



REAL LIFE

PEOPLE • FASHION • FOOD • WELLNESS • HOW WE LIVE

THIS WEEK IN REAL LIFE

INSIDE TODAY

Find the missing ingredient
in your diet

See Page F2

INSIDE TODAY

Tips for packing the family
for a day on the slopes

See Page F6

COMING FRIDAY

Last-minute gift ideas
for your neighbours, nephews
and co-workers

EDITOR: VALERIE BERENYI 235-7571 FAX: 235-7379

WWW.CALGARYHERALD.COM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2005

VITALS

No more dark circles

NEW PRODUCT • Looking a bit raccoon-eyed these days? It might be because you're doing too much partying — but then again, it might not.

Dark under-eye circles are caused by many things besides fatigue: heredity, too much sun, allergies, an unhealthy diet or simply getting older. The real cause, though, is a process called hemoglobin degradation — capillaries deposit blood in the thin skin around the eye; the blood oxidizes and turns a purplish colour.

Now a product called Hylexin promises to combat hemoglobin degradation and reduce dark circles.

Holt Renfrew started carrying the cream this week for \$139. For more information on Hylexin, or to order it online, go to <http://hylexin.com>.

— Calgary Herald



Prosciutto, Watermelon and Brie Fingers

RECIPE • These light appetizers from the National Watermelon Promotion Board are a perfect holiday nibble.

24 finger-sized watermelon rectangles

24 thin slices brie about the same dimensions as watermelon fingers

24 slices prosciutto

Place a piece of brie on top of each watermelon finger and wrap each with a slice of prosciutto. Secure with a toothpick. Makes 24 appetizers.

— The Canadian Press

Happy Chismukkah!

HOLIDAY • With Christmas and the first night of Hanukkah falling on Dec. 25, this is poised to be the year that Chismukkah hits the big time.

Interfaith families looking for a middle road between latkes and baked ham need look no further than Ron Gompertz's book Chismukkah: The Merry Mish-Mash Holiday Cookbook.

The spiral-bound book, available at chismukkah.com for \$15 US, includes such ecumenical recipes as Bubbie Ganoush, What Am I Chopped Liver and Gingerbread Mensch.

Chismukkah is a holiday of mysterious origins that was featured in an episode of The O.C. in December 2003, the same month Gompertz and his wife, who live in Bozeman, Mont., sent out their first Chismukkah cards.

For the book, Gompertz collaborated with chef Kathy Stark, who owns Bozeman's only Jewish deli. He describes the result as "what would have happened if Martha Stewart had married Jon Stewart."

— Newsday

MEMORIES

How do you
celebrate when
the holidays
are stained
with grief?

JACQUELINE LOUIE
FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

I've always loved Christmas. I've always loved the snow, the decorative lights that make the dark nights so comforting, and the joyful laughter of family and friends gathered around the piano to sing carols.

But everything changed seven years ago, after my mother died suddenly of auto-immune disease.

Christmas went from being my favourite holiday to the one day of the year I dreaded. I could manage every other day, even my mother's birthday or Mother's Day. But I couldn't bear the thought of Christmas and how it had changed.

What has saved me every Christmas since then is music, and playing it for other people.

I hadn't touched the violin for many years. But I went right back to it after my mother died. Now, every year, I play my violin at Christmas services at a variety of places, including Foothills hospital, Calgary and Banff churches and a local hospice.

I have been told many times that the easiest way to forget one's problems is to do something nice for someone else. I've found

that always works. Even the simplest thing, such as a phone call to see how someone is doing, can make a difference.

There are such huge expectations surrounding Christmas and what it's supposed to be — a happy family holiday — that for many people, it can be a tough time of year. And if people have experienced a loss, Christmas can be especially difficult.

"The conflict is that everyone is happy and celebrating — and so they should be, because this is a period of gratitude. But I had nothing to celebrate," says George Lightbound, 69.

His wife Sheila died of cancer in 1999. Just two years later, his daughter Cheryl drowned when she was caught in a hurricane during a diving trip to Belize.

"It's a killer, this Christmas thing, when you don't have your family. It changes every aspect of your life, your attitudes and your priorities, forever," he says.

If you're grieving a loss, how do you make it through Christmas intact?

People who have been through the experience say there are a number of steps you can take to help yourself. Getting professional help can be invaluable, as can joining a grief support group. Each person deals with grief in a different way, so the key is finding what feels right for you.

Grief support groups allow people to speak with others who understand what they're going through.

"You connect with each other. You can help each other," says Lightbound,

who has been volunteering as a facilitator with Calgary Health Region's grief support group for the past four years.

What Lightbound has realized during his journey through grief is that it isn't so much the problems we are presented with in life, it is the attitude we bring to them that counts.

As he began to recover, he was able to think about how his experience could benefit others. He began asking himself questions:

"What can I learn from this?"

"Who can I share this experience with who will benefit from it?"

"How do I make something good come out of this?"

"It starts to turn this horrific experience around into something that has some good in it," Lightbound says.

Now, each Christmas, he volunteers at a variety of charitable organizations. He also started a scholarship in his daughter's memory, awarded each year to a second-year computer science student at Mount Royal College.

These are a few examples of how people can help themselves move through the grieving process.

"One of our goals with people is to try and help them look at these times as creative opportunities to heal," says Rev. Bob Glasgow, co-ordinator of the Calgary Health Region's Grief Support Program, which provides free individual and group counselling to people who have lost a loved one.

SEE MEMORIES, PAGE F2

Handling grief at Christmas

Rev. Bob Glasgow, co-ordinator of the Calgary Health Region's Grief Support Program, offers the following suggestions

■ Have a plan for Christmas. Don't take a wait-and-see approach. Decide what you can or wish to handle and let family and friends know that plan;

■ If you are feeling emotionally vulnerable, give yourself permission to socialize as much or as little as you feel comfortable;

■ Spend time with people whose company you find refreshing and uplifting;

■ Decide which traditions will stay the same and which will change;

■ Sometimes, people will start a new ritual, such as hanging up a stocking for their loved one, and asking family and friends to fill it with special memories. Some people might light a candle and say a prayer for

their loved one;

■ Be gentle with yourself. Give yourself permission to cut back on such things as holiday preparations and gift giving;

■ For more information, call the CHR's Grief Support Program at 943-3533. It will also provide referrals to a range of grief support groups;

■ Hospice Calgary, which offers comprehensive community-based hospice service, also provides counselling for families grieving a death. Call 263-4525 for information.



Photo:
Calgary Herald Archive
Artwork above: Kathryn
Molcak, Calgary Herald

For: *Everyone On Your List* **Canon**



Canon Powershot A520 4 MP
• 4x zoom lets you get up close to the action
• 20 shooting modes to capture the perfect shot
• 8 special scene modes for great results for capturing challenging subjects like kids and pets
\$299.99



Canon SD450 Digital Elph 5 MP
• Large 2.5" LCD monitor
• With Canon's print/share button direct printing and/or downloading images is easier than ever
• Packed with features in a compact camera
\$499.99



Canon Rebel XT w/18-55 8 MP
• Small and lightweight it fits right in your hand
• Compatible with all Canon EF series lenses
• With intuitive simplicity and powerful performance it's the EOS digital camera for everyone
\$1,149.99



FREE Digital Prints
through the entire year of 2006!

A value of up to **\$200**

Free with every digital camera purchase

Japan Camera

Give us your memories. We'll make you Smile.
Prices and offers are in effect until December 24, 2005

japancamera.com

ASK THE EXPERT

Ironing out health problems



SAMARA FELESKY-HUNT

Find the missing ingredient in your diet

Q: I am sick and tired of being sick and tired. Do you think it is because my iron is low in my diet?
A: Many women are low in iron and may not realize it. According to a Canadian and American Dietitian's position paper on women's health and nutrition, low iron remains the most common deficiency. Low iron can also be a concern among toddlers, children, young women and seniors.

The missing mineral

Dietary iron is essential in maintaining vitality, energy and well-being. The role iron plays in the body involves transporting oxygen to cells and tissues. Of the body's 25 trillion blood cells, which contain iron, 25 billion are destroyed each day and need to be replaced. Iron is also important for healthy immunity and a healthy appetite. Low iron stores may make you feel irritable, sluggish and cause hair loss, loss of appetite and even headaches.

Poor absorption of dietary iron, blood loss or insufficient dietary iron can lead to anemia. A current report notes about six per cent of the population suffers from an iron deficiency, which generally leads to anemia.

How much iron?

In order to maintain a healthy iron balance, the body must absorb enough from the diet to offset the amounts lost in perspiration and urine, and in women, through menstrual bleeding.

Adult women require 18 milligrams each day until they are 50 years of age. Iron needs are very high

Calgary Herald Archive
Oranges can help your body absorb more iron.



Eggs are rich in iron and can easily be incorporated into your diet at breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Herald Archive, courtesy, Alberta Egg Producers

during pregnancy. Endurance athletes, especially runners, may have increased iron needs because of iron losses from foot strike breaking down blood cells.

Pump up the iron

There are two types of dietary iron, heme and non-heme. Animal foods such as meat, poultry and fish contain heme iron. Heme iron is easily absorbed and used by the body more readily than non-heme iron. Non-heme iron is found in whole grain and enriched breads and cereals, breakfast cereals, vegetables, fruits and legumes.

It is difficult for women to achieve the recommended intake for iron each day. In order to achieve the necessary requirement, you need to eat a serving of whole grain iron-enriched cereals, a handful of

almonds, a cup of baked beans, 14 dried apricots and a 4 oz. steak all in one day. Unless you are focused on a diet containing iron-rich foods each and every day, this very important mineral is missed.

Fortunately, vitamin C increases the absorption of iron, the non-heme type. Foods rich in vitamin C can double or triple iron absorption. Research shows vitamins A and E, copper and B vitamins also aid in iron absorption. Eating balanced meals will therefore ensure proper iron is absorbed.

Be careful of the tannins in tea and coffee as they may limit iron absorption. If you are concerned about iron absorption, you may want to delay having tea or coffee until after your meals are eaten.

quickly. Incorporate them into any meal for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Oysters are loaded with iron. Try adding oysters to pastas, sauces or soups.

Dried beans, such as black beans, chickpeas and lentils, or tofu, are excellent sources of iron. Legumes can be added to favourite soups, stews, chili or spaghetti sauces to boost iron.

Eat more oatmeal and cream of wheat. Add them to cookies, breads, muffins and pancakes along with vitamin C-rich dried fruit to help with iron absorption.

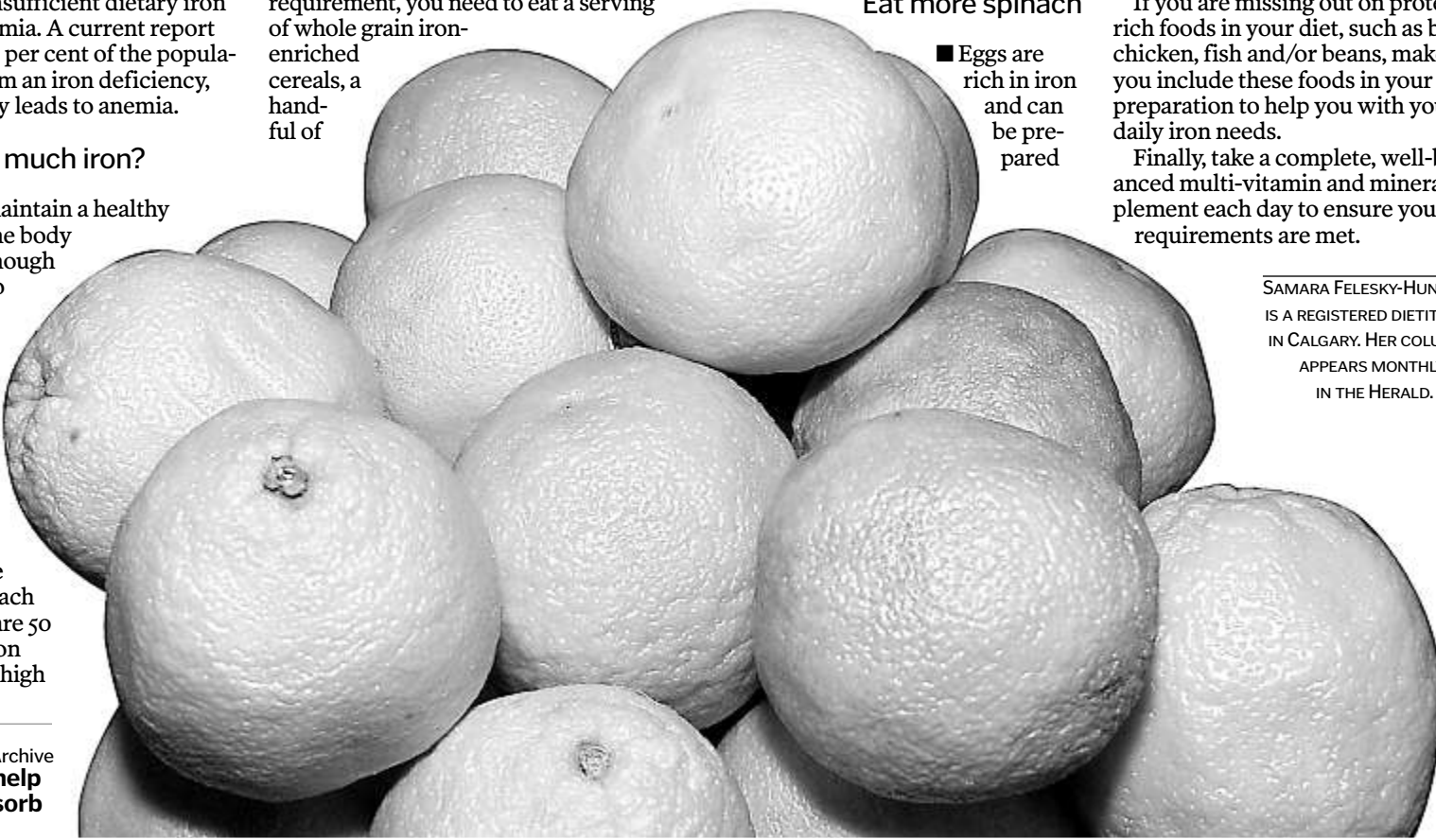
Greens such as spinach, Swiss chard and mixed greens make wonderful salads and are full of iron. Add orange or grapefruit slices to aid in iron absorption. Try sauteed greens with garlic and lemon for an easy change.

If you are missing out on protein-rich foods in your diet, such as beef, chicken, fish and/or beans, make sure you include these foods in your meal preparation to help you with your daily iron needs.

Finally, take a complete, well-balanced multi-vitamin and mineral supplement each day to ensure your iron requirements are met.

Eat more spinach

Eggs are rich in iron and can be prepared



SAMARA FELESKY-HUNT IS A REGISTERED DIETITIAN IN CALGARY. HER COLUMN APPEARS MONTHLY IN THE HERALD.

RECIPE

For the love of vegetables

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
 NEW YORK

Respected cookbook author Barbara Kafka has turned her hand to vegetables. In her latest book, *Vegetable Love* (Artisan, \$50), she cooks up delicious dishes just loaded with nutrients.

This greens-and-beans recipe would be ideal for helping boost your iron levels.

Beet Greens With White Beans, Bacon and Walnuts

5 oz (140 g) or about 1 cup (250 mL) dried cannellini beans, soaked, or 1 can (19 oz / 540 mL) cannellini beans, drained and rinsed

1 recipe bacon lardons (recipe follows), fat reserved

2 tbsp (30 mL) walnut oil

greens from 6 bunches beets (leaves only), cut crosswise into 1/4-inch (0.5-cm) strips

3 tbsp (45 mL) sherry vinegar

kosher salt to taste

1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped walnuts

freshly ground black pepper to taste

If using dried beans that have been soaking, drain them. Put in a pot and add fresh water to cover by 2 inches (5 cm).

Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 1 to 3 hours, depending on the age of the beans, until soft but not bursting.

Drain beans in a colander; rinse with cold water to stop the cooking. Set aside.

Prepare bacon lardons. Very meaty bacon will leave only 2 tsp (10 mL) fat; if the bacon has rendered a lot of fat, remove all but 2 tsp (10 mL).

Add walnut oil to bacon pan and increase heat to medium-high. Add greens in 3 batches, cooking for 1 minute each time and letting volume shrink before adding next batch. With a wooden spoon, scrape leaves against the bottom and sides of the pan to deglaze and get the flavours. Turn heat to low.

Cook for 5 minutes. Stir in vinegar and salt. Add beans, bacon lardons, walnuts and pepper. Toss gently. Cook for a few minutes until heated through.

Makes an ample 4 cups (1 L).

Bacon Lardons

1/2 lb (225 g) very lean slab bacon (bought from a butcher) or regular grocery store-bought bacon, cut into 1/4-inch (0.5-cm) thick slices, then cut across into 1/4-inch (0.5-cm) strips (about 1 1/2 cups (330 mL))

Put bacon in a medium saucepan. Cook, turning occasionally, over very low heat until fat is rendered and bacon is browned.

This can take up to 35 minutes if bacon is very lean. (For fattier, store-bought bacon, increase heat to decrease cooking time.) Remove bacon to a paper towel to drain.

Makes 2/3 cup (160 mL), with about 2 tsp (10 mL) fat if using very lean slab bacon, more if using fattier bacon.

FROM FI MEMORIES: 'Comforting'

According to Glasgow, if people can come up with a meaningful plan that feels right for the whole family, Christmas can be a time not only for expressing emotional pain, but also for feeling that loved ones are being remembered in an honourable way.

This is what Jake and Megan Mayell have done in the 14 years since their son Kogi died one month before Christmas, at age 22.

Each year, the Mayells, their daughter Nytasha and granddaughter Jazmine buy a special Christmas tree ornament in Kogi's memory. This year, they found the perfect ornament at Heritage Park's 12 Days of Christmas: a playful figurine of a skier, perfect for Kogi, who was an avid skier.

A strong support system is also essential.

"My friends were the saving grace," Megan says.

Even now, the Mayells' friends still call and send flowers in remembrance. On the anniversary of Kogi's death, the family goes out for dinner with two of Kogi's former classmates. "We still talk about him a lot — it's comforting to me," Megan says.

Whatever people are going through, there are always things they can do to help themselves heal. I have found that reaching out to others, whether it's at Christmas or at any other time of the year, helps me feel connected and at peace.

For me, music is a wonderful way to remember my mother, who was passionate about music, especially all of the music at Christmas.

It has given me a connection with her — and it has given me something to look forward to at Christmas again.

HOLIDAY NUTRITION

Nuts come out of their shells

KIM PAINTER
 USA TODAY

This holiday season, it's OK to go nuts — as in walnuts, almonds and pecans.

Nuts have always had a place in seasonal baked goods, as party snacks and even as Christmas stocking stuffers. In the old days, though, nuts were thought to be high-calorie, high-fat indulgences. But now, study after study shows nuts pack a nutritional

wallop — at least when eaten in moderation.

Since 2003, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has allowed labels for most nuts to say there is good evidence they lower the risk of heart disease.

One study this fall found a diet rich in fruits and vegetables that also included the healthy fats found in nuts, avocados and olive oil was more effective at controlling heart risks than a traditional, higher-carbohydrate heart-healthy diet. And a study in mice with Alzheimer's-like symptoms hinted almonds might be a potent brain booster.

"Nuts are just loaded with nutrients

A word on allergy

Nut allergies, especially peanut allergies, are common and reactions can be severe.

Be sure to let guests know when you add nuts to a dish.

Don't bring a dish with hidden nuts to a potluck dinner. You could spoil someone else's holiday in a single bite.

that we don't get enough of," says Cynthia Sass, a Tampa, Fla., dietitian and a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association.

For example, walnuts contain omega-3 fatty acids, which play a major role in heart and immune-system health.

"With nuts, you get a lot of bang for your buck. You get protein, you get minerals, you get healthy fat and fibre," says Lisa Dorfman, a dietitian in Miami.

Dorfman, who doubles as a licensed psychotherapist, says: "Nuts also are a fun food. You feel like you're cheating, but you're not."

But before you inhale that bag of pistachios, order a second slice of pecan pie or consume a tin of your mom's peanut brittle, use some common sense: Nuts are a calorie-dense food and often are paired with ingredients such as salt, butter and sugar.

So eat your nuts straight, and no more than an ounce or so a day — a golf ball's worth — suggest Dorfman and Sass.

Take a handful to work for your



Herald Archive, CanWest News Service

When eaten in moderation, nuts pack a nutritional wallop.

midmorning snack (they'll be much healthier than the holiday cookies lurking in the break room), but leave the jar at home. Eat a few to fill up before a party.

And use them to jazz up other healthy foods. Sass suggests adding walnuts to oatmeal or yogurt, almonds to salads and peanuts to stir-fried dishes.

This time of year, many people also buy nuts in the shell and use a nut-cracker to open them. That certainly will slow down consumption — maybe too much, Sass says.

"A lot of people just end up with bags of nuts sitting around," she says.

But Dorfman says nut cracking can be a great stress buster — something a lot of people can use about now.