

fitness

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Does brown seaweed promote weight loss?

BROWN SEAWEED is used to flavor many Asian soups and salads. But an unpublished study that involved more than 200 subjects found that consumption of brown seaweed promotes weight loss. The research was presented at the 232nd American Chemical Society National Meeting. According to the researchers, subjects who were fed brown seaweed experienced a 5- to 10-percent reduction in weight.

Apparently, brown seaweed contains a compound known as “fucoxanthin.” Besides giving brown seaweed its distinctive color, fucoxanthin is thought to promote fat “burning.” No adverse side-effects from fucoxanthin were reported in the study.

Now for the bad news: The subjects in the study were rats and mice. It’s unknown whether the response in humans would be the same as that of rodents. Equally unknown is whether fucoxanthin could be made into a pill that is effective. What about the notion of simply eating brown seaweed to lose

weight? It’s difficult for the body to absorb fucoxanthin from the seaweed. So, a person would likely have to con-

sume large amounts of brown seaweed on a daily basis in order to produce meaningful weight loss. **FM**



Is there a relationship between bicycle riding and erectile dysfunction?

THERE APPEARS to be strong scientific evidence to support that bicycle riding is associated with erectile dysfunction (ED). One study compared 1,786 amateur cyclists to 155 active long-distance swimmers. The researchers found that the prevalence of ED was 4 percent in the cyclists and 2 percent in the swimmers. Among the cyclists, it was shown that ED was correlated with age, and distance and duration of training. In another study, 463 men reported no ED before a 200-mile cycling event. But after the ride, there was a 4.2-percent incidence of ED.

Does this mean that fitness enthusiasts who enjoy cycling should seek another means of aerobic training or another mode of transportation? Not necessarily. It’s thought that the main culprit here is the way that cyclists “interact” with the saddle, or seat. To minimize the risk, researchers from the Department of Urology in the Boston Uni-

versity School of Medicine offer these precautionary measures: Use a wider seat without a protruding nose extension, tilt the nose of the seat down, use a gel seat, employ a more upright or reclining position, and limit cycling to less than three hours per week. **FM**

Does the size of a plate or bowl influence how much a person eats?

A WEIGHT-LOSS tip that many nutritionists recommend is to use smaller plates, bowls and glasses/cups. Essentially, the thinking is that this will help to limit the size of portions and, as a result, lower the number of calories that are consumed. And it certainly makes sense that if someone simply decides to eat an entire bowl of potato chips, for example, a smaller bowl would yield fewer calories than a larger bowl.

As part of a recent study, 85 individuals were invited to attend an ice cream social. Unbeknownst to the participants, they were randomly given

either a small (17 ounces) or large (34 ounces) bowl, as well as either a small (2 ounces) or large (3 ounces) spoon to scoop the ice cream. Those who used a larger spoon and a larger bowl consumed 56.8 percent more ice cream than those who used a smaller spoon and a smaller bowl. Perhaps even more fascinating is that the “subjects” in this study were faculty, graduate students and staff members of a nutrition and food science department at a large university.

Here’s something else that’s interesting: People tend to pour more fluids into short, wide glasses than tall, narrow ones. For instance, researchers discovered that 86 experienced bartenders in Philadelphia unknowingly poured 20.5 percent more alcohol into short tumblers than tall “high-ball” glasses of the same volume. And you thought Philly was only known for cheese steaks, Rocky Balboa and the Liberty Bell! **FM**

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