

HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY ONE "BODY" AT A TIME

Wellness Program of the African People's Education & Defense Fund, Inc. April 2006
1327 Dr. ML King (9th) Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705 (727) 821-2437 www.apedf.org

Health Tidbits

African People in the U.S. Suffer Unhealthy Eyes

African people in the U.S. suffer some of the highest rates of visual impairment and eye disease such as glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

Glaucoma is four to five times more prevalent in African-Americans than in white people, and a large percentage of those who have glaucoma and ocular hypertension are unaware of the diseases. For more info, visit www.AmEyeHealthy.org

Loss of Sleep Can Trigger Weight Gain

Chronic lack of sleep can be one reason people in the U.S. are getting so much heavier, according to two recent studies.

Researchers at Stanford Univ. and Univ. of Wisconsin found that going without sleep seems to elevate blood levels of a key appetite-stimulating hormone, ghrelin. It causes levels of a "stop eating" hormone, leptin, to take a dive. The net affect is an increase in appetite. Those who slept the least had the most ghrelin and the least leptin, and those who slept the longest, vice versa.

The other study at the Univ. of Chicago also found that the volunteers rated themselves as significantly hungrier — especially for high-calorie foods — when they had been deprived of sleep. It does make sense that the body would seek more nourishment if a person is up and about instead of sleeping. But the body is over-reading that need and signaling a need for calories that is way above what the actual requirements are.

Can Weight Loss Cure Your Pain?

If your aches and pains won't go away, you may need to consider an appropriate diet and exercise regimen for the cure.

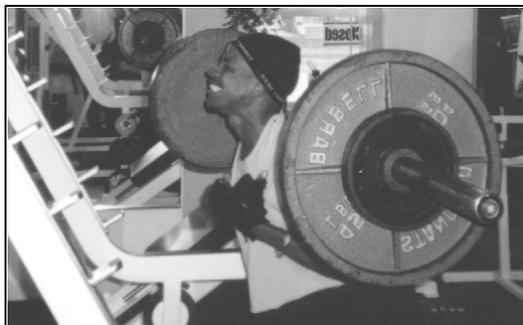
Recently doctors have found a link between excess weight and headaches. An Einstein College of Medicine survey of more than 30,000 migraine headache sufferers found that obese participants (those who had a body mass index of 30 or above) were almost twice as likely to report chronic daily headaches than the average-weight respondents. And the heavier they were, the more severe the pain.

Since inflammation of blood vessels near the brain can lead to headaches and extra pounds often trigger inflammation, shedding weight may be a key to relief.

But the weight-pain connection isn't limited to headaches. "Because the body is designed to support a specific amount of weight for your build and height, exceeding that can throw it out of alignment," says Steven B. Heymsfield, M.D.

One study, of a group of heavy, elderly adults with a form of arthritis in their knees, showed that every pound lost translated into a fourfold reduction in the force exerted on their knees when they walked. Doctors suspect that anyone, young or old, may avoid knee problems by watching their weight.

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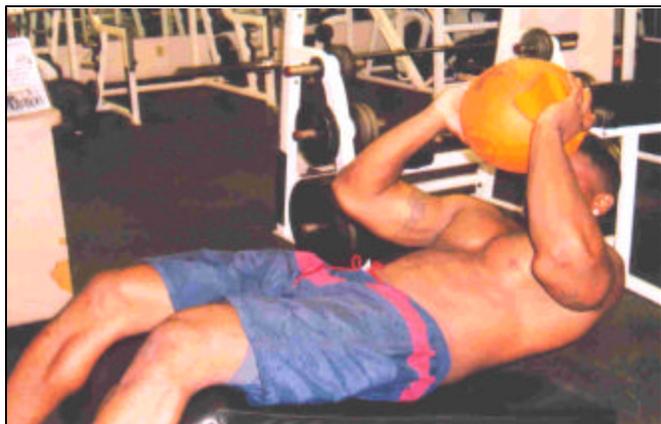
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