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Your Prescription for Health
ExeRxcise is Medicine Singapore
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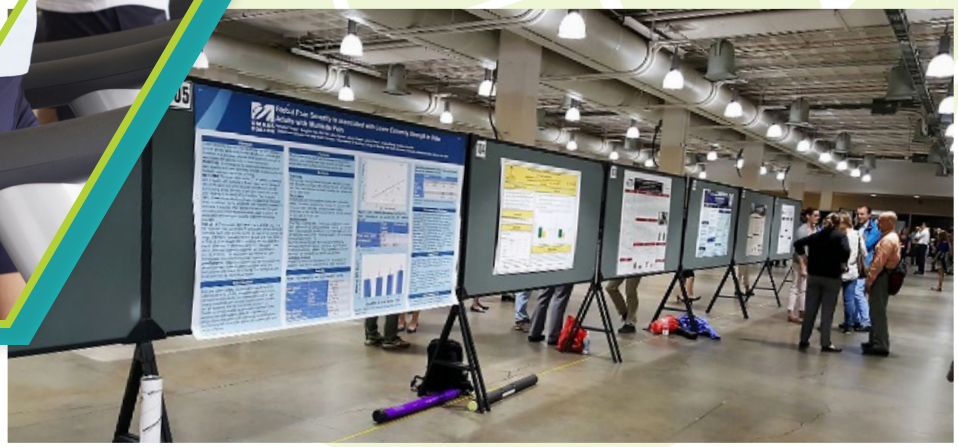
EIMS NEWSLETTER

7TH WORLD CONGRESS ON ExeRxcise is Medicine

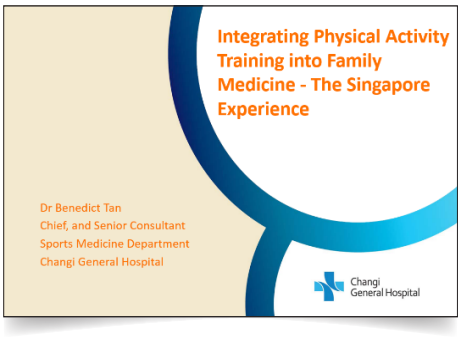
Dr Leonard Lim



The World Congress on Exercise is Medicine was held in Boston, USA this year and over a period of 6 days, there were lectures, symposiums and hands on clinical workshops ranging from Exercise in the Treatment of Eating Disorders, to Exercise and Diabetes Prevention, to Exercise and Cancer in Children.

These various lectures, symposiums and workshops all point unanimously in the role that physical activities can play in the treatment and prevention of a wide range of diseases and should really be cornerstone in the treatment of most chronic diseases. With the challenge of an aging population that is affecting most developed countries, including Singapore, it becomes even more imperative that healthcare providers, especially Family Physicians and General Practitioners must be well versed in prescribing exercise for their patients

This year, Dr Benedict Tan, Chairman of Exercise is Medicine Singapore,



was invited to be a panelist during a symposium the World Congress to share Singapore's experience of introducing exercise prescription into the training of family physicians and general practitioners. Singapore had been relatively successful in training primary care providers in exercise prescription through the Exercise is Medicine Course for Primary Care Providers that was inaugurated since 2012. To date, we have trained over 340 doctors who provide primary care, including residents from the SingHealth Family Medicine Residency Program and medical officers from the Singapore Armed Forces. Singapore is one of the first countries in the world to have achieved this and Exercise is Medicine Singapore is proud to have spear headed this effort.

During the congress, Dr Benedict Tan, together with Dr Cindy Lin, who was previously the Director of Public Outreach for Exercise is Medicine Singapore, were invited to be the faculty for the Course in Exercise Prescription that was held on the last day of the congress.

It had been a most enriching experience and we hope to be able to report from this congress again next year.

CHAIRMAN'S Message

Dr Benedict Tan

As EIM matures as a global movement, it is changing gears to meet both the needs of well-entrenched EIM National Centres as well as newly-established ones. Stay abreast of all these changes as we update you on the recent World Congress on Exercise is Medicine in Boston.

As we enter the third quarter of 2016 - with its year-end festivities - we include in this issue some advice on healthy eating and how to maximise returns from your training and exercise by adhering to a sound diet and we also debunk some myths of exercising.

As always, here's wishing you a healthy and active end to 2016!

MYTHS ABOUT EXERCISE

MYTH 1
Yoga can help with all sorts of back pain

If it is a muscle-related cause, Yoga can help to stretch the back muscle and reduce stiffness. It can also strengthen the core strength which supports good posture and excessive strain on the back muscles. However, if the pain is due to other reasons such as a ruptured disc, lumbar herniated discs or degenerative disc disease, one should not go ahead with Yoga or any exercise programme and should consult a doctor first. Performing exercises using the back for those with the back problems listed above can cause greater injury to the back **(Nazario, 2016).**

MYTH 2
No Pain, No Gain

This incorrect belief is one of the reasons that cause people to get injured from exercising. Although one would feel sore the next day or two after an intense bout of exercise, it isn't the same as feeling pain during the exercise. A sign of injury is feeling pain whilst doing the exercise. If pain persists, one should consult a doctor

MYTH 3
I should avoid exercise after having a heart attack or heart bypass

No, research shows that heart attack survivors who start exercising live longer than those who are sedentary. After a heart bypass or a myocardial infarction/heart attack, one should get moving. Multiple bouts of very light intensity exercises, while taking note of one's heart rate such as sitting and standing up or walking are good for a start. However, one should consult the doctor to prescribe an exercise programme before starting and ensure to always exercise with someone (Heart.org, 2016).

MYTH 4
Any form of exercise can cause miscarriage to a pregnant woman or harm the baby

Moderate physical activity during pregnancy does not contribute to low birth weight, premature birth or miscarriage and may actually reduce the risk of complications, according to a Michigan State University professor who contributed to the US government's first-ever guidelines on physical activity. Specifically, the guidelines call for women to get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week during pregnancy and the postpartum period, preferably spread throughout the week. In addition to health benefits, moderate physical activity also may reduce the length of labor, evidence suggests. The guidelines call for women to avoid doing activities that involve lying on their back after the first trimester and activities with high risk of falling or abdominal trauma (Michigan State University – ScienceDaily, 2008).

MYTH 5
Exercise Is Worthless If I Can't Do It Regularly for Hours

Lack of time is one of the main reasons why people do not exercise. Being healthy does not require a few hours spent in the gym every day. The benefits of exercise can be reaped by just spending 30 minutes a day working out at a moderate intensity for 5 days a week. Also if you are unable to fork out 30 minutes a day you can do intervals of 10 minutes 3 times a day. If you don't think you can fit in a workout every single day for the rest of your life, that's no reason not to go for a walk today. Do not cheat your body out of exercise because you don't think you'll be able to do it again tomorrow, or the next day (Acsm.org, 2011).

MYTH 6
Trying to exercise and get healthy is useless; decline in old age is inevitable.

The myth of getting older means getting decrepit is false. There are people in their 70s, 80s, and 90s out there running marathons and becoming body-builders. Majority of the symptoms that are associate with old age like weakness and loss of balance are actually symptoms of inactivity and not age. It is never too late to start a workout regime to improve your overall health. However, you need to be careful and cautious of how you are going to do it. No matter how old you are, exercising will improve your strength, range of motion, balance, bone density, and boost memory, helping to prevent dementia. Exercise also enables you to be more independent and improve your quality of life. As you stay strong and agile when you age, you will be more able to keep doing the things you enjoy and less likely to need assistance (WebMD, 2016).

MYTH 7
Weight training can cause bone fractures due to the heavy loads

Resistance training helps to maintain healthy bone mass, increase strength, balance and prevent age related muscle loss when you age. This helps to reduce the risk of osteoporosis which women are at risk of (Westcott, 2012). Weight bearing exercises can, in fact, improve bone health. Together with adequate amounts of Vitamin D and calcium, it can help prevent osteoporosis (Gerace, 2016).

MYTH 8
If you don't need to lose weight, there is no point in exercising

This is an absolute myth! Weight loss may be one of the side effects of exercising and it should not be the only reason why you exercise. Exercise is one of the best preventive medicines for chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes and cancer. One of key health benefits of exercise is that it helps to prevent abnormally high blood glucose and improves blood cholesterol profile. Exercise also improves sleep and mental health. It makes you feel more refreshed, energetic and clear headed and can help to improve your performance in school or work (Mayoclinic.org, 2014).

MYTH 9
Walking isn't a good work out

Actually, whether you walk or run one mile, you will burn the same amount of calories. Yes, it's true! So, next time you're out for a walk you are doing something good for your health! Walking is also a great option if you are very out of shape/overweight and exercising seems too daunting to even begin. It is also the easiest exercise to perform no matter what your age or fitness level. (Mayoclinic. 2016). Once you are in the habit of walking more, consider increasing the pace and alternating between speed walking and strolling.

EATING REDUCED-FAT FOOD CAN HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT.

TRUE OR FALSE

HPB (2015) STATES THAT A PRODUCT WITH ≥ 25% LESS FAT THAN THE REFERENCE FOOD CAN THEN BE QUALIFIED TO BE LABELLED AS 'REDUCED FAT'.

Are you trying to lose some weight? Are you on a lookout for the low-fat options? How much fats are actually in a reduced fat product? Read on to find out more.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2 Tbsp (32g)	
Servings Per Container 14	
Total Carbohydrates 7g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 3g	8%

Figure 1: *Original Creamy Peanut Butter (Bliss, 2016)*

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2 Tbsp (36g)	
Servings Per Container about 13	
Total Carbohydrates 7g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 3g	8%

Figure 2: *Reduced Fat Creamy Peanut Butter (Pinterest, 2016)*

As you can see from the images above, the original product (448g) contains 16g of total fat while the reduced fat (468g) contains 12g of total fat. The reduced fat does meet the criteria of having a decrease of 29% in total fat. However, the carbohydrate content from the original creamy peanut butter has increased from 7g to 15g in the reduced fat creamy peanut butter. This means that there is more added sugar and starch to the reduced fat peanut butter. Therefore, reduced fat may not necessarily mean that it has lesser calories and therefore you still need to read the nutrition label. In fact, the reduced fat peanut butter only has 10 lesser calories compared to the original peanut butter. To lose weight, ensuring that food choices are low in fat is not enough, the amount of calories is the one that will determine whether you will lose weight or not. Eating lesser calories than what you burn will result to a weight loss. Thus, reduced fat choices are the better alternative if you really have a strong craving or can't live without it. However, you can also choose other choices that are more nutrient dense, provides lower calories and leaves you feeling fuller!

#1: LOW FAT CHEESE

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 1/4 cup (28g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 80	Calories from Fat 50
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 6 g	**9%**
Saturated Fat 3.5 g	**18%**
Trans Fat 0 g	
Cholesterol 20 mg	**7%**
Sodium 230 mg	**10%**
Potassium	
Total Carbohydrate 1 g	**0%**
Dietary Fiber 0 g	**0%**
Sugars 0 g	
Sugar Alcohols	
Protein 7 g	
Vitamin A 300 IU	6%
Vitamin C 0 mg	0%
Calcium 400 mg	40%
Iron 0 mg	0%

It contains total fat of 6g, total carbohydrate of 0.5g and 80 calories per serving. It also has higher amounts of calcium about 40% of RDA compared to the peanut butter which has 0mg of calcium. This will be a healthier alternative to spread on your bread.

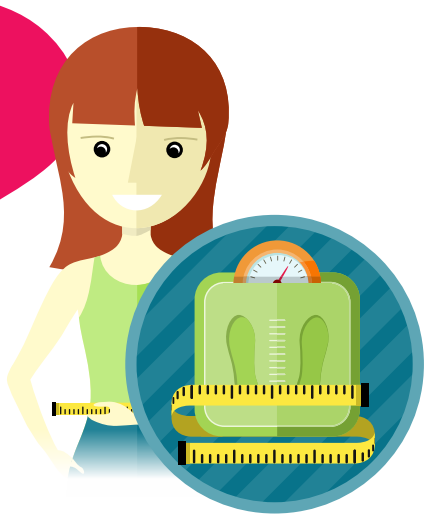
Figure 3: *Low Fat Cheese (Quitehealthy.com, 2016)*

#2: NO SUGAR JAMS

Figure 4: *No sugar jams (Gavanmurphy.com, 2016)*

These jams do not contain any simple sugars or any Trans and saturated fat and only contains 10 calories per tablespoon. This is a healthier alternative compared to the peanut butter if you want to lose weight as it has lesser amounts of total fat and calories.

EATING WHOLE GRAINS CAN HELP ME LOSE WEIGHT.



TRUE OR FALSE

Have you been eating whole grain cereals or 'Health Bars'? Are they actually effective in helping you to drop a pound? Read on to find out.

Figure5. *Granola-Strawberry-Yogurt Bar (Amazon.com, 2016)*

NHS.UK (2016) STATES THAT A PRODUCT WITH 22.5G PER 100G IS CONSIDERED AS 'HIGH IN SUGAR'.

Granola... Yoghurt... Strawberry... Naturally flavoured... Seems healthy right? Let's take a closer look. In 1 serving (35g), the product contains 14g of simple sugars. In 100g of this product, it would contain about 40g of simple sugars. It has met the criteria to be considered as high in sugar. Also this product is high in sugar as it contains corn syrup and sugar as its second and third most ingredients in this product. Also this product contains other forms of sugars like dextrose, honey and maltodextrin. Therefore do not be fooled by the food label as it may seem healthy but in fact this product is high in sugar and calories! So it is important to check the nutrition labels when buying food. *One teaspoon of sugar is equivalent to 4g of sugar* (Magee, 2016). Thus, in consuming one bar equates to 3.5 teaspoons of sugar!

HEALTHIER OPTIONS SUCH AS LIGHTLY SALTED OR UNSALTED CHICKPEAS OR GREEN PEAS ARE LOWER IN SUGAR.

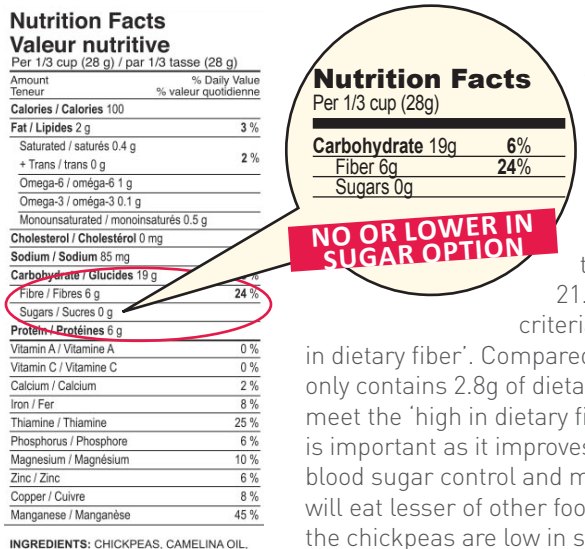


Figure 6*: Lightly Salted Chickpeas Snack (Threefarmers.ca, 2016)*

ACCORDING TO (HPB, 2015) A PRODUCT THAT IS HIGH IN DIETARY FIBER CONTAINS MORE THAN 6G OF DIETARY FIBER PER 100G.

In this case the dietary fibers for the lightly salted chickpeas are 21.4g per 100g which surpasses the criteria by HPB to be deemed as 'high in dietary fiber'. Compared to the granola bar above, it only contains 2.8g of dietary fiber per 100g and did not meet the 'high in dietary fiber requirement'. Dietary fiber is important as it improves bowel movement, improves blood sugar control and makes you feel fuller thus you will eat lesser of other foods (Healthxchange, 2016). Also, the chickpeas are low in sugars (0g of sugar per serving of 28g) compared to the amount in the granola bar (14g of sugar per serving of 35g). Eating lesser sugars is beneficial as it can help to lower blood sugar levels, and prevents excessive weight gain.

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