

## Health & Nutrition

# Determining calorie needs

Calorie requirements are determined by the energy needs of each individual, based on sex, weight and age. As we grow older, our basic metabolic needs—the energy required to stay alive—decreases.

Along with decreased calorie needs for basic requirements may come a decline in physical activity. We probably become less active in sports, may move to a smaller residence requiring less upkeep, or use a car rather than walking to or from a location.

Our caloric intake should, therefore, be reduced further to reflect these changes.

Calories (energy) are supplied by proteins, carbohydrates and fat—not by vitamins or minerals—in the food we eat. Carbohydrates and proteins each provide four calories per gram weight while fat provides nine calories per gram.

## Blood disease strikes smokers

**BOSTON**—A blood disease that causes headaches, fatigue, and fainting has been added to the list of ailments that researchers say are more likely to strike people who smoke.

The disease is called polycythemia. It increases the amount of carbon monoxide and cuts the level of oxygen carried by the blood through the body.

A new study says that smoking may be the most frequent cause of the disease.

The researchers say that virtually everyone who smokes has polycythemia to some degree, although in most it is not severe enough to produce symptoms.

"People who have this disease are essentially asphyxiating themselves," said Dr. Stephen A. Landaw, co-director of the study.

"Instead of the acute asphyxiation that leads to death, they have decreased their oxygen supplies."

A report on the research was recently published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

In an accompanying editorial, the *Journal* said, "Cigarette smoking far exceeds as a public health hazard: saccharin, radioactivity, food dyes, freon propellants, asbestos, and the many other potential toxins that have generated great public and governmental concern."

The New York-based researchers studied 22 persons with the disease. All smoked and inhaled at least one and one-half packs of cigarettes or four cigars a day.

However, when five of the patients gave up smoking—or severely cut back on the number of cigarettes or cigars smoked—the disease disappeared.

Since fat is the most highly concentrated source of energy, many of us may believe that simply reducing fat intake to a bare minimum and eating larger amounts of carbohydrates and/or protein foods will automatically solve a weight problem.

## It's Your Good Health

By Murray C. Brown, M.D.

Sore throats are common in cold weather. This symptom has many causes such as having cheered too long and too loud at a football game, excessive smoking, prolonged exposure to dry air or, more seriously, leukemia, tuberculosis, tonsillitis, infectious mononucleosis, or a viral or streptococcus infection, the latter being the more common causes.

Although in most cases you can rely on home remedies you should see your doctor if: 1—the sore throat lasts more than eight days; 2—is accompanied by a cough, hoarseness, shortness of breath or a temperature over 38 degrees C (100 degrees F) or; 3—if you have ever

had rheumatic fever. The diagnosis of a strep throat should be based on a throat culture.

The treatment of choice for this type of sore throat is penicillin unless you are allergic to the drug. It may be given as a single injection that is effective for 10 days or may be taken by mouth for a like period.

It is important not to stop taking the antibiotic as soon as the throat feels comfortable. If it is not taken for the full 10 days a relapse that will be harder to treat is likely to occur.

It is also unwise to take any antibiotic if the cause is a virus because, not only will it do no good but also it may lead to a drug allergy or decrease your benefit from the antibiotic later when you really need

nutrients.

It is the total number of calories consumed above and beyond those used that eventually adds up to a pound of body fat.

A pound of fat is gained for each 3,500 calories consumed above those used. For example, if you added a doughnut (about 225 calories) to your usual coffee-only coffee break, at the end of 16 days you would gain a pound.

This, of course, is assuming that you did not increase your physical activity or reduce your normal intake of food.

An extra 225 calories each day will provide a 154-pound man with the energy needed to walk 43 minutes or to run for about 12 minutes.

Most of us may not be that active. Sitting and writing requires only 10 to 20 calories per hour while ironing uses 59 calories per hour.

With today's life-style filled with labor-saving devices, we should all probably devise ways of being more active—take the stairs instead of the escalator or elevator, or walk to the corner store instead of jumping in the car or on the bus.

it. Although there is no specific treatment for a viral sore throat it will usually clear up in four or five days with rest, a hot gargle and a few doses of aspirin.

## You and Your Health

By Dr. Mikal Ramadan

*(Editor's note: The following health questions are submitted to Bilalian News by Dr. Mikal Ramadan, president of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad Memorial Health Facilities Corporation in an effort to further enlighten readers who may have similar problems. The questions and answers, however, are not intended to serve as a substitute for the readers seeking personal and qualified health care for their medical problems.)*

**QUESTION:** How is the baby actually delivered in a C-section (Cesarean Section)?

**ANSWER:** First, surgical incisions are made to open both the abdominal wall and the uterus. The surgeon then inserts his hand into the uterus and gently removes the baby (or babies) who are still attached by way of the umbilical cord to the placenta. The cord is tied off in the same way as it is for vaginal deliveries. After this, the surgeon reinserts his hand into the uterus and separates the afterbirth from the uterine wall. In vaginal deliveries this would happen automatically in the third stage of labor. Once this is complete the surgeon then tightly sutures the uterus then closes the abdominal wall with sutures. This operation may take anywhere from

45 to 60 minutes. It is noteworthy that 5 out of every 100 deliveries in America are Cesarean Section.

**QUESTION:** I am 30-years-old and just learned through a routine physical that I have diabetes. I've heard that special care should be taken with the feet. Can you elaborate on this?

**ANSWER:** Let me first say that you are very fortunate that your diabetes was detected. As for your feet, be sure to wear well-fitting shoes as well as socks of soft materials. Be careful to avoid extreme temperatures, lacerations, abrasions, or infections. It would be a good idea to develop the habit of inspecting your feet daily for injuries for oftentimes in severe cases of diabetes the sense of pain is impaired.

Keep the feet dry and the skin supple by applying some cream or lotion. Be sure to cut your toenails regularly to avoid damage by ingrown toenails. If the toenails are brittle, soak them in water first. It is better to use scissors instead of a knife or razor to cut your toenails. If you have any existing problems with your feet or if a problem should develop I suggest you seek professional help as proper care of the feet in diabetes is very important to avoid complications.

**QUESTION:** My doctor has just



recommended surgery for me for a condition that I have had for a number of years. I am extremely frightened of surgery and I have been reading lately of the amount of needless surgery that is being performed. Are there any rules of thumb or suggestions which you might offer to a person in my situation?

**ANSWER:** I suppose it is good that you did not mention your particular condition so that I can address my comments generally. Unless the surgery is an emergency, which obviously in your case it is not since you have had the condition for years, there is no need to make a decision on the spot. Have the doctor explain the surgical procedure to you. Once these questions are answered, I would still obtain a second opinion, and if they were not answered to my satisfaction, I would obtain another surgeon.