

Viva Health

Issue 01 | July-September

M A G A Z I N E

LET'S TALK FITNESS

with Celebrity Trainer

**WARMZ
INCREDIBLE**

**Chilli
Peppers:**

*More nutritious
than you think*

**START YOUR
DAY RIGHT
...EAT YOUR
BREAKFAST!**

**ALCOHOL AND
HEART DISEASE:
WHAT YOU
SHOULD
KNOW**

7

**TIPS FOR MAKING
YOUR SALADS
HEALTHY
AND TASTY**

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IN CREDIBLE DIBBLE

Emmanuel Darkwa Ampadu also known as **Warmz Incredible** is a celebrity fitness trainer with a deep passion for workout and healthy living.

In this Issue we get into the depths of work outs, dieting and fitness training with the Incredible Warmz.



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Ideas That Work

welcome

TO THE VIVA IDEA

Wow! It only seemed like a figment of imagination when we thought of a magazine with absolute attention on health and fitness; and here we are, months later with the first edition out.

The Idea

Viva is a health focused magazine produced quarterly that serves readers with medical content, insights from experts, content on lifestyle and healthy living. Your health is our concern; everything we publish is to enable you make the right and healthy choice for you and your family.

Ghana has a range of magazines on various topics but none handles health topics in a way that appeals to a vast majority of readers and offers a wide platform for health providers in the industry to sell their services. We intend to fill this vacuum with Viva:

- An accurate, trusted, up-to-date health and medical magazine read by at least 500,000 Ghanaians every quarter.
- Over 50 doctors and experts providing content on various health topics
- Targeting a total combined circulation of Viva Health Magazine of 90,000 in year one, increasing to 300,000 by the end of year three.

WHAT MAKES OUR MAGAZINE OUTSTANDING?

Simple Language: We write in simple language using real-life examples without the usual medical jargons, so the average reader can understand.

Relevant Content: We focus on real life medical challenges and the right content to help readers make informed decisions during complicated, stressful times.

Rich expertise: • Over 50 doctors and experts providing content on various health topics in every edition.



Viva will be published quarterly with increased press runs throughout the first three years. Sample distribution, sales to organizations, and social media promos to targeted audience will be utilized to build subscriptions.

MISSION

To demystify, promote and encourage healthy living amongst consumers by publishing relevant content to serve our readers.

VISION

To be an authoritative magazine in the promotion of healthy living and sound medical counsel.

We would like to thank every individual and organization that has shown support for the idea thus far. We are but only positive of the lives we will change with this initiative.

Viva is here and Viva is here to stay.

Dr. Carl Nutsugah

Editor-in-Chief
ENT Specialist



By Mrs Naana Anane Adjei

WHAT CAUSES Cravings?

Chocolate, ice cream, crisps, ice, even clay – Cravings for food and non-food items are an issue of concern to a lot of people, particularly those who wish to adopt healthy eating as part of a healthy lifestyle. There is the desire to eat just about anything (non-selective cravings), which is often an indication of dehydration.

Taking a glass or two of water in such instances could actually curb cravings. Non-selective cravings may sometimes be an indication of actual hunger too. The desire for specific foods, on the other hand, is known as selective craving.

Have you ever wondered where cravings come from, and why we experience them? Several schools of thought have emerged regarding cravings, and the topic is one that is still up for further research.

It is important to know what causes cravings, as a first step towards curbing

them.

It's all in the Mind

Have you ever thought: "it's all in the mind" when those intense desires set in? Well, that is not far from the truth! There are regions of the human brain that regulate memory, pleasure and reward.

Cravings originate from these regions of the brain, mainly because there is a memory of pleasurable or rewarding experiences a person has associated with particular foods.

It's also about how you feel

It is also important to note that cravings may be purely emotional, especially among those who eat for comfort. Stress plays a major role in emotional eating as well, as does anxiety.

Hormones, Hormones!

Hormonal imbalances can also cause cravings. Deficiencies of leptin (which regulates appetite) and serotonin (which regulates mood, social behavior, appetite and digestion, sleep, memory) may lead to cravings.

In pregnancy, hormonal changes may

alter senses of taste or smell, resulting in strong cravings.

Poor nutrition

Cravings may also be a sign that you're not eating well, with reference to both quantities/ proportions and quality. They have often been linked to the lack of certain nutrients.

If your body lacks a particular nutrient, it may manifest as an intense craving for a food that contains that nutrient. If you skip meals, fast for long hours or place yourself on a restrictive diet, chances are that you'll have cravings very often.

As with several conditions, identifying the cause of your cravings may well be a great stride towards addressing them. So, what do you think causes your cravings?

Writer is a certified Dietician and is passionate about good health.

Start Your Day Right

...Eat Your Breakfast

“Oh gosh!

I'm so late for work...let me just find some food after the meeting..oops! I need to finish that task before next meeting , I can't afford to eat now...let me grab a coke and pie that food can wait till lunch"....the typical cooperate worker's morning.

Life as a worker can be very active and a busy one at that; many meetings to attend, numerous deadlines to meet and plenty reading to do. There is almost always not much time . This is especially true for the mornings when the day begins with early morning meetings after a long tiring night trying to cram as much as possible. This leaves us little time to prepare for the mornings activities and most of the time we are not able to eat a proper breakfast to begin the day with

However, like any vehicle embarking on a busy schedule you need to fill up the tank before you start the journey. The breakfast you eat ,can set you up for a good day and it is indeed, the most important meal of the day, even more especially for active workers.

Having slept through the night or rather crammed throughout the night, the body's energy stores especially Glucose ,the body's main source of energy, goes down. aside this too the levels of other nutrients especially the vitamins which help in keeping us alert and also help the brain to function properly also get low.

Taking breakfast is therefore very important to replenish these energy stores and nutrients for proper brain functioning at the start of the day and also to improve your thinking ability as well as keeping your concentration level high.

Contrary to the common belief that eating breakfast will make you dull, studies have shown extensively that people who have eaten breakfast can concentrate better and have a longer attention span, helping them to give out their best. They also perform better physically after eating breakfast as there is more energy available to their muscles.

In a more subtle way too, Breakfast can also help improve mood, as workers have better concentration and aren't tired or hungry hence ,preventing them from experiencing the usual mid-morning slump, where you feel dull, cannot concentrate or understand the things happening around and cannot just wait to go for break .

Aside these benefits, Eating breakfast regularly may also help you to control your weight. This is because when breakfast is skipped, hunger sets in long before it's time for lunch, but because it's not convenient to eat properly (as you may still be working or finishing a task), many people who have not eaten breakfast snack on foods that are high in fat and sugar before eating lunch later eg. fried yam, Coke etc. These excess calories are stored as fat which when accumulates can make one overweight or obese .the long term consequence of these can be unpleasant heart problems and diabetes.

Let's keep in mind however that even though eating any breakfast is better than not eating breakfast altogether, some choices are better than others.



Unbalanced or predominantly carbohydrate breakfasts, like plain koko with “bofloat” , can give energy for one to two hours, while complete breakfasts that contain a balance of protein, fat and carbohydrates can maintain blood sugar levels for longer periods to provide the needed fuel active students need. So go on take your koko but do add some milk and some bananas or oranges for desert!

Remember, for you to fully make up your daily nutrients requirement ,you certainly have to make time for breakfast. So no matter how busy or hot you may be, let's make time to have breakfast! With a good foundation (healthy breakfast) your day and mood would be as bright as the sun.

Pearl Exornam Selormey

*Nutritionist
St. Elizabeth Hospital,
Hwidiem*





CHILLI PEPPERS: More Nutritious Than You Think

By Mrs Naana Anane Adjei

C

Chilli peppers come from the nightshade family, closely related to bell peppers and tomatoes. These fruits of Capsicum pepper plants are noted for their pungent, hot flavour. Chillies contain mainly water and a bit of carbohydrates (88% and 9% respectively).

A lot of people add chilli peppers to their food just for the heat or spice. These colourful powerhouses however bring more than spice to the table.

Peppers are packed with antioxidants including Vitamin C, which is particularly important for the proper functioning of the immune system and promotion of wound healing.

Chillies also contain pyridoxine (vitamin B6). This nutrient plays an important role in how our bodies regulate our metabolism. Pyridoxine is also needed for healthy nerves, skin and red blood cells.

Capsaicin is a bioactive plant compound found in peppers. It speeds up the rate at which our bodies burn energy. It also helps reduce the sensitivity of nerve endings to pain. Even pain associated with acid reflux has been shown to be reduced by capsaicin.

You may have heard that chilli peppers aid weight loss. Although there is mixed evidence on this subject, it may be helpful to include chillies in your diet in addition to other healthy lifestyle practices.

Chilli peppers stimulate the secretion of saliva and gastric juices. This effect helps improve digestion. They have also been associated with reduction of gas and bloating, as well as soothing the digestive tract.

Chillies may not be a major component of your prescribed meal plan, but the cumulative impact of this spicy fruit as part of any diet cannot be overlooked.

If you react to or have an insensitivity to chillies or experience digestive problems with intake of chillies, it is better to avoid or limit

5 COMMON FOODS YOU MUST AVOID FOR WEIGHT LOSS

By Dr Carl Nutsugah

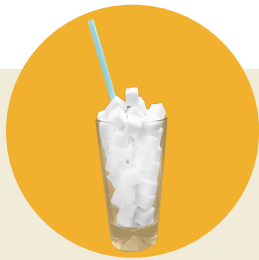
Trying to lose weight? Make sure you aren't consuming these foods otherwise you could be RUINING your weight loss goals!

We all know that the food we consume directly affects our body and the way it is going to change whether it is for better or worse. In order to keep ourselves as healthy as possible, we try to eat a healthy diet.

Preferably one we can stick to forever if we care about the way we look.

On the other hand, if you think you have a couple of extra pounds then you need to make a weight loss plan.

So if you are planning on making a weight loss plan for yourself here's a list of the worst foods for weight loss you need to avoid.



SWEETENED DRINKS

Sweetened drinks like sodas are also among one of the worst foods for weight loss.

They are on this list because they are filled with added sugars and sweeteners that are very unhealthy and have the opposite effect of weight loss.

Research has shown that consuming a single 355ml can of soda each day can lead to 15 pounds of weight gain in a year!

Furthermore, soda drinks are corrosive for your stomach.

Even drinking one glass a day increases the chances by 50% for metabolic syndromes like increased blood sugar, increased blood pressure, increased levels of fat in the blood and very low levels of cholesterol.



WHITE BREAD

The reason why white bread itself is on this list is that it's completely out of any useful nutrients. It doesn't contain fiber because it's not made of whole wheat and all of the calories consumed are from simple carbohydrates which turn into fat.

It also contains a lot of salt and large quantities of sodium are terrible for your body and can cause high blood pressure.

Because of the simple carbohydrates, refined sugar and preservatives in white bread, it will only make you gain extra weight.

Being able to balance the consumption of white bread is good but even better if you can completely avoid it. Try whole-wheat bread instead.



CANDY

Firstly, most candy contains saturated fat which causes a rise in cholesterol levels which leads to high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. There are about 9 grams of calories in each gram of fat.

Ideally, your daily fat consumption should be around 44 to 77 grams of fat per day and one candy bar contains at least 11 grams of saturated.

So, there's a big chance that combined with other foods during the day you'll exceed your daily limit.

Candy is also high in sugar and having sugar in any diet plan will lead to weight gain and poor nutrition overall, especially if you're replacing meals that could actually have good nutrients.

Lastly, since candy has a lot of calories it's safe to say that if you're constantly eating candy then your daily calorie consumption will exceed the amount you need for weight loss and you'll gain weight instead



ALCOHOL

Alcohol is actually a diuretic and because of this the more alcohol you drink the more you put your body at risk of dehydration.

Since hydration is very important, especially if you're an active individual, you have to be very careful with the quantity of alcohol you introduce to your system.

When it comes to the impact on the metabolism, the liver takes the main role in dealing with alcohol, trying to neutralize and help your body get rid of it as fast and as easy as possible.

All of this is bad for your entire body because the liver plays a major role in helping with food processing and if we constantly drown it with alcohol it won't be able to function as it's supposed to.



ICE CREAM

I think we can all agree that ice cream is extremely delicious but at the same time, it's also quite unhealthy because it's high in calories and most ice creams are also high in added or processed sugars.

Of course, eating a small portion is fine from time to time, but the fact that you can eat a lot of it in one sitting poses a problem.

If you can't live without eating ice cream, consider making one yourself but try using less added sugars and healthier ingredients.



LET'S TALK FITNESS

with Celebrity Trainer

WARMZ INCREDIBLE

By Derrick N. Tagoe

Photographs by Joel Kantabri

Warmz Incredible also known as Emmanuel Darkwa Ampadu is a guy with a deep passion for workout and staying healthy. He is also the CEO of Warmz Aesthetics, a lifestyle fitness brand which aims to positively impact the fitness lifestyle industry in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

Viva Health Magazine caught up with him to walk us through his fitness journey so far.

VH: Let's start with you. Who's Warmz and how did he fall into fitness?

WI: Ok so Warmz is regular guy who is passionate about muscle building, looking good and changing the face of bodybuilding in his country Ghana. I got into fitness because I felt a strong passion towards it. I used to work for a construction Company in Tema as a site supervisor a couple of years back and I used to struggle with getting psyched up for work. I would jump straight into our local gym right after work without hesitation. This made me conclude I have a high interest for working out and if I could make money out of that, I'd live a fulfilling life! So I did a lot of

research and tried different techniques on myself, it worked; others tried it and it worked for them too. Fast forward, I'm here now almost done with my Ace online fitness course and ready to step up my game.

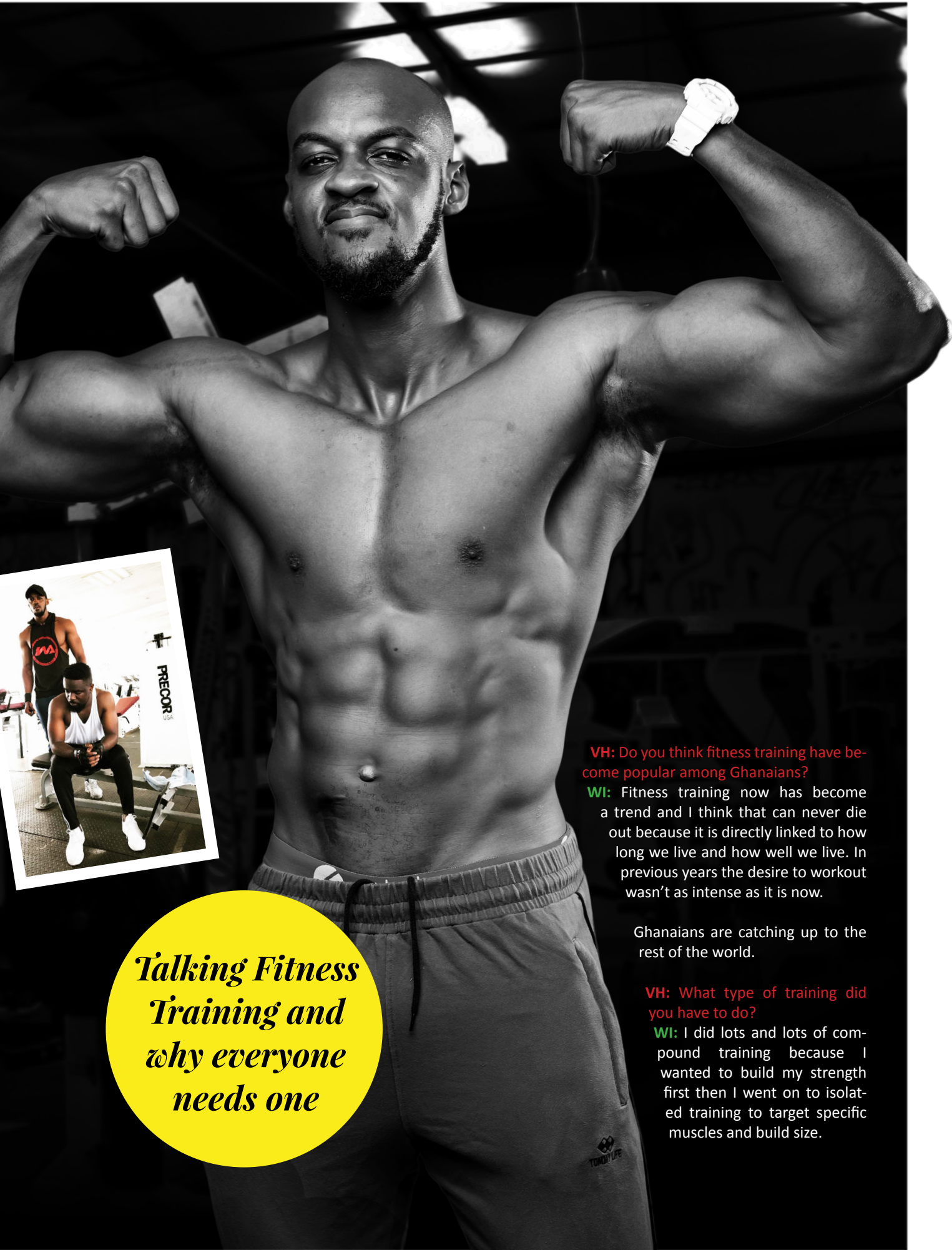
VH: Do you have fitness goals for yourself? If so, what are they?

WI: Yes I set fitness goal for myself every time and one of them currently is being 100 kg pure muscle I'm currently 93 kg and not far from that.

VH: Do share with us what your first experience was like lifting a weight

WI: My first experience lifting weight to be honest, wasn't great at all. I had minimal knowledge on what I was doing back then. My strongest need to workout came about back in Kumasi Polytechnic when I was being mugged by a guy armed with a knife and I was too scared to do anything because of my size. I felt he just wanted to intimidate me and not threaten my life per se but the mere fact he could easily do that told me I needed to push myself hard at the gym. Hopefully my size would repel such attacks in the future.

Then and only then did I get serious and started real workouts.



Talking Fitness Training and why everyone needs one

VH: Do you think fitness training have become popular among Ghanaians?

WI: Fitness training now has become a trend and I think that can never die out because it is directly linked to how long we live and how well we live. In previous years the desire to workout wasn't as intense as it is now.

Ghanaians are catching up to the rest of the world.

VH: What type of training did you have to do?

WI: I did lots and lots of compound training because I wanted to build my strength first then I went on to isolated training to target specific muscles and build size.



VH: Tell us about your specialties in relation to fitness and exercising

WI: I specialize more in HIIT, abs sculpting and muscle building.

VH: What should someone do if they are really interested in becoming fit?

WI: They have to read more and research on this field before attempting anything. They should also get a good personal trainer to guide them. Lastly and more importantly, they should take that bold step of actually seeing it through.

VH: How important is nutrition and dieting to anyone aspiring to get into fitness?

WI: Some say it's 70% diet, 30% workout, Nah...it should be 100% dieting, 100% workout! Nutrition is so important without the right nutrition, you'll stand still in your fitness journey for a disturbingly long amount of time. In order to lose weight, you have to be at a calorie deficit and to gain muscles calorie surplus. Without the right nutrition none of those can be achieved

VH: In your experience, what are some of the misconceptions people have about fitness and muscle building?

WI: Whenever people walk to me some go like, "I want to gain muscles but I don't want to look like you". First of all, looking like me will take u at least 2-3 years

of hard work. People think when you lift weights for a month you're going to see immediate change. You would see changes but not much of it. You need time, patience and endurance to achieve that. Also ladies erroneously assume they will build muscles like men when they lift weight.

On the contrary they would rather look firm, well toned up and still have their soft and tender body because they continue to secrete the oestrogen hormones.

VH: What advice can you offer individuals who want to train and keep fit?

WI: Individuals looking to train and remain fit should first of all eat well. By eating well, i mean they should eat foods high in macro and micro nutrition to help the body by recovering, building and protecting it.

VH: Are there any drawbacks to working in this field?

WI: The main problem with working in this field is the mindset the typical Ghanaian has about working out. They see it as a chore and requires a huge amount of persuasion. But thankfully that is changing. People are gradually easing up into the idea.

VH: How has your job changed your life?

WI: My job has changed my life completely. Aside

the satisfaction in knowing the lives I have turned around, it has made me meet some famous people I never thought I'd meet. We talking about Sarkodie, Jocelyn Dumas, Fuse ODG, Idris Elba, Ahuofe Patri, Ameyaw Debrah and a whole lot more. Without this job I doubt I would have have met all these amazing people. It gets better; i even get contacted by some pretty huge personalities abroad. It has been a sweet ride for me so far.

VH: Something for fun: What is your favorite healthy snack?

WI: A banana peanut butter smoothie with 1-2 scoops protein shake.

VH: Lastly before we let you go, would you push your girlfriend/wife to exercise even if she's not really into that?

WI: From my experience, I've realized you can take a horse to the river but you can't force it to drink. It would be easier if she is willing, so what I'll definitely do is give a her a reason to workout. She will be more serious with it when she makes that choice herself.

VH: Thank you for your time Warmz. It's been INCREDIBLE talking to you.

WI: Always a pleasure.



**SOME SAY IT'S 70%
DIET, 30% WORKOUT,
NAAH IT SHOULD BE
100% DIETING, 100%
WORKOUT!**



GOOD NUTRITION IS THE

FOUNDATION!

By Mrs Pearl Selormey



Good nutrition provides a solid foundation in the early stages of life for healthy adulthood.

Right from cognitive and physical development, nutrition plays a fundamental role in how children develop.

Just like building a house, without the right raw materials and foundation, the house is bound to collapse or develop cracks along the way. It is therefore crucial to feed children right especially in the first 1000 days of life.

Providing them with varied or diversified nutrient-dense meals daily doesn't have to be very expensive or exotic.

Readily available local foods like vegetables, fruits and high fibre foods can be presented in appealing ways to reduce costs.

Meal times with family can also be made exciting if there is variety to choose from and if families eat together.

Aside providing children with healthy options on the table, it is also a time to teach them about making healthy

choices with food so they can grow with healthy eating habits.

The best investment any household can make is to ensure children get right nutrition as nutrition forms the bedrock for good health.

So let's help them to eat right to get their health right!

ALCOHOL & HEART DISEASE:

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

By Mrs Naana Anane Adjei

Ever heard someone say that a bit of alcohol is good for the heart? Can a few alcoholic drinks really be good for your heart? Cider, beer, whiskey, rum, champagne, palm wine, red or white wine, the list is endless.

Should you drink or not?

You may have come across certain studies suggesting that moderate alcohol consumption may raise HDL ("good") cholesterol, prevent damage caused by LDL ("bad") cholesterol, among others. These studies are however inconclusive on whether those healthy effects come from the alcohol or from other good lifestyle choices that light drinkers make.

Red wine, in particular, is widely credited for its resveratrol content. Resveratrol has been touted as a natural way to slow aging and fight cancer, obesity, heart dis-

ease and diabetes. The benefits of resveratrol in humans has been widely debated and is still being researched into. Should you desire to improve your resveratrol intake, red wine is certainly not your only option. Grapes, cranberries and even peanuts and cocoa also contain resveratrol.

If you don't drink, your heart is definitely not a good enough reason to start. It is rather a good reason to stop drinking. Alcohol use is particularly harmful to people who have:

- A family history of alcohol abuse or of liver disease or pancreatitis
- Heart failure, cardiomyopathy, uncontrolled high BP, arrhythmia, history of sudden cardiac death or stroke or high triglyceride levels (you will know from your lipid profile test)
- Had a heart attack. Alcohol can cause

further damage to heart muscle.

- Diabetes. Alcohol affects your blood glucose level.

Heavy drinking makes it more likely for one to develop serious health problems like liver disease, cancer, peptic ulcer, among others. Regular or high alcohol use can also hurt the heart and lead to diseases of the heart muscle, known as cardiomyopathy. Drinking alcohol regularly can also raise blood pressure.

The best way to prevent the harmful effects of alcohol use is to keep your drinking light or moderate. Moderate drinking means an average of two drinks per day for men, and one drink per day for women. There is the same amount of alcohol in each standard drink: one regular beer, a glass of wine and a shot of spirits.



7 TIPS FOR MAKING YOUR SALADS HEALTHY AND TASTY

Mrs Naana Anane Adjei

A typical Ghanaian salad is packed with processed meats, dressing, canned vegetables and other toppings.

We love our flavors, so we often end up eating junk in the name of salads. Understandably, dry salads do not sit well with a lot of us.

It took a lot of experimentation to help me change from the vegetable hater I was, to the salad lover I am now. Friends and family enjoy my salads, and as you pick up these tips I hope your love for salads deepen, and people visit you for a bowl of salad or invite you to make salads for their events too.

1 Texture is Everything: For me, a good salad must have some crunchiness to it. This is achieved by purchasing firm, mature vegetables which are not exposed to the sun, and cleaning them well. A lot of the stuff we use to clean our vegetables (salt / vinegar / baking soda, etc.) cause greens to lose their moisture and wilt quickly.

Try this for crisp, crunchy greens: Clean your greens thoroughly with water before storing. Keep them refrigerated in a bowl, covered with a napkin till you're ready to use them. During preparation, use cold water to prepare your solution for washing your greens and rinse with plain chilled water (preferably with crushed ice) immediately after washing. Also, to prevent wilted greens or soggy salads, don't add dressing, vinegar or lemon juice till you're ready to eat your salad. That means you should not pre-mix salads with dressing before serving.

2 Get Your Veggies Right: Use more leafy greens (dandelions, lettuce) or cruciferous vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, etc) than starchy vegetables such as carrots, beetroots, sweet corn, etc. This helps you to moderate your carb intake, especially if your salad is part of a large meal with other carbs such as rice, yam, pasta or potatoes. Cucumbers are a great addition to your salads as well, for that freshness and feeling of fullness due to their high water content.

3 Ditch the Processed Meats: corned beef, sausages, luncheon meat and other fatty, processed meats should give way to healthier sources of protein. Eggs, fish, lean cuts of meat or poultry and other seafood could be used instead of processed. Use plant proteins such as tofu, beans or nuts (yes, nuts are great in salads too) in place of animal proteins often.

4 Keep it Simple: use just 2 or 3 vegetables in addition to your leafy greens. This gives room for exploring different vegetable combinations in different salads, so you don't get fed up with several vegetables at once. For example, a green salad of cucumbers and leafy greens only will taste different from a coleslaw or one with greens, tomatoes and bell peppers.

5 Spice it Up: Add some chopped herbs and spices to put a twist on your salad. Basil (akokomesa), ginger, garlic, black pepper, parsley, coriander, the list is endless. Aside the flavor, herbs and spices are packed with health-boosting compounds, most of which are highly potent in the uncooked state.

6 Watch the Dressing: Store-bought salad dressing is often high in sodium and saturated fat. Try homemade vinaigrette or low fat salad dressing, or simply use plain/ Greek yoghurt, lemon juice, apple cider vinegar or virgin olive oil as dressing. Choose low fat or trim dressings if you must buy.

7 Experiment with Fruits: Try adding a few pieces of fruit to give your salad a touch of sweetness. Fruits such as apples, mangoes, grapes, etc as great additions to salads. Whether fresh or dry, fruits help you enjoy the boring veggies.



Let's Talk About **DEPRESSION**





H

He was confident enough to ask me whether depression exist in Africa. I was stunned, either by his ignorance or by his seemingly dismissive nature towards the topic. Somewhere between the lines formed on his forehead spelling arrogance and contempt was one that read curiosity and willingness to know more.

I took my time, managed to suppress my anger and schooled him on the topic of depression. After long chat, I gathered that he was yet another African made to believe that depression is a foreign culture that has been blindly copied from the whites and that it does not apply to those in Africa. To some extent, he believed only white folks suffered from such a condition.

When we parted ways, I was convinced he had a different conviction about depression and people who live with it. He promised to read more about it, and I was glad.

*I know you could read about it too, as a matter of fact, I would love that you do but *before you do, let me give you a little gist about it, from the little knowledge I have garnered as a health professional. Hopefully, I would stir your desire to want to know more.*

What is Depression?

Depression is a mental health disorder characterised by persistent depressed moods or loss of interest in activities causing significant impairment to daily life.

Before you scream about it being a mental health disorder, know that every individual skips a period of normalcy once in a while. It happens when you cry, feel pain, feel very excited or feel very agitated. The only difference or the factor that makes it a disorder is how long it lasts. A person should be able to get back to normalcy after a short period of time. It becomes questionable when it exceeds fourteen(14) days. A person can be queried or diagnosed with depression when they stay in a depressed state for 14 days continuously or beyond .

Research has shown that it affects women more than men, and I am tempted to believe it's because we are more emotional. They haven't been able to prove the reason for that statistics though.

Causes:

There are a number of factors that can cause a person to suffer depression, they could be biological, psychological and social factors. Faulty regulation of mood by the brain, medications, stressful life events and some medical conditions can be causes of depression. There are nerve factors like its growth and function that have major impact on depression (you could read extensively on that if anatomy and physiology interests you much.)

Risk Factors:

- People with poor coping mechanisms
- Family history of depression
- Childhood trauma

- Temperament of the individual
- Abuse of recreational drugs
- Having a previous episode of depression

Symptoms:

- Anxiety
- Apathy
- Discontent
- Guilt
- Loss of interest in activity
- Hopelessness
- Loss of interest
- Mood swings
- Sadness
- Insomnia
- Over sleeping
- Loss of appetite
- Restlessness
- Suicidal thoughts and tendencies, etc

Types of Depression:

There are different types of depression ranging from mild to serious forms. Those that last long and those that do not . There are nine(9) basic ones,

-Major depressive disorder: most common type of depression. Symptoms are extreme sadness, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, etc.

-Persistent depressive disorder: Also known as dysthymia. Its a mild form of depression and not as severe as major depressive disorder . It's low level depression that lasts for two years or longer. It's the chronic form of depression.

-Atypical depression: a common sign of atypical depression is a sense of heaviness in the arms and legs (like a form of paralysis). Oversleeping and overeating are two major

symptoms of atypical depression. Irritability, low mood reactivity and weight gain are also symptoms. Treated mostly with talk therapy.

-Situational depression: also called adjustment disorder. Triggered by life changing or stressful events. It's more common than major depression and mostly doesn't need to be treated by medication. It mostly clears up when the event has ended. Events like, a breakup, job loss, death of a loved one, trauma, etc

-Pre-menstrual dysphoric disorder: (PMDD) affects women during the second half of their menstrual cycle. Strikes once a month, days before her period. Symptoms are moods swings, anxiety, irritability and depression. It is much more severe than premenstrual syndrome which is common for most women.

-Post partum depression: depression that occurs after having a baby. Symptoms include, fear of hurting the child, suicidal thoughts, extreme sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, fatigue, feeling of disconnect from the child.

-Psychotic depression: loss of touch with reality. Characterized by delusions and hallucinations. They experience psychotic symptoms like becoming catatonic, not speaking and not leaving their bed. Mostly treated with a combination of antidepressants and antipsychotic medications.

-Bipolar disorder: people with this kind of depression have extremely low periods followed by extremely high periods. It was

“Depression is not an evil induced illness or a curse as some people believe it to be”

referred to as manic depressive disorder because it has components of both.

-Seasonal affective disorder: occurs at the same period of time every year. They experience signs of depression at specific times or seasons. Most people experience this when it is winter and it's believed its caused by the absence of light.

Treatment:

- psychotherapy
 - medication
 - medical procedure
 - lifestyle modification
- (Will do an extensive post on this soon).
Etc.

Depression is not an evil induced illness or a curse as some people believe it to be (I am not denying the spiritual aspects of it however). We are human and sometimes our responses to life occurrences can cause us to become depressed. It can happen to anyone, from pastors to soldiers, children to adults, Christians to

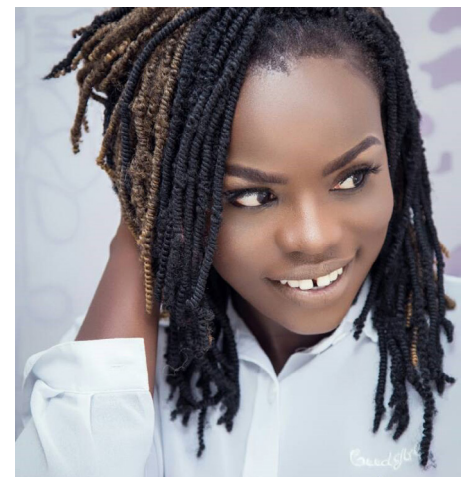
Muslims. It can happen to anyone anywhere across the globe. The most important thing we must pay attention to is that, it is treatable and curable.

The most effective form of treatment has been proven to be the talk therapy and almost everyone can offer that. Even if you are not a professional, you can help someone who is depressed by speaking positively and kindly to them. I hope this helps you to be able to identify someone who is treading on the path of depression.

Do not hesitate to seek help if you recognise any of these signs and symptoms, either it's for yourself or for a loved one.

Let's all help for the world to be a better place.

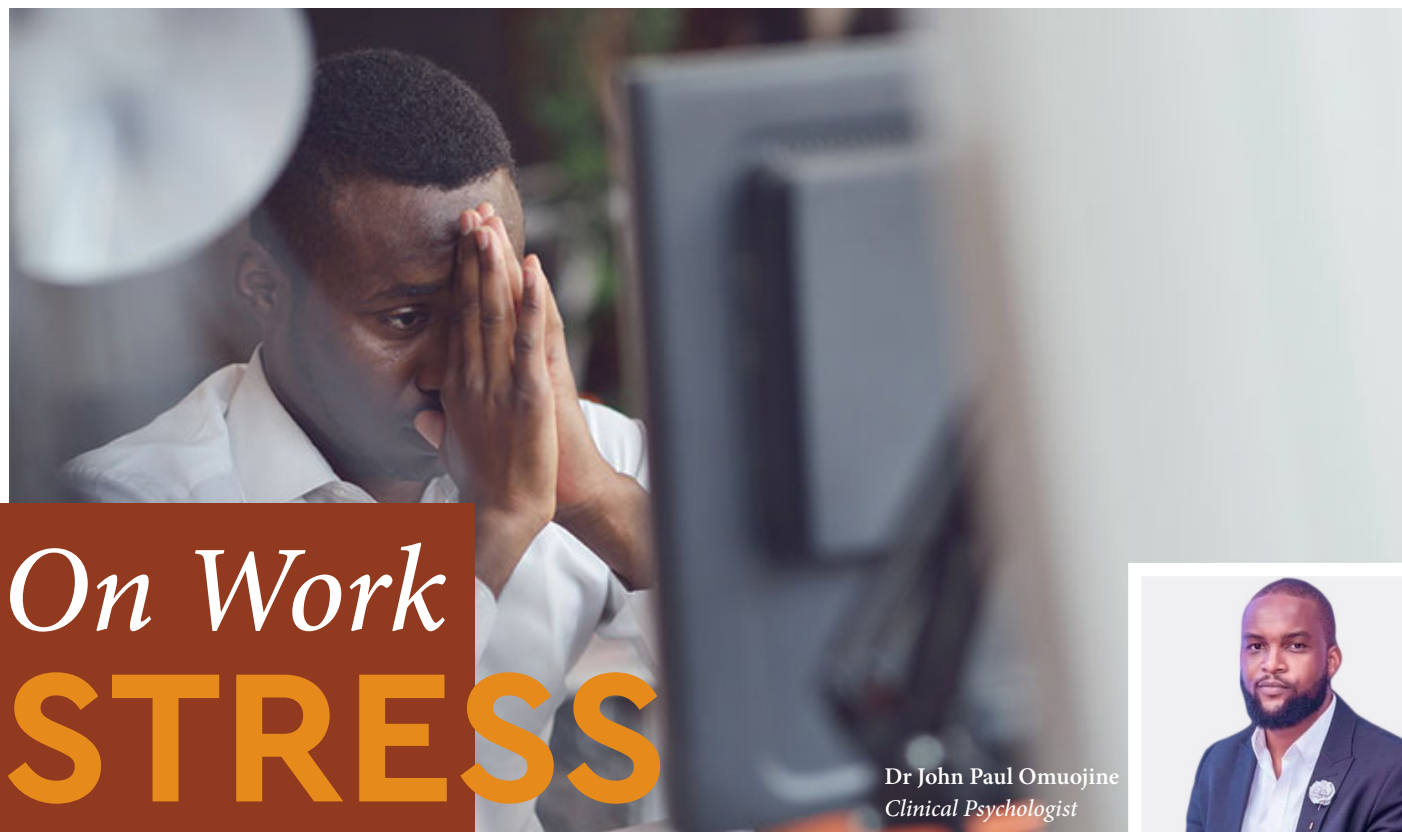
Till next time,
Afiya.



By Afiya Agyemang
Email: elladina44@gmail.com

“PEOPLE DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE GETTING MENTAL HEALTH CARE, NECESSARILY, BECAUSE THEY'RE WORRIED THAT THEIR FRIENDS ARE GOING TO THINK THEY'RE UNSTABLE OR THEY'RE CRAZY.”





On Work STRESS

Dr John Paul Omuojine
Clinical Psychologist



It's a half-moon and you're in the stone age. You spot a new cozy-looking cave after a snake invasion rendered your last home uninhabitable. As you approach the entrance of your potential new abode, you identify a familiar footprint. Immediately, your pupils dilate to let in as much light as possible.

A surge of adrenaline in your blood stream is followed by a rise in your heart rate and blood pressure to power your muscles which are now rock-hard as you square up against an 8 feet tall bear. Your now lightning-quick reflexes help just enough to evade a deathly blow; you're scratched up but barely bleed as most of the blood supply to your soon sweaty skin has been shunted internally- to minimize bleeding and send it to the muscles, where it's really needed at the time. You make a run for it into the bushes and out of range of your attacker and your physiology soon returns normal. You have just experienced an appropriate response to acute stress.

Stress can be defined as any situation or condition that threaten to disturb the state of equilibrium, or the process by which this happens. But for clarity, I will refer to stress and the process and 'stressor' as the offending situation/agent.

Stress is not inherently negative. In fact, it is necessary to drive growth and development. Even in our modern world, a certain level of stress is helpful, for example the fear of failing that final paper or bungling that crucial presentation was in some ways necessary to push you to do your very best and be successful. Too little; you slack off. Too much; you can barely concentrate. When stress causes problems of significance to our physical and mental health, it is usually either instantaneous and, usually obviously, excessive or chronic and sometimes insidious. The latter is most relevant in occupational settings.

In contrast to bears and snakes, today's stressors are less tangible. They could be anything from that uncomfortable chair that aggravates your back ache to the strained relationship with your boss since you rejected their advances. Though their dangers may not be immediately apparent, these elusive but persistent stressors are more harmful than they appear.

The human body is better equipped to respond to transient stressors. When stress is persistent, no matter how apparently 'small' to the external observer the response switch is kept 'on' for longer than it is supposed to. As a result, stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol

are persistently elevated. These affect multiple organ systems. It can lead or contribute to a raised blood pressure (hypertension), altered blood sugar and fat metabolism (diabetes, high cholesterol), migraines, mental health disorders (depression, anxiety etc) amongst a host of others.

The first step to dealing with these

Stress is not inherently negative. In fact, it is necessary to drive growth and development.

stressors is identification. Three major groups of stressors include biological (e.g. chronic pain), psychosocial (e.g. from relationships), occupational (school work, work dynamics etc.) Our next publication will focus on dealing with occupational stress.



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MY CHILD HAS DRANK POISON!!

A mother wails and cries for help!

A father screams and quickly picks up the child!

What should they do next?

A

According to the 2014 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System (NPDS), 1,326,789 toxic exposures

occurred in children younger than age 20 years in 2014, and mortalities represented 7.5% of all fatalities reported to the NPDS in 2014.

In Africa at large and in Ghana, there is paucity of data but on average about 4 children report at the various paediatric emergency units with acute poisoning on a monthly basis.

Common poisoning agents include pharmaceuticals, household products (e.g. bleach, cleaning agents), pesticides, poisonous plants and bites from insects and animals and ingestion of kerosene.

It is important to note that acute poisoning does not necessarily result from ingestion of large quantities of a substance. The commonest cause of paracetamol poisoning is repeated miscalculated overdoses to treat fever.

Do not think your child is too young to ingest poison;

As early as 4 to 6 months, infants start reaching for things and put everything in their mouth

Between 7 to 12 months Infants start to get curious, pull things down and put everything in their mouth

Between 1-3 years, children begin to imitate their parents, climb on things and put everything in their mouth

WHAT YOU MUST NOT DO

Do not store food and household cleaners together

Do not take medicine in front of children
Do not put kerosene, parazone and other chemicals in soft drink bottles or distilled water bottles

Do not store detergents and dishwashing soaps under the sink

Do not keep alcohol on the floor

Do not induce vomiting if child ingests poison.

Do not pour palm oil into the child's mouth or smear garlic on the child

Do not shake the child

WHAT YOU MUST DO

If child inhales poison,

Get the child into fresh air immediately, open all doors and report to the hospital immediately

If poison spills on the skin,

Remove all clothes and rinse the skin with water for about 10 minutes, wash gently with soap and water and report to the hospital immediately

If poison splashes in the eye,

Pour lukewarm water in the eye without forcefully opening it for about 15minutes and if the child is old enough, have the child blink several times while washing then report to the hospital immediately

If child swallows poison,

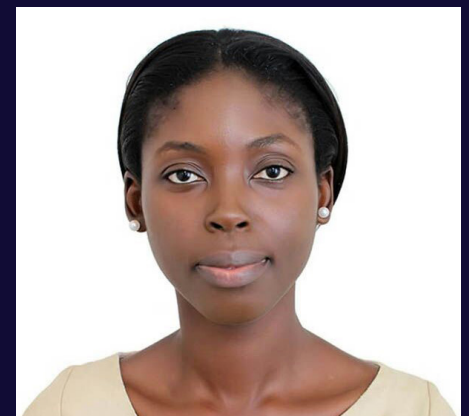
If child ingests hydrocarbons like kerosene and turpentine, remove stained clothes, wash the mouth and report to the hospital

If child ingests battery fluid, bleach, toilet bowl cleaner, soap, perfume, remove clothes and wash burned area/mouth with water, give sips of water or milk and report to the hospital immediately

If child ingested pesticides or poisonous plant, remove clothes if stained, wash the mouth and report to the hospital immediately

Remember to always report to the hospital with what your child ingested, inhaled or spilt on him or herself so as to guide the health professionals in their management

By Dr. Gabrielle Obeng-Koranteng





Introducing Yakokoe

- Public Engagement on Air Quality and Its Associated Health Effects

By Collins Hodoli
PHD Student Cranfield University UK

Studies have shown the link between air pollution and its adverse effects on human health. The World Health Organization (WHO) described air pollution as “the world’s major environmental health risk”¹. The WHO reported on the effects of air quality on human health and identified the relative contributions to mortality from different components of air pollution. The strongest correlations with health were found to be particulate matter (PM) followed by ozone (O3) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2).

For gas phase pollutants, NO2 is identified as a crucial species that may affect quality of life and contribute to increase mortality rates². NO2 and carbon monoxide (CO) are both respiratory sensitizers and can adversely impact those with existing cardiovascular or respiratory diseases.³ It is important to note that long-term exposure to NO2 affects lung functioning while CO

reduces the body’s ability to transport oxygen and thereby affecting cognitive function at lower concentrations and being poisonous at higher concentrations⁴⁻⁵. While Nitric oxide (NO) may not be of a primary importance for direct impact on public health, it quickly converts to NO2 which through its influence on ground level O3 affects the oxidising ability of the troposphere leading to global warming. Particulate matter is a key indicator of urban air quality and widely used in setting air quality standards⁶.

In Ghana and many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, public knowledge on air quality/pollution and its related health impacts is limited. Further to this, air quality data is poorly communicated and usually found only in governmental reports. This inhibits awareness creation, behavioural changes and stakeholder engagement on development of mitigation measures. Technological development and the application of machine learning can bridge these

gaps in Sub-Saharan Africa. This may help in public sensitisation and awareness creation, engagement and behavioural changes. In this piece, a summary on the usefulness of one of such developments; Yakokoe is presented.

Yakokoe is a mobile application that is built mainly to engage, educate and empower citizens. With this simplified mobile application, the state of the air within your region is at your fingertips. Using the United States Air Quality Index (AQI), this app provide subscribers with information on the quality of the air in their region with its associated health risks.

The AQI to simply put is an index for reporting daily air quality specifically on how clean or polluted the air is and what health effect is linked to such air quality levels. The table below provides guidance on the colour coding system used.

Table 1: AQI and Interpretation ⁷

Index Value	Name	Colour	Advisory
0-50	Good	Green	None
51-100	Moderate	Yellow	Unusually sensitive individuals should consider limiting prolonged outdoor exertion
101-150	Unhealthy for sensitive group	Orange	Children, active adults and people with respiratory disease such as asthma should limit prolonged outdoor exertion
151-200	Unhealthy	Red	Children, active adults and people with respiratory disease such as asthma should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion; everyone should limit prolonged outdoor exertion
201-300	Very unhealthy	Purple	Children, active adults and people with respiratory disease such as asthma should avoid outdoor exertion; everyone should limit outdoor exertion
301-500	Hazardous	Maroon	Everyone should avoid all physical activities outdoors

1WHO, 2014. Burden of Disease from Ambient Air Pollution for 2012. http://www.who.int/phe/health_topics/outdoorair/databases/AAP_BoD_results_March2014.pdf World Health Organization (accessed 31 October 2016)

2World Health Organisation, 2006. Air Quality Guidelines for Particulate Matter, Ozone, Nitrogen Dioxide and Sulfur Dioxide. In: Global Update 2005. Summary of Risk Assessment. WHO/SDE/PHE/OEH/06.02

3Health Effects Institute, January 2010. Traffic-related Air Pollution: a Critical Review of the Literature on Emissions, Exposure, and Health Effects A Special Report of the HEI Panel on the Health Effects of Traffic-related Air Pollution. Special Report 17

4 Lehr, E.L., Feb 1970. Carbon monoxide poisoning: a preventable environmental hazard. Am. J. Public Health Nation. Health 60 (2), 289e293

5Abelsohn, A., Sanborn, M.D., Jessiman, B.J., Weir, E., Jun 2002. Identifying and managing adverse environmental health effects: 6. Carbon monoxide poisoning. Can. Med. Assoc. J. 166 (13), 1685e1690

6Cohen AJ, Ross Anderson H, Ostro B, Pandey KD, Krzyzanowski M, Kunzli N, Gutschmidt K, Pope A, Romieu I, Samet JM, Smith K (2005) The global burden of disease due to outdoor air pollution. J Toxicol Environ Health Part A 68(13–14):1301–1307

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WHAT'S MY SKIN TYPE?



Dr Vida Obese
Specialist Physician/Social Entrepreneur/
Women's Advocate

The skin is the largest organ of the body and protects us from microbes. It helps regulate body temperature, and permits the sensations of touch, heat, and cold. It has three layers namely; the outermost layer of skin, known as the epidermis which provides a waterproof barrier and creates our skin tone. Beneath the epidermis is the dermis which contains tough connective tissue, hair follicles, and sweat glands. The deeper subcutaneous tissue (hypodermis) is made of fat and connective tissue. Knowing your skin type is a very basic and important step towards establishing an effective and healthy skin routine. This is determined by how much oil your skin produces. Medications, stress, diet, skincare regime and environmental factors affect your skin's oil production.

I believe there are six basic types of skin: oily, dry, sensitive, combination, normal and ageing/damaged skin. Normal skin

is rare and usually has no noticeable problem. Pimples are rare, though they might have been present when younger. Normal skin has small pores with healthy glow to skin and no sensitivities.

Oily skin has large pores mostly around nose, chin and forehead and shiny. This skin type experiences blemishes often especially blackheads. This skin is more prone to acne breakouts. Having oily hair may serve as a clue to you!

Dry skin is usually flaky and scaly, dry to touch, feels tight and develops red patches easily. This skin type is prone to cracking and peeling. It is less elastic and forms wrinkles easily. Dry hands and feet may serve as a clue!!

Combination skin is just a combination of oily and dry skin. The cheeks are usually dry while the T-zone (forehead, nose and chin). Blackheads are often found around the nose.

Sensitive skin is easily irritated and often

has red patches. It is viewed as a sub-category of the other skin types. Skin can be sensitive regardless of skin type and usually occurs as a result of reaction to certain skin care routines or allergies. The sensitive skin will be red, dry and itchy.

Ageing or damaged skin often has fine lines and wrinkles or hyperpigmentation. Ageing skin starts around eyes, mouth and the forehead. It appears loose due to loss of elasticity. Skin can be damaged by the sun or harsh topical agents such as steroids and in recent times certain pills, creams and herbs used to lighten or brighten the skin.

Skincare products for oily skin are designed to help rebalance the level of oil in your skin. Products designed for dry skin are usually water based to add needed moisture to the skin.

If you don't feel confident about what type of skin you have, it's best to speak to a dermatologist to ensure you use only products best suited for you.

THE MALARIA VACCINE: WHY THE CONTROVERSY IN GHANA?

By Dr. Carl Nutsugah (excerpts from BBC.COM)

Malaria is humanity's curse. It is among the oldest of human diseases, infecting our earliest ancestors, influencing our recent evolution, and causing an estimated half of all deaths since the Stone Age. Today, nearly half of the world's population is at risk from malaria – it kills more than 400,000 people a year, most of them in Africa, where a child dies every two minutes from the disease. But now hopes have been raised of an end to the scourge: the first malaria vaccine is being

rolled out in immunisation programmes in Malawi, Ghana and Kenya.

The new vaccine has been developed by GlaxoSmithKline with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and others including the World Health Organization (WHO) and Gavi, the global vaccine alliance. It took 32 years of research, and cost more than \$700m (£552m).

Trials show it to be just 40% effective at preventing the disease over four years. That's about as effective as influenza vaccine, but considerably less than the 97% effective diphtheria vaccine. And yet, it may well be the most significant win in our war with malaria for several decades, preventing many thou-

sands of deaths and reducing the great social and economic burden that comes with experiencing or caring for someone with chronic sickness. Public health officials in Africa are allowing themselves to become excited about the barely imagined prospect of eradicating the disease.

"I never thought there would be a vaccine in my lifetime, but now we have a chance," says Anthony Nsiah-Asare, director general of Ghana Health Service, who is coordinating the vaccine's implementation. "We've seen how it has been eradicated in some continents, so it should be possible in Africa, and now we have real hope that it could be."



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HEALTH BENEFITS OF INTERMITTENT FASTING

By Pearl Owusuaa Adjei
Medical Student
KNUST

The mention of fasting in our society draws people's minds to religion and spirituality. But, research has proven that fasting not only has spiritual benefits but also has various health benefits which have scientifically been proven.

Intermittent fasting refers to an eating pattern where you alternate cycles of eating and fasting periods. The various types of intermittent fasting include the 5:2 diet, alternate day fast, eat-stop-eat fast, 16/8 diet.

The simplest and most common is the 16/8 diet which involves daily fasts of 16 hours and restricting your eating to an 8-10 hour "eating window" where you can eat twice or thrice. A typical example is skipping breakfast and eating the first meal at about 12pm and the next meal at about 8pm. Thus, the individual fasts for 16 hours from 8pm to 12pm the next day. It could also be 10am and 6pm or 11am and 7pm. The 16/8 is the simplest because we naturally fast when we sleep so this diet is somehow an extension of the normal fast we do when we sleep. Some well proven benefits of intermittent fasting are explained below.

Intermittent fasting is beneficial for

weight loss. since the body does not get its energy from food during fasting, it relies on the glucose stored in the muscles and liver to gain energy. When the stored glucose (glycogen) is exhausted, the body then begins to burn fat for energy. This causes the fat stores in the body to deplete and result in weight loss. Any toxins that are in the body's fats are dissolved and removed from the body.

Secondly, intermittent fasting improves blood pressure and heart health. Fasting decreases the Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL), also called bad cholesterol. A study in 110 obese adults showed that fasting for three weeks under medical supervision significantly decreased blood pressure, as well as levels of blood triglycerides, total cholesterol and bad cholesterol (LDL).

Another benefit of intermittent fasting is cellular repair. When fasting, body cells undergo autophagy (waste removal). This involves the breakdown and metabolizing of broken and dysfunctional proteins that form in cells over a certain period. Increase in the frequency of autophagy provides protection against diseases like cancer.

Last but not least, intermittent fasting also results in an increase in insulin sensitivity. During fasting, the body tries to conserve energy by increasing the

sensitivity of cell membranes to insulin. The cells can now metabolize insulin efficiently, reducing the amount of glucose in the body. Researches and reports have shown that the risk of diabetes can be reduced by intermittent fasting. In June 2014, the Medical News Today reported on a study suggesting that fasting may reduce the risk of diabetes among people who are at high risk for the condition.

It is important to note that intermittent fasting, just like any other beneficial diet, requires discipline & commitment. It's benefits are worth the try!



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WHY AM I NOT LOOSING WEIGHT?

By Dr Vida Obese

Specialist Physician/Social Entrepreneur/Women's Advocate

People want to lose weight for different reasons. Being overweight does not imply you are not healthy but it increases your risk of developing health issues such as sleep apnoea, heart disease, gallstones and diabetes and linked to infertility.

It's assumed that only people who are overweight want to lose weight. Some people are very conscious of how they look and it impacts their self-confidence leading to depression and so view weight loss as a positive way to look and feel good.

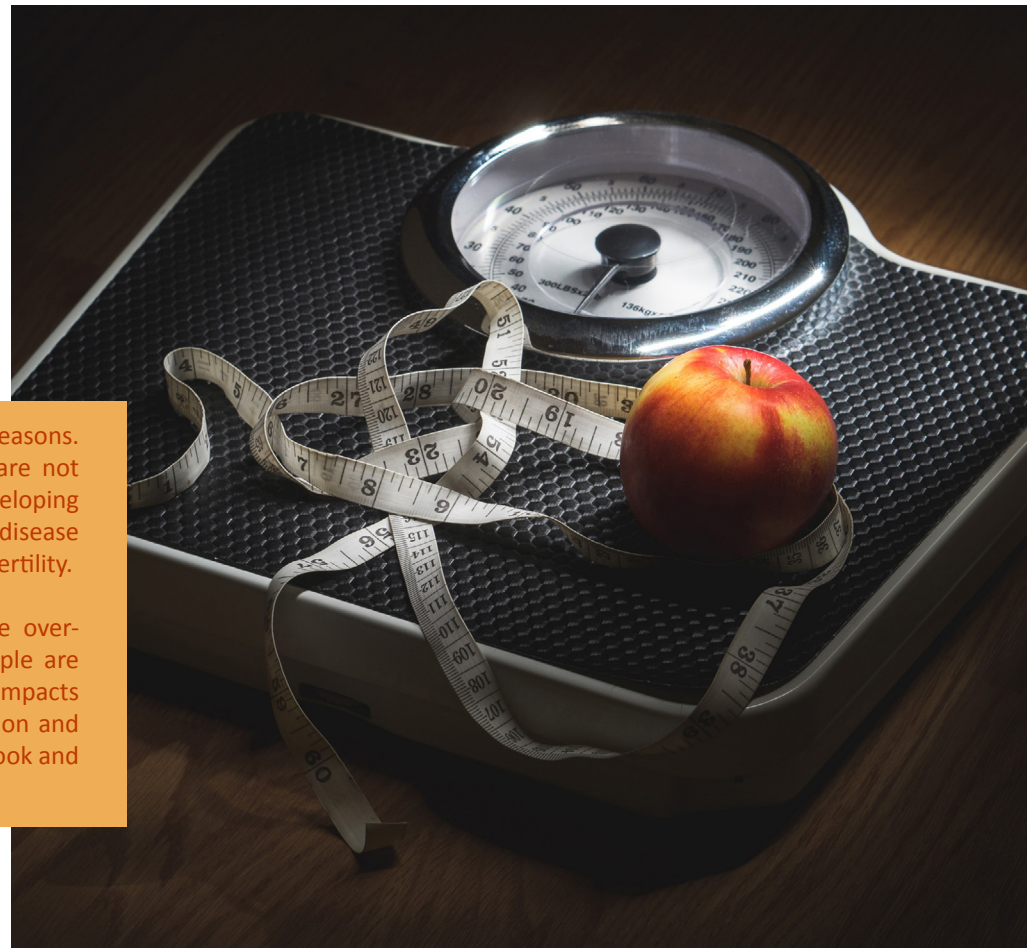
Others pursue weight loss to try and fit into their dress for special occasions such as birthday photo shoot, engagement or wedding while others do so after pregnancy to get back in shape.

Why is losing weight so hard? Why is it keeping off a few kilos harder? Why do others lose and easily gain?

The principle of weight gain is easy: Energy intake exceeds energy expenditure. Being overweight or obese is a result of complex interactions among genetic, behavioural and environmental factors. While we can't fight with our genes, the use of behavior and lifestyle modification is based on wealth of evidence that people become overweight as a result of modifiable behaviours or habits.

Weight loss is what I call a "patience project". Many people have unrealistic expectations of what they can achieve with healthy diet and exercise. They often have a picture of a fitness model, body builder or someone they aspire to look like in mind and often compare their progress with them. If you have lost some weight and you feel good about yourself and the scale wouldn't budge any further, maybe it's time to accept your body the way it.

There are some medical conditions that



can drive weight gain and make it harder for you to lose weight. These include hypothyroidism, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), sleep apnoea and diabetes. Certain medications can make weight loss harder, or even cause weight gain. If you feel this applies to you, speak to your doctor about it for further evaluation.

Beers, some wines and sugary alcoholic beverages are very high in calories; keeping in mind alcohol itself is about 7 calories per gram which is high. Studies on alcohol and weight have never been conclusive and generally doctors advocate for moderate drinking. If you are trying to lose weight, you might want to pay attention to that.

Good sleep is very important for your physical and mental health as well as your weight. Poor or quality sleep is a potent risk factor for obesity and could hinder your weight loss progress.

You might not be losing weight because you are binge eating (even on healthy foods). This means you are eating large amounts of food, often more than the body needs. Some people binge on junk food, while others are binge on healthy

foods such as nuts, nut butters, dark chocolate, cheese etc. Even if something is healthy, its calories count and this can explain why your scale won't budge.

You might not be losing weight because well, you are still drinking sugar!!! Sugary beverages are very fattening as they easily get broken down by body and the brain does not compensate for the calories in them by making you eat less of other foods. This applies to some "healthier" beverages and fruit juices.

You may not be losing weight because you are too focused on dieting. Instead of approaching weight loss from a dieting mindset, let your goal be to become a happier and healthier person.

Habits are hard to change; eating habits more difficult as it entails making choices every day, several times a day. You have to stay focused and stay motivated and keep reminding yourself why you need weight loss. More importantly, LOVE YOURSELF!!

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