Bits & Pieces . . . .

Think Twice Before Throwing Away a Banana Peel

by Dr Victor Marchione, MD

A lot of people love bananas and have discovered that they make a great "in-between-meals" snack. Bananas are sweet, have enough bulk to make you feel full (at least temporarily), and can give you a little burst of energy without the blood sugar crash associated with baked goods like cookies or muffins.

After you eat that banana, here's one health tip though: don't be so quick to toss the peel in the compost. Why? Believe it or not, banana peels - just like many other fruit peels - contain a lot of healthful nutrients. This is likely why many primates eat bananas, peel and all; although most of us toss banana peels out.

Banana peel is rich in potassium and contains much more soluble and insoluble fibre than the fruit's flesh. All this dietary fibre promotes better digestion and bowel movements and could **even reduce blood cholesterol levels.** Banana peel also contains an antioxidant called lutein, which could protect and boost the health of your eyes. And, last but not least, banana peel contains a mood-boosting substance, tryptophan.

So how do you eat a banana peel? Do you just start chewing? Of course, banana peels can be eaten raw, although they are a bit tough and don't have the same great taste as the actual banana. Instead, you may want to boil the peel for 10 minutes or so before eating it and then put it in the juicer. In Asian countries, banana peels are often fried and served as a delicacy. So think twice before throwing away your banana peel.

Reference: Sundaram, S., et al., Appl. Biochem. Biotechnol., Aug. 2011; 164(7): 1,192-206.

HIRUDOID for soft tissue injuries and falls.

A little known wonder cream from the chemist, Hirudoid should be in every first aid cupboard or box. A little bit goes a long way. **Use it to rub into any sore spot from bumps and falls, or sprains, strains or seized up areas.**

For any soft tissue injuries, rub in every 4 hours if needed in the first 24 – 48 hours (NB sometimes only needs 2-3 applications to fix) then 2-3 times a day until pain gone and movement restored. This cream has analgesic and anti-bruising properties, increases flexibility of injured and scar tissue, reduces redness.

Studies have proven that Hirudoid can reduce the healing time of a bruise by up to 50% and is also effective for treating the swelling. It promotes speedier absorption of fluid from the tissues reducing swelling and inflammation. In one study, 83% of patients who used Hirudoid were fully mobile within one week.

New Study Shows Virgin Coconut Oil Improves Cholesterol Levels

A clinical study at a University in the Philippines, has shown that eating virgin coconut oil (VCO) showed 110 participants who took **3 tablespoons of VCO every day for four months** (while 79 others took a placebo for the same period) recorded a decreases in triglycerides and very low density lipoprotein (VLDL) - a form of the so-called "bad" cholesterol and elevated high density lipoprotein (HDL), the "good" cholesterol. Higher levels of HDL is known to reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes. No change was seen in the lipid profile of the placebo group.

Researchers noted there was an unexplained rise in creatinine but still within the normal range. Elevations in thyroid T3/T4 were noted due to enhanced thyroid function. No change was noted with increased weight.

Those who took the VCO **felt stronger and healthier**, had regular bowel movements, increased appetite and stamina and better sleep with 3 tablespoons a day.

Apart from these improvements, 3 spoonfuls of virgin coconut oil may also enhance a person's sex life. Some members of the group reported that they were more virile during the test phase. 13 percent of the VCO takers became more sexually active in the VCO study. This study provides further evidence that virgin coconut oil is not only heart healthy but may provide additional health benefits as well.

Reference: Scientists Present Results of Clinical Study on VCO – *Philippines. Cocommunity* May 2012, Vol 42, No 4.

Antibacterial hand soaps impair muscle function

Science News 14 Aug 2012

An antibacterial chemical widely used in hand soaps and other personal-care products may impair muscle function, scientists claim. Researchers at California and Colorado Universities found that the chemical Triclosan, a phenol compound, hinders muscle contractions at a cellular level. Specifically, the team evaluated the effects of triclosan on molecular channels in muscle cells that control the flow of calcium ions, creating muscle contractions. Normally, electrical stimulation ("excitation") of isolated muscle fibres evokes a muscle contraction, the fundamental basis of any muscle movement, including heartbeats. But in the presence of triclosan, the normal communication between two proteins that function as calcium channels was impaired, **causing skeletal and cardiac muscle failure**.

Neuro-toxicologist, Isaac Pessah, noted that triclosan also silences incoming nerve stimuli, diminishing the ability of muscles to contract.

Triclosan is commonly found in antibacterial products like liquid hand soaps, hand lotions, deodorants, mouthwashes, toothpaste, shaving gel, facial cleaners, dishwashing liquid, cutting boards, wipes, laundry detergent, fabric softener, bedding, clothes, footwear, carpets, toys, trash bags and even **respirator masks and incontinence** products.

Our thanks to Qld Polio Aust rep **Dr Margaret Peel** for seeing this research and alerting us to another possible source of increasing muscle weakness for polios.