

Disease linked to diet

'You are what you eat,' the old saying goes. Food plays a role in the development and treatment of certain disease. Researchers have found a link between disease, treatment and diet in certain types of heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes and other chronic illnesses.

The picture is not yet crystal clear, but enough evidence has been collected to recommend that people be concerned about fat, sugar and dietary fiber intakes, says Sarah Hinton, extension nutrition specialist, North Carolina State University.

All three have a place in a well-balanced diet. Fat and sugar should be eaten in moderation, and special care should be taken to include fiber in the daily diet, says the extension specialist.

Fat is not just found in fat cells, it is in all of the cells of the body. We couldn't exist without it. But it is possible to get too much of a good thing, and Americans get 40 to 50 percent is the recommended allowance.

Another 15 to 20 percent of the average North Carolinian's calories come from sugar. People eat 100 to 125 pounds each year. Too much fat and too much sugar lead to obesity. "Obesity is probably the

most common nutritional problem affecting North Carolinians today," Mrs. Hinton says.

Obesity is a risk factor for developing cardiovascular diseases, high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis, gall bladder disease, diabetes mellitus and liver disease. Sugar can also contribute to tooth decay, one of the most widely spread, costly and preventable diseases directly related to nutrition in the United States today.

Distinguish between carbohydrates, such as starch and fiber which are good for the body, and concentrated sugars. The naturally occurring sugars such as those in fruit and other plants are better for someone worried about his weight than sugar or honey.

Complex carbohydrates also supply dietary fiber or roughage in the diet. Fiber is the part of plants not broken down in the digestive tract. It aids the movement of waste products through the intestine. Fiber can be useful in treating constipation and diverticular disease, but there is conflicting evidence as to whether it prevents these disorders.

To be sure you are getting enough fiber each day, eat whole grain breads and cereals, fresh fruits and raw vegetables.

Caladiums are popular

The brightly colored leaves of the caladiums make these plants one of the most popular in the home landscape.

Caladiums, which are tropical plants, may be planted after May 15 in the Coastal Plain, after June 1 in the Piedmont and after June 15 in the Mountains, suggest North Carolina State University agricultural extension specialists.

There are two types -- fancy and lace leaved. Fancy leaved caladium leaves are somewhat rounded. Lace leaved types have narrow, elongated leaves. Depending on varieties, both fancy and lace leaved types are available in shades of red, pink or white. Some have combinations of these colors.

They should be planted in a semi-shaded location -- from 40 to 60 percent shade is ideal. Exposure to full sun may cause foliage bleaching or even burning of the thinner leaved varieties.

Caladiums are grown from tubers, which are fleshy, underground stems bearing true buds. They must be planted in warm soils, if they are to sprout and grow well. A soil temperature of at least

70 degrees is preferred.

Caladiums can be forced into growth indoors. Plant the tubers one inch deep in coarse peatmoss and keep at a temperature range of 70 to 80 degrees. After they sprout, plant outdoors.

Soil for caladiums must be porous and well drained. It is usually necessary to add organic matter such as peatmoss, pine bark or leaf mold to clay or sandy soils.

Work in a complete fertilizer such as 8-8-8 at planting. Use two pounds per 100 square feet. Apply one pound per 100 square feet at each six-week interval after planting.

Caladiums have an unusually high requirement for water, so keep them moist but not water logged.

The plants will have to be dug each fall in North Carolina to avoid the cold. Lift plants before the first freeze and spread the corms in a warm sunny place to dry for 7 to 10 days. Then remove the remaining soil and leaves from the corms. Store tubers in a protected area where the temperature does not drop below 60 degrees. Remove any tubers showing rot.

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