

## Protecting Your Back-to-School Immune System

By Dr. Theresa Tsingis, D.C., M.S.



For adults and children alike, the change of season and return to school results in exposure to all sorts of microbes. Most of us know that we should eat healthy antioxidant-type foods in order to optimize health, but how can personalized nutrition help families to withstand the onslaught of back-to-school bugs? Let's address one way that adults can keep themselves healthy, and then how to supply children with good back-to-school nutrition.

Adults can improve their chances of fighting viruses and bacteria by paying attention to their individual body composition. Why? Muscle acts as a reservoir for the immune system, providing amino acids for the production of infection-fighting cells. So when someone is carrying excess abdominal fat and inadequate muscle mass, they can become hosts for infection. Therefore, it is vitally important during the cold and flu season to target the loss of abdominal fat and avoid muscle loss, especially for people over 30. It's wise to find out your accurate body composition beforehand, in order to know how to improve your health during the upcoming season.

Like adults, children have similar needs for antioxidant-rich nutrition; the challenge can be getting those foods into them. What are some ways to accomplish this? I've found, as a nutritionist and mother, that variety is key. Periodic shopping visits to pick up new snacks together does not have to be an ordeal. If you plan once every couple of months to take fully-fed children (don't forget to eat also) on a shopping trip, you will be able to collaborate, which leads to better compliance.

Many parents find that choosing a regular shopping day helps them organize snacks for the week. Encourage children to taste seasonal fruits and vegetables. The most antioxidant-rich foods are those with dark pigments (cranberries, pomegranates, grapes, berries, sweet potatoes). Try watching the Food Network together once in a while. Some youngsters take to "Iron Chef" and other contest-based shows, and creative eating habits may result!

I stock the pantry with a wide variety of non-perishable snacks for those on-the-run mornings. Many tasty fruit, nut and energy bars have low sugar and high fiber content. Nut butters and low-fat dairy products such as string cheese and yogurt are easily packable and have a long shelf life. If your child is sensitive to dairy, try soy-based products. Avoid nitrate- and chemical-laden snack packs, anything with high fructose corn syrup and partially hydrogenated fats. These additives have been linked to lowered school performance, diabetes and altered blood fat levels.

A sound nutrition approach maintains a steady blood sugar. This results in a constant supply of energy, which helps the immune system resist infection. To find out specific ways to boost your immunity, consult with a nutritionist. Accurate body composition analysis and a specific plan (not diet) based on your lifestyle and needs could be the best flu and cold prevention for this season.

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## Lose 9 Pounds in 9 Days at Star Pilates?

A personal journey, by Sophie Braccini

Early summer is the time of the year when my annual trip to France to see family and friends starts me worrying. Will they find me looking older? Will they think I have put on a few too many pounds? And then, while driving on Moraga Rd. one afternoon, I saw a message on the Moraga Center's marquee: "Star Pilates: Lose 9 pounds in 9 days." That same afternoon I picked up the phone and called to make an appointment with owner/operator Miles Morsey.

Morsey has a very cordial and relaxed approach with his clients. "Well," he said, I'm not sure the 9-day program is the right thing for you. You might rather consider doing metabolism testing with meal plans and have the right plan designed specifically for you." So much for nine pounds in nine days, and yet I was curious so I decided the time was right to follow his advice.

Thus I found myself sitting with a pincer on my nose, breathing through a metabolism-measuring device for 10 min-

utes; as it turns out, I have a very slow metabolism. No wonder I was having trouble losing weight. I compiled an extensive list of foods I love and Morsey tailored meal plans specifically for me and my weight loss goal.

Morsey proposed a launching process to start my weight loss program off right: A no-carb diet for three days, meaning a diet focused on dairy, meat, fish and vegetables with no carbohydrates of any kind. A challenge for a vegetarian, but three days is a short period of time and I decided I was going to do what it takes to achieve my goal. After three days, I had lost three pounds. The diet's effect on my appetite was encouraging. I stopped being hungry and craving the little sweets in which I enjoyed indulging from time to time.

Now the real dieting began a week before my trip to France. I found the servings of my new meal plans extremely small. Strangely enough, the portions worked for me since I wasn't hungry, wasn't losing energy during the course of a day, and

continued to have the positive feedback of losing weight each day. Morsey advised me to balance my meals and to completely avoid snacking.

Once in France, I managed to pass muster. But ten days in France can be hard on a dieter. I had left the U.S. with two combined strategies for maintaining my weight while away: (1) stick to the no-carb tactic which allowed me to eat my share of saucissons and foie gras, and (2) maintain the small portions approach which would let me indulge in my mother's mirabelles pie.



Sophie Braccini and Miles Morsey, in front of Morsey's Star Pilates location

Photo by Michael Lucacher

## Events Raise Awareness, Funds for "Silent Disease"

Matt Sharp, who owns Sharp Bicycle in La Fiesta Square with wife, Sally, has a close relationship with Wendy and Scott, and says Tamis' battle with ovarian cancer struck a chord. Three years ago, Sally's sister lost her battle to ovarian cancer. "We've seen first hand that this doesn't happen to 'other people' - it happens very close to home. We hear these stories of people who say that they had symptoms and didn't respond to them; it's one of those things you want to take care of."

In addition to the October event, this year Tamis and Hampton are partnering with Oakwood Athletic Club, which will be hosting "Time to Celebrate Life, A Day of Fitness with the Pros!" on Saturday, Sept. 29 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the club. A variety of active morning classes and afternoon mind/body classes will be open to the public with a minimum \$25 donation, with all proceeds benefiting NOCC.

The Oakwood event includes prizes, guest instructors, snacks and a light lunch from noon to 1 p.m. for participants, with a small silent auction from 8 a.m. to 1p.m. (which includes a \$1,000

necklace). One of the guest instructors is Jennifer Sage from Vail, Colo., who will lead two SPIN classes. Registration for these classes will begin Sept. 5.

Tamis hopes both events will build awareness of the disease and its symptoms. "I was always really aware of breast cancer because there's so much out there about prevention and screening," she said. "There are no screening tests

for ovarian cancer. Doctors don't even seem to know the symptoms."

Since the initial event, Tamis and Hampton have raised more than \$20,000 for ovarian cancer research. On the Oct. 4 event, adjacent businesses like Sharp Bicycle and Design Within Reach will help out by welcoming overflow guests into their stores.

Raffle tickets will be sold at

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Clocks, Etc. and Oakwood. In addition to the Howard Miller grandfather clock grand prize, silent auction prizes will include: a night at a studio apartment for two, overlooking Ghirardelli Square; a deluxe room at Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa; and a magnum of HRM Rex Goliath California Cabernet Sauvignon wine.

For raffle tickets and information, call (925) 284-4720.



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**Food recycling begins in Lamorinda on September 1!**

**Residents are encouraged to use this new program to recycle food scraps with yard waste on a weekly basis.**

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- **Meat Scraps**
- **Cheese/Dairy**
- **Much More**



Store scraps in the handy container you will receive in August.

Place food scraps in your yard waste cart beginning **September 1 st !**



**Visit [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org) or call 938-8900 for info.**

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