

SENIOR SCAPE: Are you getting enough?

Are you getting enough nutrients?

By Sylvia Dickens

Nutrition is an annoyance!

This from someone who never was a big eater. Milk was unpalatable and nauseating. Meat was unappealing. Fat was disgusting. Veggies, on the other hand, were tasty, and so were apples. Of course, sugar was an absolute delight!

Mealtimes are still a challenge. As a youth, I was not noticeably affected by this poor appetite. It's different now. What a shocker to feel light headed and weak from skimping on meals for several days. Geesh, that's how most of my life went until now. What changed?

Looking back, I now see that damage was occurring on the inside. Bones are unimpressive. Fingernails are super fragile. Hair is thin and brittle. The thyroid gave up trying. The heart-skips are most likely connected to a lifetime of poor diet. Those years of neglect have finally caught up with me.

It's even tougher to eat properly now because I'm still not very creative in the kitchen. Meals are still an annoyance. And it doesn't help that I'm getting lazier with age.

Do you have a poor appetite? It could be because a medication you're taking destroys appetite. Fortunately, mine don't, but then you need to have an appetite before you can lose it.

A few years back, my doctor said I should be taking calcium and multi-vitamins. Do you recall the rumors that such supplements are bad for you? I do, which makes me reluctant to take them. I read recently that calcium can cause kidney stones. "So that's where mine came from," I said to myself. I immediately stopped taking calcium.

The thing is, they could be wrong. Or it could be that a kidney stone is worth the risk over brittle bones. It's awful to have to weigh the risks when both are undesirable.

If you aren't taking supplements, you probably should be, as should we all. The food that comes to us today spends a long time exposed to the air. Many food items go through several processes before delivery. This causes the natural nutrients to dissipate or be destroyed. We no longer can guarantee that if we eat well, we'll stay healthy.

Ask the pharmacist

There was a time when I saw pharmacists as simply chemistry experts who dispense drugs until one day someone suggested, "Ask the pharmacist." Really? I thought.

Pharmacists are fantastic! There have been times when I needed a quick answer. For example, it only required a stop to the local pharmacist to learn that my worries about a change I experienced after starting a medication were unfounded. That was a relief.

Another time, he advised what supplements I could take safely with my current medication.

This is really important for all of us, because we need to consider our medications when we take something else, even if that something is just a cold medication or a multi-vitamin. My pharmacist always assures me it's good to ask because most people don't.

On May 22 at 1 p.m., you'll get a chance to ask an Aurora pharmacist about nutrients. The presentation will focus on the important role vitamins and minerals play in helping our bodies to remain healthy. Getting the right amount of the right nutrient at any age is key, especially for those of us who are over 50.

It's not easy to know which supplements to choose, how much to take or even if you need them at all. After this presentation, you'll know how to decide. You'll also learn about common supplements and herbal products and why you should watch out for drug interactions.

At the end of the presentation, you'll have an opportunity to ask questions.

Bill Hawke is awarded

You might not know Bill because he doesn't talk much and he doesn't mingle. He's the guy who is frequently spotted scurrying around the Centre with his keys a-janglin'. You might recall seeing his name in this column when I praised him for the great effort he put in to setting up the room and equipment for the Victorian Tea.

It should be no surprise that he has been well-recognized for his hard work and dedication. Our Primary Facility Operator at the Centre, he was presented with the AURA 2013 Award, also known as the Round of Applause Award from the Town of Aurora. He received the award during a special town staff ceremony on March 26.

Congratulations Bill! It was well earned.

More Bocce Balls

You Bocce Ball enthusiasts will be glad to know that we now have another set of Bocce Balls. They were donated to the Centre by Sheila and Lorna Cox. Thank you. They will be put to good use very soon.

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site www.auroraseniors.ca, email auroraseniors@rogers.com or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.