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Just In

NYC Wins Right to Make Chains Reveal Calories

Restaurant chains in New York City that have more than 15 outlets nationwide will now be required to prominently disclose the calorie counts of their dishes on menus or menu boards. The mandate was the outcome of a legal battle between the restaurant industry and New York City's health department, making it the first municipality to win in the courts on such a regulation. While the ruling was issued in April, restaurants will only begin to be fined for noncompliance this month. The new law will not apply to most white tablecloth restaurants or small delis, pizza shops or family-owned restaurants.

Consumer advocacy groups, such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest in Washington, D.C., say the New York City ruling could pave the way for other city governments to pass similar menu rules to benefit consumers. San Francisco and King County in Washington State have similar menu laws in place.

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, April 16, 2008.

7 Healthy Habits For Keeping Kidney Stones And Gallstones At Bay

If you've ever experienced a painful bout of kidney stones or gallstones, it's likely you don't want an encore. Experts estimate that 5% of Americans develop kidney stones at some point; 10% to 15% develop gallstones. They don't always pose problems. But when they do, symptoms can include nausea, vomiting and pain. The best strategy is to stop stones from forming in the first place. Although heredity and age are key factors, lifestyle habits contribute. Changing these habits may help stymie stones.

Separating the Stones. The presence of stones in one part of the body doesn't mean you're more susceptible to stones elsewhere. Kidney stones form when substanc-

es in urine—usually calcium and oxalate—crystallize anywhere in the urinary tract. Gallstones, on the other hand, are solid clumps of mostly cholesterol that form in the gallbladder when there is more cholesterol than it can easily dissolve. The gallbladder releases bile salts, which help digest fat and handle cholesterol. But when something goes awry, crystals form and eventually harden into stones.

Several lifestyle factors foster the formation of stones. Here are seven key habits you can adopt to help reduce the risk of developing either kind of stone.

1. Focus on Fluids. Drinking plenty of liquids is pivotal for kidney stone prevention. *(continued on page 4)*

15 Food Facts That Could Inspire You To Eat More Like a Vegetarian

Vegetarian diets are often cited as a more healthful way of eating. Research presented at the recent 5th International Congress on Vegetarian Nutrition at Loma Linda University in California seems to bear this out. Trouble is, not everyone wants to give up steak and burgers, or even chicken cutlets and sushi. Even fewer are willing to go the vegan route and forgo omelets, cereal with milk and honey on toast as well. But you can still benefit from a vegetarian way of eating without going whole hog, so to speak.

A survey by the Vegetarian Resource Group shows that just under 3% of Americans are actual vegetarians, though 4% to 10% identify themselves that way (even though they eat fish or poultry). Yet there is an obvious interest in at least a partially vegetarian way of eating, as 30% to 40% of Americans report they are looking for meatless items to buy.

So, without committing to becoming a by-the-book vegetarian, how can you help yourself eat fewer animal products yet still enjoy grilled salmon or an occasional tasty pork tenderloin?

Here are highlights from the recent conference to motivate you and help you move toward eating more vegetarian.

Why to Eat More Vegetarian

1. The animal-to-plant ratio of the average American diet is 2:1. In 1900, it was 1:1. Perhaps we should turn back the dietary clock. Certainly, our ancestors ate meat and other animal products, but in smaller amounts, as they filled their plates with more vegetables and whole grains.

2. Beans are an important part of a healthful vegetarian diet. Rich in folate, potassium, magnesium and fiber—nutrients most Americans need to get more of—they have a low glycemic index to keep blood glucose on an even keel.

3. Nuts are also high on the vegetarian agenda. Though you may worry about the fat and calories in nuts, people who eat them regularly are no heavier than those who don't, and their diets are

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7 Habits to Keep Kidney Stones and Gallstones at Bay

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vention. Experts recommend drinking enough liquids—like water—to produce two quarts of urine in a 24-hour period.

Lemonade may work even better. Yes, lemonade. That's what Duke University researchers concluded when they administered "lemonade therapy"—enough to produce 1.5 to 2 liters of urine a day—to 12 kidney stone patients for four years.

Coffee seems to protect against both gallstones and kidney stones. In two large studies, people who drank two to three cups a day of caffeinated coffee were less likely to develop gallstones than nondrinkers. Decaf coffee and regular tea did not protect against gallstones, but all three beverages protected against kidney stones, probably by boosting total liquids.

2. Consume Calcium. Getting enough calcium enables it to bind with oxalates—substances that occur in many plants and make up a large part of kidney stones—and prevent them from crystallizing into stones.

Excessive calcium supplementation, however, can actually raise kidney stone risk. In the Women's Health Initiative, women who supplemented with calcium plus vitamin D experienced 17% more kidney stones than those who did not. Experts think this is a problem only if you are taking more than 2,100 milligrams a day of calcium, as women in the study were doing. But keep eating calcium-rich foods and supplement to meet 1,200 to 1,500 milligrams daily.

3. Keep an Eye on Oxalates. You may have been told to eliminate oxalates from your diet, but it may not be necessary. Experts believe that diet accounts for only 10% to 15% of the oxalates that linger in the urine of people who tend to form kidney stones. While it may be best not to go overboard on high-oxalate foods (e.g., tea, beans, nuts, spinach and whole wheat), these foods are healthful, so don't limit them unless you have a real propensity for kidney stone formation.

4. Watch Weight and Move More. Being overweight, especially around the waist, increases the likelihood of developing gallstones. Exercising is one way to help get rid of excess weight. And one study found that people who were the most active were 62% less likely to develop gallstones than those who were inactive. Avoid rapid weight loss, however, as that, ironically, can also trigger gallstone formation.

5. Eat Less Animal Protein. One study of men with kidney stone history found that those who reported eating less animal protein were only half as likely to suffer a recurrence within five years as those who ate the most animal protein. Red meat may especially raise risk. In a study tracking 45,000 men for 16 years, researchers found that men who got more iron from meat were more likely to develop gallstones. Or it could be the saturated fat and cholesterol in red meat that's to blame. The Nurses' Health Study found that women who ate the most nuts and vegetable protein—thus less saturated fat and cholesterol—were less likely to need gallbladder surgery than women who ate the least.

6. Slash Sodium. Research links a diet high in sodium with an increased risk of kidney stones. Sodium's role may involve promoting calcium excretion, leaving less of it to bind with oxalates.

7. Mind Your Magnesium. In a trial of more than 42,000 men, those getting the most magnesium were 28% less likely to develop gallstones than men who got the least.

The Bottom Line. Adopting a healthy lifestyle may reduce your risk of kidney stones and gallstones (see below) and guard against other illnesses as well.

—Linda Antinoro, J.D., R.D.

EN'S Advice for Stonewalling Stones (listed alphabetically)

Factor	Gallstones	Kidney Stones	How It Works	What to Do
STONE PREVENTERS				
Calcium (from food)		✓	Stops oxalates from forming into kidney stones.	Eat low-fat dairy foods, canned sardines and salmon (with bones), broccoli, kale and calcium-fortified orange juice and soy foods. Don't exceed 2,100 mg of calcium daily.
Fluids (water, coffee, lemonade)	✓	✓	Increase the volume of urine, which dilutes potential kidney-stone forming substances. Coffee supplies caffeine, which helps the gallbladder to contract and release bile. Lemonade contains citric acid, which hinders kidney stone formation.	Drink at least 10 cups of fluids daily (half as water). Don't exceed three cups/day of caffeinated coffee. Make lemonade as in study: one cup lemon juice to seven cups of water, sweeten with artificial sweetener or as little sugar as is tolerable.
Magnesium	✓		Keeps insulin concentrations low, which decreases the cholesterol content of bile.	Eat artichokes, avocados, almonds, cashews, wheat germ, soybeans and whole grains.
Nuts		✓	Provide unsaturated fats, fiber and phytosterols, all of which inhibit cholesterol absorption and may thwart gallstones.	Eat one ounce of nuts at least five times a week.
Physical Activity		✓	Prevents bile in the gallbladder from crystallizing into gallstones.	Engage in exercise most days of the week for 30 to 60 minutes.
STONE PROMOTERS				
Animal Protein	✓	✓	Contributes cholesterol, saturated fat and heme iron—all promote cholesterol formation in bile, leading to gallstones.	Aim for no more than four to six ounces of meat a day. Choose more vegetable protein.
Calcium (supplements)		✓	Excessive doses may raise urinary calcium.	Don't exceed 1,200 mg/day of calcium from supplements.
Obesity	✓		Fosters insulin resistance, which facilitates gallstone formation.	Maintain a healthy weight. Don't drastically cut calories to lose weight; be more active instead.
Oxalates		✓	May raise urinary oxalate levels, but only slightly.	Don't abstain from healthful high-oxalate foods like spinach, rhubarb, dried figs, beets and black tea, but don't go overboard if prone to kidney stones.
Sodium		✓	Excessive intake triggers loss of calcium in the urine.	Aim for less than 2,300 mg daily. Limit processed foods. Do not add salt at the table.

mg=milligrams

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