

## Class for June/July 2008: Smoking (Effects on Vitamin A and Vitamin C)

People who smoke a pack a day die on average of 7 years earlier than people who have never smoked. While smoking has many negative effects on a person's health, smoking also affects the way your body uses vitamins.

### Vitamin A

- Vitamin A is responsible for the health of the goblet cells in your lungs. The goblet cells secrete mucus that acts like a barrier and prevents bacteria from entering the lungs.
- Vitamin A can also help prevent cancers of the skin, bladder, and breast.
- Vitamin A does its work well unless it comes in contact with the chemicals in cigarette smoke. Something in the smoke attacks and destroys vitamin A. This puts people who smoke more at risk for lung infections and cancer.

### Vitamin C

- Vitamin C is an antioxidant, which means it blocks the formation of several cancer-causing substances such as nitrosamines.
- Chemicals in cigarette smoke inhaled also destroy vitamin C. In fact, smoking a single cigarette breaks down the same amount of vitamin C as you would get from eating an orange.
- The more you smoke, the more vitamin C you lose from your tissues and blood. Your body needs more vitamin C to counteract the damage that smoking causes to your cells.

#### *Some Sources of Vitamin A are:*

Sweet potatoes, canned pumpkin, carrots, spinach, collard greens, kale, mixed vegetables, turnip greens, fortified cereals, winter squash, cantaloupe, mustard greens, red pepper

#### *Some Sources of Vitamin C are:*

Red pepper, kiwi, oranges, green pepper, grapefruit juice, vegetable juice, strawberries, cantaloupe, Brussels sprouts, papaya, broccoli, sweet potato, tomato juice, cauliflower, pineapple, kale, mango

Keep in mind that the people around you are experiencing secondhand smoke. These people are also at risk and need a diet rich in vitamin A and C as well.

On food labels you will see Vitamin A and Vitamin C levels in percents. The percents you eat in a day should add up to 100%, or more, especially if you are a smoker or a victim of second-hand smoke.

It's a good idea to take a multi-vitamin and eat a diet rich in vitamins regardless of whether you smoke or not because most of us don't eat a balanced diet that provides all the vitamins we need.

## Smoking Quiz: June-July 2008

1. People who smoke die on average of how many years sooner than people who never smoked before?
  - a. 1 year
  - b. 3 years
  - c. 5 years
  - d. 7 years
  
2. Name 2 sources of vitamin A:
  
3. Name 2 sources of vitamin C:
  
4. TRUE/FALSE: People experiencing second-hand smoke also need a diet rich in vitamin A and C.
  
5. TRUE/FALSE: The amount of vitamin A and C you eat a day should at least add up to 100% on a food label.