

# Personal Health newsletter

**PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR A HEALTHFUL LIFESTYLE**

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*Helping  
you make  
your own  
decisions  
about your  
personal  
health . . .*



**Seeing the light . . .**

## **Should we reconsider using CFL's?**

Curly, compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL's) are marketed as being long-lasting, cost effective and environmentally friendly. Some users find an inconsistency among manufacturers in how long the bulbs actually last (not very long, for some brands). But a bigger concern is; are they really friendly to the environment?

All CFL's contain mercury and must be disposed of at designated recycling centres. In a society where people don't pick up after their dogs and still don't dispose of their plastics properly, do we really think *everyone* will dispose of CFL's properly? And what about remote communities where there are no CFL recycling drop-offs? (Some of these communities don't even have recycling programs for their glass and plastics.) Mercury-poisoned soil is a possibility if these bulbs pollute our landfill sites. And by December 2014, CFL's *might* be the predominant light bulb available in British Columbia.

In addition, there's much more than just an environmental concern. The health impact of CFL's on our bodies is also being questioned.

Thanks to technology, we're surrounded with various items that send off large amounts of radiation and energy. Humans are also masses of energy – and health experts question the effects these two energy sources create when they're combined.

Cell phones, computers, microwave towers, televisions, etc., are everywhere. The human body acts as an antenna for the electromagnetic waves produced by them. Some individuals are particularly sensitive. In addition, now we'll all be exposed to the high frequencies of energy from fluorescent lighting sources,

when regular incandescent bulbs become unavailable in Canada. They drain too much energy, says the government. Which means CFL's may be widely used in malls, stores, public buildings and private homes. That's not good news to those who are sensitive to high energy sources.

It's called electromagnetic hypersensitivity – or getting sick from the electronic devices we use and the 'energy' they emit. Scientists are still debating if people can suffer from electromagnetic hypersensitivity. They say it's never been proven. But many people feel their health problems are directly linked to these energy sources.

In 2007, the World Health Organization recognized the danger of these frequencies. They claim high levels of exposure to electric and magnetic fields in frequencies of up to 100 kilohertz can affect the nervous system, resulting in acute health effects. On *Global TV's* program *16:9*, a microsurge metre,

*Continued on page 2 . . .*

## **Recycling CFL's . . .**

Most Home Depot and Rona stores across North America will accept your used CFL bulbs. Check major recycling centres in your city as well. Visit Health Canada's website [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) for more information on the safe clean-up of broken CFL bulbs, and Environment Canada's site [www.ec.gc.ca](http://www.ec.gc.ca) to find other recycling centres in Canada.

# Reconsider using CFL's . . . from page 1

which measures electric energy, read CFL's as far above these readings. Incandescent bulbs measured well below 50, which is a recommended safe level on most micorsurge meters.

In the past, headaches were often attributed to fluorescent lighting. It was thought the fast flickering of the bulbs stimulated a headache. However, health officials now believe it's also the high levels of energy emitted by the fluorescent bulbs.

But headaches aren't the only health complaint thought to be linked to fluorescent lighting. Other health complaints include inability to concentrate, dizziness, fatigue, aching joints, skin rashes, and blistering.



The report on Global TV's program 16:9, questioned if the ultraviolet radiation emitted from these bulbs can damage our skin. Officials at Health Canada told 16:9, "There may be skin

sensitivity issues, especially in people with certain skin diseases," but they wouldn't provide the reporters with their findings.

In Britain, government health researchers and advocacy groups are being cautious. They feel there should be proper standards and warnings with this type of lighting. In London England, the government has put warnings on CFL "curly bulbs" after they found one in five brands of CFL bulbs emit unusual levels of UV light.

With all this speculation and general unease about CFL's, it's disconcerting to know our Canadian Government will soon veto the old light bulb and endorse CFL's. Shouldn't we look into other less "energy draining" light sources, before we elect to use a questionable source? A source that will drain tons of energy anyway, just in trying to educate the public on how to use it properly.

Until more is known, British researchers advise

avoiding close contact to CFL's for more than one hour. This especially applies to children. Try to use fewer of these bulbs in your home. If you suffer from headaches or other health complaints and there is no known reason, try removing the CFL or other fluorescent sources in your home to see if your health improves.

Educate yourself about cleaning up the mercury, should you break a CFL bulb. And do not throw used bulbs in your trash. Find where to recycle them.

For a healthier option, purchase CFL's which have the curly part in a protective UV-filtering cover. These are available in Canada. Or use LED or Halogen lighting.

Health Canada claims CFL's are safe. But history shows being categorized as 'safe' is not necessarily permanent, as we constantly learn more about the real dangers we create; things that at one time were thought to be 'safe.'

Forty-eight years ago the town of Libby, Montana thought the asbestos dust from their vermicular mine was 'safe.' Now many residents of that town are affected by asbestos poisoning. Many have died. Remember Thalidomide in the 1960's? Pregnant women were assured this drug (to prevent morning sickness) was 'safe,' but it caused devastating birth defects in their children. In the 1980's Accutane was deemed 'safe' to treat teenage acne. Today, it's been found several diseases and disorders, including inflammatory bowel disease, are strongly linked to Accutane use. And we are on the verge of discovering whether or not there is a possibility our 'wireless' technology is linked to certain cancers – especially among children.

Will CFL's come back to haunt us too?

For Health Canada's stand on CFL's, visit: <http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2011/2011-04-16/html/reg1-eng.html>

Still concerned? Contact John Cockburn, Director, Equipment Division, Office of Energy Efficiency, Department of Natural Resources, 930 Carling Avenue (CEF, Building 1, Observatory Crescent), 2nd Floor, Room 25, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0Y3. Telephone 613-996-4359; email: [equipment@nrcan.gc.ca](mailto:equipment@nrcan.gc.ca)

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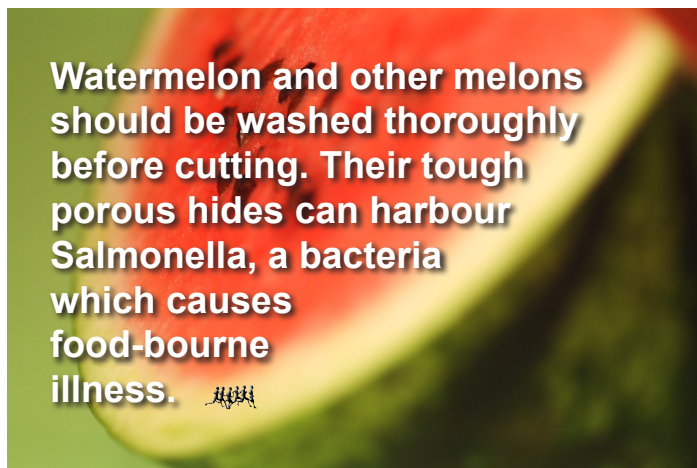
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# Lose weight sensibly for good health

**O**besity is generally defined as having a body weight of more than 20% above ideal bodyweight. However, experts really aren't sure who should lose weight, who can lose weight, or how much weight a person should lose — they can't even agree on what ideal bodyweight really is. Some people have health risks from being overweight, while others don't. Some can be harmed by dieting and others aren't.

A general recommendation for bodyweight is females weigh 100 pounds for the first five feet of height, adding five pounds for each inch over five feet. Males would begin at 110 pounds, adding five pounds for each inch over five feet. But these are non-specific recommendations only. No two people are alike in skeletal structure and muscular composition.



## Are you setting an example?



**B**e a “fitness” role model to your kids. Fitness professional David Patchell-Evans once asked a group of children who would influence them more to exercise: a rock star, a former athlete, your friends, or your parents? The unanimous answer was, “My parents.”

**Thought for the Day:** “The most handicapped person in the world is a negative thinker,” says Heather Whitestone, a former Miss America. Whitestone is deaf.

How you feel should be more important than how you look. Let your general state of health and/or your doctor's recommendations determine if you really need to lose body weight.

Stepping on a scale isn't a reliable tool on its own for assessing your health. Rather, a combination of weight, body fat testing, measurements, BMI (body mass index), or WHR (waist-to-hip ratio) *all together* will more accurately indicate if your weight puts you at a health risk. Ask a fitness professional, a doctor, or a nutritionist to take these measurements for you.

Generally, if a health problem is associated with excess body fat, losing weight is recommended. Here are some guidelines for your fat-loss quest;

- Prepare yourself mentally. It takes patience and may take time to reach your goal.
- Get help with psychological issues, like binge eating, overeating, or negative body image.
- Be active and eat sensibly. Avoid skipping meals. Promote three-plus meals daily.
- Monitor your progress by keeping a journal. Record your measurements, your thoughts, even what you eat daily.
- Enlist support of others. Tell others your goals. Find a good listener to unburden your woes.
- Get rid of big weight goals. Concentrate on small changes, like three to five pounds at a time. Reward yourself; for each half-inch you lose around your thighs, treat yourself to a movie or DVD.
- Treat a relapse as a stumble, not a crime. Don't punish. Pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and try again.

**I**t's not an animal's fur that causes allergies. The real culprit is a protein in their saliva. Pets, especially cats, can spread allergens as they groom themselves. Allergists suggest pet owners reduce their exposure to allergens by bathing cats and dogs weekly. Brush them often, wearing a face-mask if necessary, and keep them out of the bedroom!





## All about eggs . . .

Here are some egg-cellent tips from the UC Berkeley Wellness Letter:

Brown eggs aren't more nutritious than white eggs. The shell colour actually depends on the breed of the chicken.

Yolk colour reveals the chicken's diet: a diet of wheat and barley result in a light yolk, corn gives a medium-yellow yolk, and marigold petals, a deep yellow. There are more caroteneoids in darker yellow yolks.

Blood in the yolk is harmless. While the egg was forming, a blood vessel burst.


Fresh eggs have cloudy whites (albumen), due to carbon dioxide yet to escape from the egg. Freshness

## Meditation increases grey matter


Taking time out from your thoughts has been shown to be an effective tool in stress reduction. Massachusetts General Hospital researchers found eight weeks of mindfulness-based stress

reduction is linked with an increase in grey-matter density in several areas of the brain, including areas involved in learning and memory, and regulation of emotions.

The study was limited to a small group, so further research is needed to confirm their conclusions. However, the changes in brain density among study participants after only eight weeks is encouraging enough to convince us any style of meditation or "brain rest" can be a valuable tool in mental and emotional health.

Sign up for a basic mediation workshop, or find other ways to relax your mind and focus your thoughts to more positive ones. Doing an enjoyable activity or enjoying nature are just two ideas. 

is also indicated by stringy white strands inside the egg, called chalazae. These strands hold the yolk in place in the centre of the albumen. They disappear over time and are harmless if eaten.

When the eggs's iron and sulfur compounds react after being boiled, a gray-green tinge may form around the yolk. This harmless reaction shows the eggs was cooked too long or not cooled quickly. Eggs scrambled at a high temperature or microwaved too long will also turn a greenish colour. 



## Laughter

To me old age is always fifteen years older than I am. *Bernard Baruch*

I would not have had anything to eat if it wasn't for the stuff the audience threw at me. *Bob Hope, on his early career failures.*

I used to be Snow White . . . but I drifted. *Mae West* 

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