

Inbrief

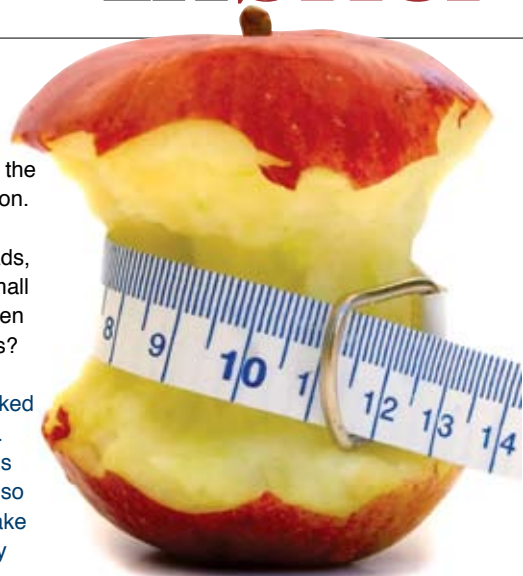
MOVE THAT FESTIVE FLAB

Q No matter what, I can't seem to shift the few kilos I gained over the festive season. This makes no sense because I eat all the right types of foods: fresh fruit, salads, wholegrains, fat-free dairy products, small amounts of olive oil, and skinless chicken and white fish. What can I do about this?

A Festive eating is characterised by wining, dining, snacking on calorie-packed mince pies and sipping on champagne. And, aside from eating far more calories than you need, your exercise routine also gets abandoned – why shouldn't you take a well-deserved break from rigid dietary rules and strict training schedules?

The problem with this relaxed attitude is that extra kilos pile on, justified with an attitude of 'so what, it's just a few kilos anyway – I'll easily lose them once I get back to "normal" eating'.

Right? Wrong!



Festive eating actually trains you to eat far more than you should. So once the eating frenzy is all over, you can't understand why nothing's happening. You think you're doing all the right things, such as making better food choices, but those

kilos refuse to budge. That's because switching to healthier food is only a third of the weight-loss solution. Eating this way does mean you're consuming fewer calories, but not few enough to promote weight loss. The key is to counteract that positive calorie intake over the festive season with a negative calorie intake afterwards. So yes, what you're doing is completely right, but you have to eat less – much less – so watch your portion sizes.

The other important thing you need to do is to up your exercise routine to increase calorie expenditure.

Bulk up your meals with vegetables and salads that are low in calories and snack on fruit between meals. If you're not sure of the right amounts of food to eat, consult a registered dietician in your area.

Above all, stay strong: the real secret to successful weight loss is perseverance: so hang in there! – *Anne Till, registered dietician, Johannesburg*

Stay safe this summer



In the swim

It's summertime and we all want to cool off in the water, whether it's at the coast or in a swimming pool.

On the beach it's important to stay within sight of lifeguards, says Sandra de Villiers, swimming coach at Eversdal Primary School. 'Check the direction of the current; if it's from left to right, aim to stay towards the left to prevent being swept away.'

She says armbands are safer for children in the water than lilos and tubes, which can easily be blown away or turned upside down. 'Running and pushing around the pool cause accidents, so be careful,' de Villiers says. Finally, always swim with a friend.

Sun sense

You've heard it before but hear it again. Always wear sunscreen and remember: prevention is better than cure. In the case of sunburn, take an anti-inflammatory, suggests Dr Dagmar Whitaker, a Cape Town dermatologist. 'Use a cooling gel, have a cool shower or bath and moisturise excessively.'

Cool food under cover

The hot weather means more flies and the spread of germs and diseases. To combat this, never leave food uncovered, says dietician Anne Till.

'Keeping food in a cool, dry place and out of direct sunlight is optimal for prolonging its shelf life and reducing the risk of bacterial contamination,' says Till. Always wash your hands, utensils and work surface thoroughly before you start cooking your food.

Pre-prepared foods should be covered with nets or kept in sealed containers and refrigerated to prevent bacterial growth, advises Till.

NIP & TUCK

Bye-bye wrinkles!

Q Okay, so I'm 50, but when I look in the mirror these days, I'm suddenly beginning to see my mom. I'm terrified of surgery and I'm pretty wary of the crack-filler look! Is there anything non-surgical I can do about my wrinkles?

A First things first: ageing is inevitable, no matter how much we rage against it. In the past, ageing gracefully was the goal – today the focus is on ageing youthfully. The good news is there are a number of ways of doing this without going under the knife. But remember, your wrinkles aren't the only ageing factor visible on your face: your skin's condition (texture, pore size, pigmentation, clarity), fat loss (especially on your cheeks, the lower corners of your mouth, your lips and around your eyes); and the drooping of certain facial features (nose, eyebrows and corners of the mouth), all contribute to what you describe as looking like your mother.

✦ Every month medical experts answer questions you have about cosmetic procedures or menopause-related issues. So let us have them! Send them to PO Box 6474, Roggebaai 8012 or femina@media24.co.za. We regret that no personal responses can be provided.



New techniques can now give you a 'youthful glow' and even tighten and lift your skin non-surgically. These include chemical peels, Botox, dermal fillers (modern ones are far removed from crack fillers!) and the new generation of fractional lasers (such as Fraxel, Palomar StarLux, UltraPulse FX), depending on your requirements. The results that can be achieved are amazing.

It's important to discuss with your doctor what will work best for you, how much time out is involved, and the level of discomfort you can expect to experience. These factors vary according to the procedures you choose.

Just as important is the follow-up routine. Use a sunscreen containing zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide, with an SPF of 30 or higher. Also choose a moisturiser with glycolic acid and antioxidants (vitamins A and C and Idebenone), or use separate topical products, which will enhance the effect. – *Dr Alek Nikolic, MD and founder of Aesthetic Facial Enhancement, Cape Town*

HOT FLUSH

How safe is HT?

Q I'm confused. What's the difference between HRT and HT? Or are they exactly the same? My doctor has suggested I go onto medication to help with my menopause symptoms but I'm really scared. I'm 51. Just how safe is it?

A With so many misconceptions about menopause and hormone therapy (HT) or hormone replacement therapy (HRT), it's no wonder you're confused.

Essentially they're different names for the same thing, but HT is the preferred name: the word 'replacement' has been dropped as the aim is not to replace your pre-menopause hormone levels, but to take the smallest dose for the shortest time necessary to control your symptoms and prevent osteoporosis – for any time up to seven years, depending on your risk.

HT remains the first defence and most effective treatment for menopause symptoms. So if your quality of life is being affected by hot flushes, night sweats, mood swings and sleep disturbances, nothing helps like HT.

There are other advantages too: recent credible scientific studies show that starting HT between the ages of 50 to 59, or in the first 10 years of menopause, significantly decreases the incidence of coronary artery disease – which is the main cause of death in women with first-world lifestyles. (However, older, post-menopausal women who start HT have an increased risk of coronary artery disease.)

The same may apply to Alzheimer's, so there's a window of opportunity when chronic disease can be prevented in early menopause. HT also prevents osteoporosis and related fractures and is as effective as most anti-osteoporotic drugs (such as Fosamax) in preventing bone loss and fractures after menopause, and it's a lot cheaper.

Other proven advantages include a decrease in colon cancer and macular degeneration – the main cause of blindness in older people.

Breast cancer is always a concern but the largest study to date shows no real difference in breast cancer



incidence between patients on HT and those on placebos over about five years.

Never accept any form of HT unless you've been fully examined (breast and pelvic examinations), which may include an ultrasound of the ovaries. – *Dr Theo Kopenhagen, gynaecologist, Johannesburg*