drugs have failed in clinical trials. A process-known as oxidative stress-happens in the brain as Alzheimer's disease sets in. The underlying cause is believed to be improper processing of a protein associated with the creation of free radicals that cause oxidative stress. Oxidative stress is believed to cause neurons in the brain to die, resulting in Alzheimer's. <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/12/111214094851.htm>

People with diets high in several vitamins and omega 3 fatty acids are less likely to have the brain shrinkage associated with Alzheimer's disease than people whose diets are not high in those nutrients, according to a new study published in the December 28, 2011, online issue of *Neurology*®. Those with diets high in omega 3 fatty acids and in vitamins C, D, E and the B vitamins also had higher scores on

Issue 168

5113 *Kali Era* , *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
2069 *Vikramarka Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
1933 *Salivahana Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
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VEPACHEDU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

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mental thinking tests than people with diets low in those nutrients. The study also showed that people with diets high in trans fats were more likely to have brain shrinkage and lower scores on the thinking and memory tests than people with diets low in trans fats. Trans fats are primarily found in packaged, fast, fried and frozen food, baked goods and margarine spreads. Another study in *Archives of Neurology* last year found that high-fat dairy products, red meats, organ meats and butter likely to develop Alzheimer's disease. Research studies ever since the 1950s have shown that a vegetarian diet, based on a high consumption of omega-3 oils containing foods and vegetables and a low consumption of land-animal based products such as meat and milk, leads to better health. Omega 3 fatty acids, and vitamins B, C, D, E are primarily found in nuts, flax, urad, fruits and vegetables.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/04/100412161913.htm>

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/12/111229092036.htm>

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/12/111220154122.htm>

Another option to prevent Alzheimer's disease maybe to become a London taxi driver. Becoming a licensed London taxi driver is no easy feat. Trainees must acquire what's known as "the Knowledge," learning 25,000 streets and their very complicated layout as well as 20,000 landmarks. The learning process generally takes three to four years, culminating in a series of exams that only about half of trainees ultimately pass. As London taxi drivers in training are busy learning how to navigate the city's thousands of streets and places of interest over a period of years, the experience actually changes the very structure of their brains, according to a report published online on December 8 in *Current Biology*. London taxi drivers showed that they have more gray matter in the back part of a brain structure called the hippocampus compared to non-taxi drivers, and less in the front. The hippocampus plays important roles in memory and spatial navigation. http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-12/cp-tdt120211.php

In addition, young women may reduce their risk of developing cardiovascular disease simply by eating foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, researchers reported in *Hypertension: Journal of the American Heart Association*. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids include walnuts, flax, urad, verdolaga (purslane), Malabar

Issue 168

5113 *Kali Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
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Health and Nutrition

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spinach (Bachchali) and other vegetables and greens. <http://www.biospace.com/News/young-women-may-reduce-heart-disease-risk-eating/242711>

Further, eating antioxidant-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables that contribute to total antioxidant capacity, may reduce your risk of stroke by inhibiting oxidative stress and inflammation. Swedish women who ate an antioxidant-rich diet had fewer strokes regardless of whether they had a previous history of cardiovascular disease, in a study reported in *Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

Oxidative stress is an imbalance between the production of cell-damaging free radicals and the body's ability to neutralize them. It leads to inflammation, blood vessel damage and stiffening. <http://www.biospace.com/News/diet-loaded-with-veggies-fruits-whole-grains-may/242414>

Meat and Cancer

Researchers found that middle-aged adults who ate red meat were 19 percent more likely to be diagnosed with kidney cancer. A higher intake of chemicals found in grilled or barbecued meat was also linked to increased risk of the disease, they reported in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Meat poses the risk of a host of health problems, such as plaque buildup in the arteries. For many, red meat is a source for iron and protein, which also can be obtained by from cereals, lentils, and leafy vegetables. Eating a diet focused on whole grains, fruits and vegetables and moderate fats. <http://www.thestar.com/article/1108095--red-meat-lovers-have-more-kidney-cancer>.

Obesity, Cancer and Diabetes

As the obesity epidemic spreads around the world more people are suffering from acid reflux, likely increasing the number of those who will develop esophageal cancer, a new study suggests in the Dec. 21 online edition of the medical journal *Gut*. Most importantly, it is preventable and the choices of lifestyle and diet and resulting obesity are causing the increase in reflux symptoms. The biggest side effect of GERD is its effect on the patient's quality of life and cancer. Eating healthy and losing weight will help improve reflux symptoms and lower the risk for cancer. <http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=660094>

Issue 168

5113 *Kali Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
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1933 *Salivahana Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
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The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

TIACS-subscribe@yahoogroups.com (The Indian American Chemical Society)

In addition, obese women with early stage breast cancer are less likely to survive than other women who are of normal weight, new research suggests (2011 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium). The findings add to the body of evidence indicating that obesity, in general, increases a patient's chance for having a worse prognosis. <http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=659497>

High rates of vitamin D deficiency have been found in obese populations and past studies have linked low vitamin D levels to cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. The mechanisms by which obesity and its comorbidities are related to vitamin D deficiency are not fully known. This new study examined associations between vitamin D levels and dietary habits in obese children, and tested whether there were correlations between vitamin D levels and markers of abnormal glucose metabolism and blood pressure. http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-12/tes-lvd113011.php

Smoking, Obesity, and Your Offspring

Obese male mice tend to sire unhealthy offspring. And it seems diet is to blame, causing tiny changes in sperm that may lead to metabolic disorders in mouse pups. The discovery brings us closer to understanding how lifestyle choices affect the health of future generations. The effects of diet and smoking become imprinted onto DNA via chemical modifications that regulate gene activity and protein production within a cell. <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg21228434.900-highfat-diet-leaves-its-mark-on-sperm.html>

Salt

A major study, based on data from more than 12,000 American adults, took into account all those risk factors for death from heart disease. The researchers found that while a [diet](#) high in sodium — salt is the main source — increases your risk, even [more important is the ratio of sodium \(harmful\) to potassium \(protective\) in one's diet](#). When people whose meals contained little sodium relative to potassium were compared with those whose diets had a high sodium-to-potassium ratio, the latter were nearly 50 percent more likely to die from any cause and more than twice as likely to die from [ischemic heart disease](#) during a follow-up period averaging 14.8 years.

Issue 168

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2069 *Vikramarka Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
1933 *Salivahana Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
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The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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Ninety percent of the sodium in the American diet comes from salt, three-fourths of which is consumed in processed and restaurant foods. Salt added in home cooking and at the table accounts for only a minor proportion of sodium intake. The body's requirement for sodium is very low — only 220 milligrams a day — but the average American consumes more than 3,400 milligrams daily. The current Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend a maximum of 2,300 milligrams (about a teaspoon of salt) for people over age 2, but only 1,500 milligrams for the 70 percent of adults at high risk of sodium-induced illness: people older than 50, all African-Americans, and everyone with high blood pressure, [diabetes](#) or chronic kidney disease. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/27/health/high-sodium-to-potassium-ratio-in-diet-is-a-major-heart-risk.html?WT.mc_id=NYT-E-I-NYT-E-AT-1228-L18&nl=e

A recent study found that kids may develop a taste for salt early on, a recent study finds, if they're fed starchy foods that contain sodium, in the [American Journal of Clinical Nutrition](#). What foods are we talking about? Things like soft breads, cereals and crackers, items that many parents probably think nothing about handing to their kids. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/health/la-heb-salt-infants-20111221,0,7425028.story>

Soy to Treat Cancer

Wayne State University researchers have shown that compounds found in soybeans can make radiation treatment of lung cancer tumors more effective while helping to preserve normal tissue, in the November 2011 edition of the journal *Radiotherapy and Oncology*. Soy isoflavones, a natural, nontoxic component of soybeans, increase the ability of radiation to kill cancer cells in prostate tumors by blocking DNA repair mechanisms and molecular survival pathways, which are turned on by the cancer cells to survive the damage radiation causes. At the same time, isoflavones act to reduce damage caused by radiation to surrounding cells of normal, noncancerous tissue. This was shown in a clinical trial conducted for prostate cancer patients treated with radiotherapy and soy tablets. http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-12/wsu--wss121611.php

Issue 168

5113 *Kali Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
2069 *Vikramarka Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
1933 *Salivahana Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
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Condom for Erections

Futura's Zanafil is based on the chemical nitroglycerin, used to treat chest pain and heart failure since the 19th century. The drug widens the blood vessels by relaxing the muscles in the vessel walls, increasing blood flow. Durex condoms made by [Reckitt Benckiser Group Plc](#) will contain a dose of Futura's Zanafil gel inside the tip, boosting blood flow within the penis. It is claimed that the product results in firmer, larger and longer-lasting erections for men. Zanafil, like Futura's other experimental drugs, relies on a patented delivery system known as [DermaSys](#) that allows medicine to rapidly permeate the skin. Unlike Pfizer Inc.'s Viagra, the condom with Zanafil will be available without a doctor's prescription. Pfizer, the world's biggest drugmaker, has sold the Viagra pill as a treatment for erectile dysfunction since 1998, which boosts blood flow in the penis, had 2010 sales of \$1.9 billion - huge market.

Keep Sinks Clean

Disease-causing strains of the fungus *Fusarium* are present in bathroom sink drains, which may be a common source of infection in humans, according to a new study in the *December issue of the Journal of Clinical Microbiology*. *Fusarium* is well known for causing diseases in agricultural crops, but some species of the fungus can cause potentially dangerous and even fatal infections in humans. For example, *Fusarium* was the cause of an outbreak of fungal keratitis (infection of the cornea) among contact lens wearers in the United States in 2005-2006. *Fusarium* infections can be difficult to treat because *Fusarium* is resistant to many antifungal drugs, explained Penn State researchers. <http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=660127>

Yoga to Fight Fatigue

After three months of twice-weekly yoga classes, a group of breast cancer survivors in California reported significantly diminished fatigue and increased "vigor." A control group of women who took classes in post-[cancer](#) health issues, but didn't do yoga, had no changes in their fatigue or depression levels. Study

Issue 168

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1933 *Salivahana Era*, *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
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The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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was published in the journal Cancer. <http://www.chicagotribune.com/health/sns-rt-us-yoga-fatiguetre7bt19i-20111230,0,2506472.story>

Recipes

Vegan Bruschetta with Garlic

Ingredients: 3/4 cup olive oil; 5-6 cloves garlic, minced; 6-8 fresh tomatoes, diced; sea salt, to taste; 1 baguette, sliced about 3/4 inch thick; extra olive oil for brushing bread.

Preparation: Pre-heat broiler oven. Over medium heat, heat the garlic in olive oil for 2 to 3 minutes. Add tomatoes and allow to cook for another 5 to 7 minutes. Brush both sides of bread with olive oil and sprinkle generously with sea salt. Place bread slices on baking sheet, and top each slice with about 1 tablespoon of tomato and garlic mixture. Broil for 2 to 3 minutes.

<http://vegetarian.about.com/b/2008/03/05/easy-appetizer-or-snack-bruschetta.htm>

Vegan Bruschetta with Tomatoes

Ingredients: 12 slices French or Italian bread, lightly toasted; 3 large tomatoes, chopped; 1 tbsp olive oil; 3 tbsp fresh basil, chopped; 1/4 tsp sea salt or kosher salt

Preparation: Combine tomatoes, oil, basil and salt in a covered bowl and let marinate at least 4 hours (do not refrigerate; tomatoes will lose their flavor). Use a slotted spoon to layer on to bread. Serve immediately.

<http://vegetarian.about.com/b/2008/03/05/easy-appetizer-or-snack-bruschetta.htm>

Issue 168

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Basil and Bean Bruschetta

Ingredients: 1 16 ounce can Great Northern Beans, rinsed and drained; 1 large ripe tomato, diced; 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or 2 teaspoons dried basil; 2 tablespoons olive oil; 1 clove garlic, minced; 1/4 teaspoon black pepper or red pepper flakes; 24 slices (1/2-inch thick) French or Italian bread, grilled or lightly toasted

Preparation: In medium bowl, combine all ingredients except bread; mix well. Spoon mixture on bread and serve.

<http://vegetarian.about.com/b/2008/03/05/easy-appetizer-or-snack-bruschetta.htm>

Vegan Cranberry Cookie

Ingredients: 3/4 cup margarine, 1/3 cup sugar, 3/4 cup brown sugar, 1 tsp vanilla, 1/2 cup soy milk, 1 cup flour, 1/2 tsp baking soda, 1/4 tsp ginger powder, 1/4 tsp cloves, 1/2 tsp cinnamon, 1/4 tsp nutmeg, 3 cups quick cooking or rolled oatmeal, 1 cup dried cranberries

Preparation: Cream together the margarine and sugars until smooth. Add vanilla and soy milk and mix well. Add flour, baking soda and spices until well mixed, then stir in oats and cranberries. Spoon 1 1/2 inch balls onto an ungreased cookie sheet and bake 10-15 minutes at 350 degrees, or until done. <http://vegetarian.about.com/od/desertrecipes/r/oatcrancookies.htm>

Quinoa Salad

Issue 168

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Ingredients: 3-4 cups water or vegetable broth; 1 1/2 cups [quinoa](#), uncooked; 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar (you may use any flavor you prefer); 2 cloves garlic, minced, juice from one lemon; 3 tbsp olive oil; 1/2 cup kalamata olives, sliced if desired; 1/3 cup fresh parsley, chopped; 1/3 cup fresh cilantro, chopped; 1 red onion, diced; 1 cup cherry tomatoes, sliced in half; 1/2 cup chopped artichoke hearts (optional); salt and pepper to taste; 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

Preparation: In a medium-large saucepan, cook the [quinoa](#) in vegetable broth for 15-20 minutes, until tender, stirring occasionally. Allow to cool. In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar, lemon juice, garlic, and olive oil. Gently toss the quinoa together with the remaining ingredients, except feta. Pour the olive oil mixture over the quinoa. Add more salt and pepper to taste and gently stir in the feta cheese. You may also add any additional vegetables that you like, such as lightly steamed broccoli, snap peas or diced bell pepper.

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Source: The primary sources cited above, New York Times (NYT), Washington Post (WP), Mercury News, Bayarea.com, Chicago Tribune, USA Today, Intellihealthnews, Deccan Chronicle (DC), the Hindu, Hindustan Times, Times of India, AP, Reuters, AFP, womenfitness.net, about.com etc.

Issue 168

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**Om! Asatoma Sadgamaya, Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya, Mrityorma Amritamgamaya, Om Shantih,
Shantih, Shantih!**

**(Aum! Lead the world from wrong path to the right path, from ignorance to knowledge, from
mortality to immortality, and peace!)**

Issue 168

5113 *Kali Era* , *Khara Year*, *Margasira month*
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