

GOOD MORNING!



Making The Effort

Everyone knows exercise is good for you, but it's a hard choice between a jog or another hour in bed

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The Most Important Meal

Breakfast can set you up perfectly for the rigours of a day's work and can even help you lose weight

Pages 8 & 9

Good Morning Gadgets

Some of the gizmos that could help get you off to a brighter start in the morning

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Wake Up To Good Sleep

Studies show we all need about 7-8 hours sleep a night, but the average worker is getting just 6.5

Page 13



Wheaten Loaf

— BEING GOOD —
NEVER TASTED SO GREAT!

TRADITIONAL
YEAST FREE RECIPE
AND A GOOD
SOURCE OF FIBRE

Good morning!

Did you sleep well last night? The key to starting the day refreshed and ready is a good night's sleep. For many people, insomnia and interrupted sleep is a big issue, and one that has an intolerable effect on their everyday lives.

Taking time to think about what is causing that lack of sleep is the subject of our look at sleep, and why getting some can be harder than you think.

Having woken up, we look at some healthy ways to start the day, with WeightWatchers-approved recipes, along with the benefits of a glass of milk. But before a good breakfast, have you done your exercise? Exercising in the morning is the optimum time for such activity, boosting metabolism and setting you up for the day ahead.

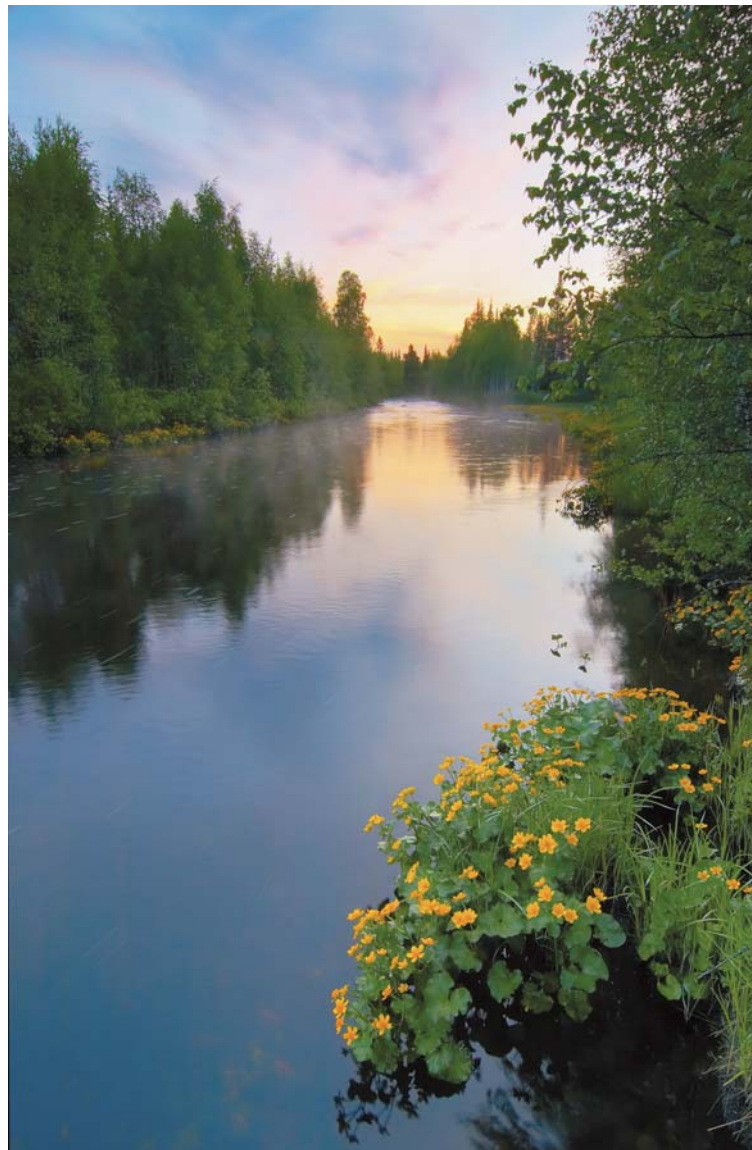
Feeling good about yourself means you can enjoy the day. Cleanliness is next to godliness, as the old saying goes, and making sure you are in tip-top

condition is the subject of two reports, on personal hygiene, and answering the questions you may have about oral health.

A fantastic, and convenient, way of getting all the essential nutrients you need throughout the day is in the form of a smoothie. Having revolutionised the way we consume fruit, and even vegetables, smoothies are now a firm favourite with people of all ages. Packed full of vitamins, minerals, and the odd shot of wheatgrass, we find out about the benefits of drinking a smoothie whilst on the go.

With lots of ideas and practical advice for starting off the morning in a new way, this supplement will

help you to get the very best out of the day, from the moment you get out of bed. So, what are you waiting for? Good morning!



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Brush up your dental hygiene

Brushing one's teeth is as much a part of the morning routine as washing, or getting dressed – it is an essential part of getting ready. A vital way of maintaining good oral hygiene, brushing twice a day helps to remove plaque, and prevent cavities (and, therefore, expensive trips to the dentist). However, is teeth brushing enough? Here are some answers to some common, and not-so-common questions.

Is brushing my teeth enough to prevent cavities?

Brushing is hugely important to remove the bulk of plaque build-up that causes tooth erosion. However, a toothbrush cannot reach every part of the mouth. Flossing can help to remove plaque and food debris from between the teeth. Using a mouthwash is not really necessary, unless it is medically recommended.

Sometimes my gums bleed when I brush. Why?

Gingivitis is a condition that causes inflammation of gums, and makes them bleed when you brush. Probably caused by plaque accumulation between the teeth, it is likely that the bacteria produced by the plaque infect the gums. People with existing medical conditions can also be more susceptible. Your dentist can help with a clean to remove plaque (and should be consulted at the onset in any case), which, coupled with teeth brushing and flossing, should help to prevent this problem.

Should I brush my gums?

Definitely. Plaque can be deposited

on the gums, as well as on the teeth. Gently brushing gums helps to prevent such build-up.

We're now being told to brush our tongues. Why?

Tongue brushing is not really essential. As it is covered in saliva constantly, the tongue is self-cleaning. Using your toothbrush to give it a gentle once-over just to remove anything that may remain is just an extra part of good oral hygiene routine, however.

What type of toothpaste should I use?

Fluoride-based toothpastes are the best option. Fluoride helps to fight plaque, as well as cleaning tooth enamel to prevent staining. Other toothpastes target specific problems, such as tartar control, or the needs of aging teeth and gums.

Will whitening toothpastes work?

A whitening toothpaste will never be a substitute for a professional teeth-whitening treatment provided by a dentist. Such treatments can be

expensive – mainly because they produce good results. A tube of whitening toothpaste just is not going to have the same effect, but will help to remove stains.

How many times should I visit the dentist each year?

For those without specific oral health issues, once every six months for a scale and polish should suffice, and help to identify the onset of any other problems. However, surveys suggest that just over half of Irish people do not do this. Reasons have not been clearly identified, but two obvious ones are the perceived fear of the dentist's drill, and, in some cases, the frankly prohibitive cost of dental care in the Republic.

I want to get some cosmetic work done. Is it safe to go abroad?

Irish dental costs mean that the prices offered overseas make such options very tempting. On our doorstep, dentists in Northern Ireland offer generally reduced prices for routine and cosmetic work, and appear in dentist listings in directories such as the Golden Pages. It is likely that such treatment centres will be accredited and should provide a good service. Further afield, many people now are choosing to visit places in Central and Eastern Europe for treatment, with Irish-based agencies facilitating access for patients. As with any service, there is a certain element of risk in terms of the overall result. Many of the bigger services have proved very popular and have positive reputations. It is wise to research a particular service, and, if possible, talk to those who have used a particular dental practice already – whether it is in Portadown or in Prague. Savings can be made, but should not be done at the expense of your health and wellbeing.

A tale of two mornings



THE GOOD MORNING: SIOBHÁN

'My morning actually starts the night before. Just before I go to bed, I spend a few minutes getting everything together that I need, so I'm not running around and looking for them at the last minute. I definitely iron any clothes I will wear the night before – I simply have no time to do it in the morning.

'When my alarm clock goes off at 7.30, the first thing I do is put on the kettle, before having a shower – it can be boiling whilst I'm washing, and I'll have hot water without having to wait for it. Every other day, I go for a quick run first, so I get up half an hour earlier, and slip into my tracksuit. I do a brisk walk and some running for about twenty minutes or so.

'My shower routine is fairly simple; I don't have time to waste. I'm in and out to refresh myself, before drying my hair and putting my make-up on. I don't go overboard on the make-up during the week, but enough so that I'm at least presentable! I brush my teeth straight after my shower – I can't risk getting toothpaste stains on my new blouse!

'After I'm set, I put on those clothes that I ironed the night before. My office isn't that formal, so I have a bit of variety in what I can wear. I still need to look smart, though.

'Now I can have that cup of tea. It's almost 8 o'clock at this stage, so

I need to get moving. A quick cup of tea and some wholemeal toast is fine for me. It is important to eat breakfast – skipping it means I'll be hungry later on, and more tempted to snack on chocolate or fatty pastries from the coffee shop.

'As I'm eating my toast, I make sure I have everything that I need in my bag. I usually spend a few seconds thinking about what I have to do today, and making sure that I plan ahead. Once my bag is packed, the breakfast dishes are thrown into the sink – I'm not washing up now – and off I go to the DART station.

'I think my routine is good. It puts me into the right frame of mind to start the day, and means I'm more organised overall – and certainly less stressed!'

THE BAD MORNING: COLM

'Not the alarm already... I'll just hit the snooze button...

'Just a few minutes longer. Press the snooze button again...

'Got up late – meant to be up at 7.30, but it's almost 8. Got in really late last night, but was a brilliant night. Shouldn't really have had that last pint, though.

'No time for a shower, so I'll just have to wash my face. Oh no, forgot to shave. It'll be OK though. On second thoughts, maybe not – there's two days' growth already.

'My face now was toilet roll over it – wasn't shaving properly and nicked myself a few times. Bit of blood on my shirt, but I can hide it with a jacket. The jacket can also hide the creases in that shirt – I was never any good at ironing.

'I'll grab a coffee on the way into work. Might help me to wake up a bit, and get rid of this hangover. Could get a breakfast roll too. Oh no! It's almost 8.30 – I'm going to miss the bus! Funny taste in my mouth – teeth!

'Standing at the bus stop now, having missed the first one. I've got toothpaste stains on my shirt, and definitely no time for coffee or breakfast. Realised I just forgot the file I was supposed to work on last night too. Great start to the day.'



THE MORAL OF THE TALE

Be prepared Do as much as you can the night before – ironing, bag packing, making packed lunch, washing long hair. This is especially apt if your routine involves children!

Get a good night's sleep Try to avoid late nights during the week, and certainly avoid going to work hungover.

Eat breakfast! Always have something to eat for breakfast. People who eat breakfast are generally less likely to be overweight.

Try to plan the day ahead Having a good sense of what's coming up puts you in the right frame of mind to start the day.

Think positive Not always easy, admittedly, but your attitude in the morning sets the tone for the rest of the day, whether you're conscious of it or not.

Start the day your way



Wake up with the photo of your beloved ones

Why not add meaning to your daily routine with a beloved photo or favorite song by your side? The AJL308 Clock Radio with 7" color display and handy USB/SD card slot can help you start your day right.

Start the day your way

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Making the effort

Although we are all aware of the importance of exercise, actually getting down to doing it is another matter entirely.

We'd all like to be one of those get-up-and-go people who can leap out of bed at 6am and go for a run before arriving back to get the kids packed off to school and then breezing merrily into the office for a day of work. The reality for most of us is quite different.

However, for those who are serious about exercise, then the morning probably is the best time to do it. Studies have shown that morning

activity helps to start the body's metabolism, meaning you will be more likely to burn calories throughout the day.

On a more practical level, exercising in the morning actually gets it out of the way, meaning that the temptations of the sofa after a full day at work are balanced by having done your exercise in the morning.

Actually getting out of bed, particularly on a Monday, can seem like

the hardest task in the world. Following that with exercise, even harder. It sometimes helps to have some motivation. Joining a gym could be the answer.

Any gym worth its salt will be open from first thing in the morning. With good, serviced equipment, and perhaps more importantly, interested instructors who want to help you to achieve a good level of fitness, then this is an ideal way to get fit and have a new perspective on the day. Having the support of trained professionals will also ensure that exercise safely, and effectively.

Indeed, many gyms operate a

'chase-up' policy, where they will actually contact you to find out why you are not attending, if they notice you have not visited in a while. Having someone check up on your progress is a great way of making yourself make that effort.

Whilst gym membership can be expensive, many places now offer reduced schemes, or allow entry on a single fee basis. The 'Pay-As-You-Go' option that we offer customers has ensured that our leisure centres

are accessible to everyone, especially families,' says Diane Vesey, Managing Director of Aura Leisure Centres. 'We have developed our service to take account of the demand that this cost effective option continues to generate from those interested in getting fit, losing weight, toning up or simply relaxing and unwinding.'

So, there really is no excuse. The options and support are available. What is stopping you now? Only yourself.



IRELAND: GRAB THE LIFE LINE AND BE FIBRE SURE!



Celebrity dietician, author and broadcaster Nigel Denby (right) dropped into Dublin to throw a much-needed lifeline to the Irish public by encouraging them to eat more fibre in their diet, as it can help reduce the risk of a number of bowel problems and cancer of the colon or large bowel.

Recent research, conducted by Procter & Gamble, has revealed that 84.6% of Irish adults did not know how much fibre they should be taking or that the guideline daily amount (GDA) is 24g. The research also revealed that two thirds of the nation thinks they are getting enough.

"Fibre is an essential part of a balanced diet and is just as important as other food groups such as proteins and fats. The right amount of fibre means we have a fully functioning digestive system." said Nigel.

Knowing what food contains fibre is a good start but the battle is making it delicious and tasty for all the family. Nigel advises: "Many people think that fibre is roughage that can be dry, dusty and hard but that is not the case. Fruit, vegetables, pulses, nuts, seeds and grains are all excellent sources of fibre and can be used in a range of recipes. My favourites include melon and orange smoothie, cranberry & apricot muesli and hot and spicy vegetable stir fry with coconut milk – all of which are quick and easy to make."

With the renewed interest in fibre there are also new supplements on the market that allow you to get your GDA of fibre in a quick and convenient way. One such product is Fibresure Powder. You can dissolve it in water, cook or bake with it without altering taste or texture.

Nigel adds: "There are other health benefits associated with Fibresure Powder. It's prebiotic which provides very important nourishment for the good bacteria in our digestive system."

Fibresure Powder is a 100% natural vegetable fibre supplement available in tubs or on the go stick packs. One serving (a teaspoon) is 5g of fibre – that's 20% of your daily fibre needs. So fitting fibre into your diet has never been easier.

For further information on Fibresure please visit www.fibresure.ie

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Kick start your day

Breakfast is regarded by nutritional experts as the most important meal of the day, yet many people, especially children, continue to skip it, writes Sinead Fagan



Rita Fagan, Managing Director of Weight Watchers, says a high number of the overweight people who join their classes make the classic mistake of skipping breakfast as they think it will give them a head start on the day.

“Skipping breakfast does not help you to slim down, that is a complete

fallacy. The body needs fuel to work at its optimum level during the day, the same way that a car needs petrol,” she points out.

“Most people, who don’t eat breakfast, find that their concentration or energy level is low mid-morning and so they reach for a sugary snack to give themselves a

quick boost. This only provides a temporary jolt and not the sustained release of energy that you might get from eating a bowl of porridge for example.”

Rita goes on to say that although some people don’t like to eat first thing, there are ways around the early morning nausea that many complain of.

“Some people can’t face food first thing,” she says. “But it doesn’t have to be a big meal, a piece of fruit, a slice of toast when you get to work, or even just a smoothie is enough to get you up and running.”

So why is eating a good breakfast so vital to maintaining a healthy lifestyle?

- Breakfast helps to kick start your metabolism into action and gets the body stocked up with nutrients to face the day ahead. Breakfast restores sugar levels after a long period of not eating and is thought to raise the metabolism by as much as 10 percent.

- Eating breakfast prevents the body from going into ‘starvation mode’ where food is stored rather than processed, encouraging weight gain.



▲ Sinead Fagan

Studies have shown that those who eat breakfast maintain a healthy weight more successfully than those who don’t.

- Breakfast eaters have a more positive attitude to work and school and they perform better. A study carried out in the US showed that children who started eating breakfast raised their exam scores significantly and were absent less often than those who didn’t eat breakfast. Other research has shown that adults who skip breakfast are less mentally and physically efficient for longer periods during the day.

- Further studies have shown that children, who skipped breakfast,

rarely met even two-thirds of the recommended daily allowance for most minerals and vitamins. It is more difficult to get all of your necessary daily nutrients without breakfast.

- Athletes who skip breakfast train less efficiently.

- Apart from all the physical benefits, taking time to have breakfast each morning gives you space to relax and focus the mind rather than rushing straight from bed into the working or school day.

- If you don’t have time to eat breakfast, then consider preparing something the night before like a big bowl of fruit salad, or else have a cereal bar and carton of juice on hand for the train or car journey into work.

- It is not necessary to have a big fry-up in order to feel full after breakfast, eating a bowl of porridge is an excellent way to stay fuller for longer; porridge is also low in fat, highly nutritious, and helpful in lowering cholesterol levels.

- If you’re still not convinced, Rita Fagan of Weight Watchers points out that along with taking regular exercise, drinking water and using a pen and paper to track your daily food intake, eating a healthy breakfast is frequently cited as one of the key factors to the success of their goal members.



The Healthy Choice!

Feel the Kelkinicity



Breakfast really is the most important meal of the day...

Despite breakfast skipping being relatively common practice now among adults and adolescents, recent research has confirmed that breakfast really is the most important meal of the day, writes Aveen Bannon (pictured right), Consultant Nutritionist to Kelkin.

Breakfast is literally breaking the fast. After a night's sleep our body is running on empty and we need to supply the body with fuel. You wouldn't expect a car to run without petrol so why expect your body to run on empty?

An American study revealed that eating breakfast is the most positive thing you can do if you want to lose weight and achieve a nutritionally balanced diet. Data showed that people who regularly skip this meal are 4.5 times more likely to be overweight than breakfast eaters. Common reasons given for skipping breakfast include lack of time, poor meal planning and a mistaken per-

ception that skipping breakfast will result in weight loss. However, breakfast skippers tend to snack more and overcompensate for the lost calories at breakfast by eating energy dense high fat foods later in the day, especially at suppertime.

Similarly, in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition, a study in adolescents and adults revealed that breakfast skipping is a health compromising behavior and those who skip breakfast are more likely to be overweight than breakfast eaters. Smoking, infrequent exercise and frequent alcohol intake were associated with breakfast skipping. Adolescent girls were found to skip

breakfast more than boys; probably a mistaken chosen method of weight control for girls. And it appears that kids really do learn by example; children of breakfast skipping parents were much more likely to skip breakfast than children of breakfast eaters. With the continuing increase in childhood obesity in Ireland these studies should give us food for thought.

A recent survey of Irish school children aged between 10-17 years revealed that 15% of surveyed children never have breakfast during the week and 8% never have breakfast at the weekends. These figures are cause for concern for two reasons. Firstly, the evident associated risk of skipping breakfast and weight gain and secondly missing a meal that provides a significant amount of nutrients to the diet. If children skip breakfast they will find it difficult to satisfy their nutritional needs. For-

tified breakfast cereals with milk are an important source of iron, calcium, zinc, folic acid and B vitamins. Children who regularly consume breakfast cereals are more likely to meet recommended micronutrient intakes than children who rarely consume them. Common sense tells us that it will be difficult for children to perform in school and learn if no energy has been provided. Even children who have eaten breakfast become distracted by hunger by late morning. Another study, in a Dublin Inner city school, showed that participation in a universal-free school breakfast program enhanced daily nutrient intake, which in turn was associated with significant improvements in student academic performance, psychosocial functioning and attendance. This is also true for adults, productivity will be impaired if your body does not have the right fuel.

Many years of breakfast skipping can result in lack of appetite in the morning and even some people reporting that they 'feel sick' when they try to eat something first thing. The first thing

to do is have a glass of juice; this will help increase your appetite. Maybe try having a piece of fruit at home and then a high fibre cereal when you get in to work. Unsweetened muesli or porridge is a great nutritious start to the day. Gradually increase the size of your breakfast and your appetite will slowly start to increase in the early morning. Time is never an excuse! It only takes 5 minutes to have breakfast in the morning and it morning and we can always get up a little earlier...I'm sure most people would agree that those five minutes extras in bed isn't worth the risk of potential obesity in later life.



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Good morning gadgets

Technology is just as much a part of your morning routine as it is for your working routine, or your entertainment in the evening. Here are some gadgets that will help to get you off to a bright start.



Radio

Not as lo-tech as you may think, this one. The days of analogue radio are numbered – already the case in much of Europe, and increasingly so here in Ireland. DAB – digital radio – is now being trialled in Dublin and other parts of Leinster, providing top-quality sound and digital information with normal radio programming. With the potential for more stations than ever before, this is one to watch. Or rather, to listen to. The internet radio is also a great improvement – connecting to your wireless network, you can listen to thousands of stations around the world, either on your computer or via handy radios that log in automatically.

Smoothie maker

A blender just isn't good enough, these days. Smoothies, the ideal way to get your five-a-day, now have their own machine, where you can produce fruity delights that flow forth from a handy nozzle, for quick, tasty and nutritious goodness-in-a-glass.

Espresso machine

Coffee is all about espresso, and even more about pod coffee. A variety of machines are now available that dispense with the messiness of ground coffee and instead come with handy pods or sachets that slot into the machine and produce good, strong espresso whenever you need it. Most also have a steam tap, so lattes and cappuccinos are but the press-of-a-button away. And cheaper than going to a coffee shop.

Slow cooker

Not for breakfast, but to save time later on – pre-planning is always a handy skill to have. A slow cooker can get on with cooking dinner throughout the day, without you having to be in attendance, so that by the time you get in, there's a dinner already waiting. The downside is that you'll still need to prepare the ingredients in the morning, and, really, there's no way I could face browning stewing

steak before at least two espressos from my pod machine – by which time, it's time to get the train. For better-prepared souls, however, this is a great invention.

MP3 player

Yes, the one thing that almost everyone has. But it is a fantastic invention. Being able to block out the noise of everyone sneezing and coughing around you whilst you relax with your favourite music really is priceless. Downloadable podcasts are also a great way to catch up with news and radio at your own convenience, using your journey times for something more satisfying than snoozing.

FIVE FACTS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT TEA

1. Around 98 per cent of tea drinkers add milk to their cuppa. Surprisingly, though, only around 30 per cent add sugar.
2. Contrary to popular belief, tea contains about half the caffeine of coffee.
3. The first cups of tea were drunk in China, some 5000 years ago.
4. Black and green teas are full of antioxidants, and properties that could help fight cardiovascular disease and cancer, amongst other diseases.
5. One pound of tea will make around 180 cups.

FIVE FACTS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT COFFEE

1. All coffee is grown in areas around the equator, in some 53 countries.
2. The percolator was invented in 1827.
3. An espresso actually contains less caffeine than a cup of percolated coffee.
4. The first instant coffee granules were produced by Nestlé in 1909, and the Nescafé brand is still one of the most popular today.
5. Arabica and robusta are the two main types of coffee from which different blends are produced.



Double the vitality

Avonmore Super Milk now comes in a 2 Litre 'Family Pack', so you can be assured there's enough vitality in each carton for all the family. A milk that is low in fat but full in taste, it's enriched with extra calcium, folic acid and four key vitamins (A, B, D & E). This essential combination of nutrients will support your family's growth and help provide them with the strength, the energy and the protection they need everyday.

New **2 Litre carton for all the family**



Dear dairy...

The vast majority of Irish people consume milk on a daily basis, even if it is just in a cup of tea. An essential source of calcium, and a whole range of vitamins and minerals (as detailed below), milk is a cheap source of goodness that is readily available.

Claire O'Sullivan, consultant nutritionist with Glanbia, spoke recently about the benefits of milk, and of dairy products generally.

DJ: Claire, milk is a given purchase for most consumers in Ireland. Do you think we are consuming enough?

CO'S: Although milk and dairy products are an integral part of the Irish diet, in a lot of cases, they do not figure as much as they should.

Milk itself has a fairly good consumption rate overall, but with teenagers, products like yoghurt and cheese are eaten less. One particular area for concern is with teenage girls, who are moving away from dairy because of a false impression that such products are fattening.

DJ: Why is milk so beneficial?

CO'S: Milk is such a complete food. There are so many benefits to be had from drinking milk. For example, it

is packed full of protein and calcium for the development of healthy muscles and bones. Most people are actually aware of those benefits. However, they may not know that milk is also a very good source of vitamin B12, which is good for the nervous system. It also contains properties that can help with blood pressure, and obviously help to control body weight. Conversely to what people may have thought previously, people who consume dairy products tend to have healthier body weights.

DJ: There are different types of milk available, from whole milk to skimmed. Which one should we be drinking?

CO'S: It depends what stage of life you are at. Children, once they start drinking cow's milk, should be drinking whole (full-fat) milk up to at least the age of five, because their energy requirements are greater. Everyone else should be drinking semi-skimmed (low-fat) milk, to get the benefits of milk with less than half the fat. For those watching their weight, or their saturated fat intake, then skimmed (fat-free) milk is the best option.

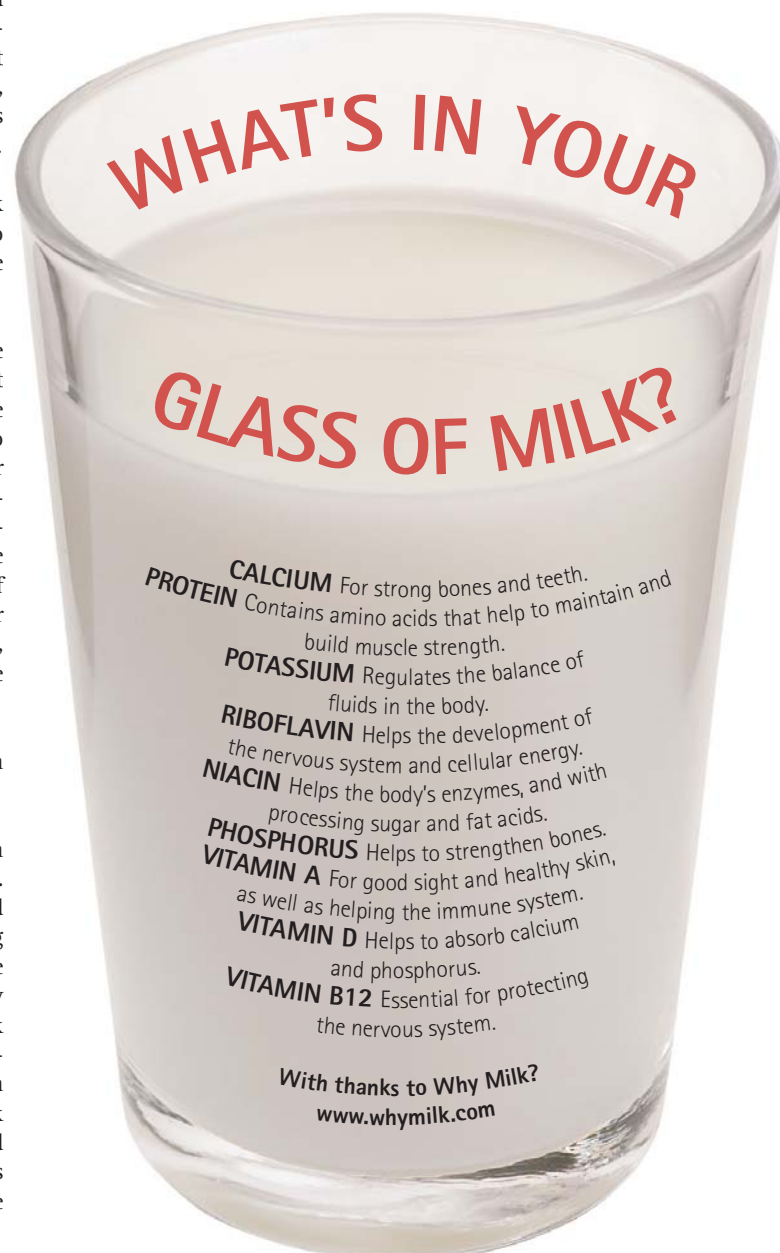
DJ: How much dairy should be in our daily diet?

CO'S: Milk and dairy products are an important part of the food pyramid. As such, they should be consumed three times a day. Actually bringing in three-a-day into your diet can be difficult, but to make it easier, try dairy with other products – milk with your cereal in the morning, yoghurt with a lunch of a sandwich containing cheese, and so on. Milk is obviously consumed in tea and coffee on a regular basis also. It is very important that we do consume three-a-day, though.

DJ: Would eating a yoghurt be as beneficial as drinking a glass of milk?

CO'S: Absolutely. Some people do not find milk palatable, so products like yoghurt are good. Having vari-

eties of yoghurt or cheese helps to promote its consumption too. Even milk now has different flavourings and types, so when it comes to fitting in three-a-day, everyday, into busy lifestyles, it is important to use the variety available.



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Smooth, real smooth

Slap, bang, whizz. Smoothies: quick as you like and full of goodness. The market for smoothies has exploded in recent years as more people realise the benefits of consuming fruit.

For some people, smoothies are breakfast. For others, they're an excellent alternative to coffee and cake as a three o'clock pick-me-up. They even make an excellent desert: think of peach, pineapple and passion fruit to round off a spicy curry, or red berries and pomegranate after a trip to the gym.

Whatever the occasion, they are an excellent source of nutrition, vitamins, and minerals. Nutritionists recommend that we consume at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Smoothies are an excellent way of meeting this requirement –

a small glass can contain two portions, while a large smoothie could contain three, or even four.

Some insist that smoothies aren't smoothies without yogurt. Margot Brennan, a qualified dietician who works as Public Relations Officer with the Irish Nutrition and



Dietetic Institute (INDI), says that a dollop of yogurt in a smoothie is an excellent source of calcium. Even better is a probiotic yogurt, which helps top up the good bacteria in your gut.

Honey is another good ingredient for smoothies. This wonderful syrup is full of antibiotic properties and helps ward off and fight infections. Some varieties, such as Manuka, are renowned for their health benefits. A lot of people like to throw in ginger, which is an excellent antioxidant that stops colds and flus in their tracks.

The supermarket shelves are bursting with a range of ready-made smoothies that can save the effort of chopping fruit and cleaning up afterwards (especially if you're wrestling with a piece of toast

on the way out the door). They don't require much preparation (or any, if you buy the ready-made variety). They are filling and, most importantly, they make an excellent breakfast.

If, however, you wish to experiment with your own smoothies, the shop shelves are also full of ready-made juices. Throw in some apple or orange juice, add what you like, and you have a nutritious meal (snack) within minutes. Either way, you're on the road to a healthier lifestyle.



SUGGESTED SMOOTHIE RECIPES: SERVE TWO

Mango and Pineapple

300ml Squeez apple juice
A third of a pineapple
Half a mango
Two spoons of yogurt
A dollop of honey

Banana Berry

300 ml Squeez orange juice
A handful of fresh frozen berries
1 banana
Two spoons of yogurt
A dollop of honey



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Wake up to good sleep

Are you feeling a bit tired at the moment? How many times have you yawned since you woke up? With the average adult requiring some 7-8 hours' sleep in every 24 hour period, how many of us can realistically expect to achieve that during the working week?

In fact, current studies show that the average worker gets around 6.5 hours of proper rest each night, with those working in healthcare and the hospitality industry in particular having reduced sleep times.

Whilst the '24-hour society' that is talked of is less of a reality for most of us, it is still apparent that activities we would once have carried out in the morning and afternoon are now being done in the evenings, or at night.

Round-the-clock supermarket shopping is available for many, and is profitable enough for one retailer in Ireland to have made it a standard part of business practice. Online services mean that mundane tasks such as paying bills, renewing insurance

or shopping, can be done at any time. Added to this the commuter culture that has seen workers live increasingly further distances from their places of work, and reliant on transport services that have not really adapted to their needs, means that the average 9-5 working day can now start from even 5am and continue to 8 or 9pm.

Is it any wonder, then, that when we do arrive at the time to sleep, that it is not that easy to unwind? Having problems sleeping – insomnia – can actually be classed as a psychological problem, if there is no apparent physical issue to deal with.

As a long-standing insomniac, I am more than away of the usual triggers. Stress is a major factor in

preventing normal sleep, whatever its prominence. Another symptom is actual tiredness – although when you actually want to sleep, it just does not come. Actually waking up tired is another effect.

One symptom that I experience constantly is waking up several times in the night. Sometimes, this can be accompanied by a strange hunger or thirst.

What can be done to resolve insomnia? If it is caused by a physical issue, such as pain or disease, then medical treatment is usually required. As a psychological problem, the solution may not be as easy to find. Stress is a major cause of insomnia. Other common causes are depression and anxiety.

One thing is certain, however: medication should be taken in moderation, and avoided entirely if possible. The recent death of the actor Heath Ledger is believed to have been caused, in part at least, by the various drugs he was taking to combat insomnia.

Actually taking control of issues is the first step. Whatever is causing stress needs to be addressed in a positive way – whether this involves counselling, just talking, or actually getting specific advice to start to resolve whatever is causing problems. In dealing with illnesses such as depression, it is vital to get sound, pro-

fessional advice. Not all conditions require medication or other intervention, and it is sometimes this that puts people off seeking medical attention. There is no point whatsoever in avoiding this until the problem has been identified. Otherwise, the vicious circle of worry will continue – actually knowing what to worry about can reduce that concern, if you know what you are dealing with. Think about your last proper holiday – do you feel like you sleep for longer when you are away? If so, then it is more than likely that this is because your stress levels are naturally lower.

Recharging

We underestimate greatly the importance of sleep. For some, it is a frustrating waste of vital hours that could be used for work. However, as any good manager should admit, working overly long hours is definitely not productive. Sleep is the body's way of recharging – restoring its energy, and preparing the body for the rigours of the following day.

Having started to deal with the trigger of stress, it is also important to look at the physical environment of where you sleep. The bedroom is much more than somewhere to sleep – it is a room where we spend continuous hours, even if we are not conscious for most of them.

Bedrooms need to be clean and tidy. Having clutter and mess everywhere will only heighten stress. Temperature is another factor – not too cold, and definitely not too hot. Try to keep the outside world out. This means no desks or work, if possible. Also, no televisions – how could anyone sleep after watching an action film, or seeing the latest news programmes? Of course, as humans we are naturally contradictory. I should confess that my internet radio is essential for me. Listening to talk radio helps me to sleep, for some reason – the BBC World Service, with its calm voices and regular programme patterns (news every half-hour, and so on) is the perfect choice.

Other factors include bedfellows – a disruptive partner who may keep different hours, or moves around a lot, can also interrupt your sleep. Too much light, especially in the summer months, can make you wake much earlier than you need to.

Having the ideal bedroom environment can go a long way to facilitating better sleep. However, if insomnia is a recurring, or constant problem, then it is important that you consult your doctor. Make this the point where you start to make changes, to restore your body's natural cycle, and to get the full benefits of a good night's sleep.

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On your way to work...

How do you get to work every day? Are you one of the dedicated few who pop on a cycle helmet and brave the country's roads each morning? Do you catch a bus or train? Or do you, as is possibly more likely, get into your own car?

Recent research carried out in Dublin and the commuter counties in Leinster by the Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) threw up some frankly shocking opinions.

52 per cent of people said the car was their most often used way of getting around

It is hardly surprising, given the lack of public transportation outside of urban areas, that the car is the only real option for many people. What does contribute to the misery for many commuters is that this particular figure represents the opinions of people who do have access to regular public transport – buses, trains, trams and city trains. Our mindset is that our cars are the only way to travel, regardless of the options, and of the progress that has been made in making those options a realistic alternative to the private car.

26 per cent, or one in four people, think only of their car for all trips

With just over a quarter of people refusing to consider any other form of transportation, there is little wonder that our roads are so clogged up. Another effects of such single-mindedness includes Ireland's increasingly unrealistic attempt to curb its

carbon emissions to within the guidelines set by the Kyoto Protocol.

27 per cent of all respondents said the car is preferable for short journeys of a mile or less, and half of all car owners (47 per cent) take their car on these short journeys

This is actually a shocking figure, on reflection. More than a quarter of people surveyed cannot be bothered to walk less than a mile to the shops or pub, or wherever. Having instilled such a culture of laziness – journeys of less than a mile cannot be influenced by a lack of other options for able-bodied adults – is it any wonder that levels of obesity are rising in children?

Finally, 55 per cent of short journey car users said they were unlikely to consider walking instead, and only 3 per cent of these short journey car users said they were very likely to consider walking for short journeys of a mile or less, instead of using the car

More depressing statistics. If we are unable to contemplate a short walk, what hope is there for both maintaining our environmental commitments, and of keeping our roads

unclogged? Drive through any market town and the evidence is quite clear of gridlock and cars everywhere – this is not solely restricted to the cities in today's Ireland.

So, what can we do? Not much, given the survey results above. However, the DTO, as part of the One Small Step campaign, is eager to try to get more people out of the car, and onto both public transportation and the paths.

"We're asking drivers to reduce car usage where and whenever possible and to use alternative transport, as appropriate," says the Director and Chief Executive of the DTO, John Henry. "Where there are alternatives available, whether that's public transport, or taking a fifteen or twenty minute walk or cycle, then people should consider these options for at least some trips every week. As well as the health benefits, and the reduction in their carbon footprint, car users who make this small change will ultimately make a big difference.

"If everyone left their car behind for just one trip each week, there would be 200,000 fewer car trips every day in the Greater Dublin Area, less traffic and less pollution. We are urging all car users to give this their serious consideration in their own and everyone else's interests.

Addressing the concerns of motorists, he adds: "Nobody is telling motorists to stop using their cars altogether but what we have to realise is that it is not sustainable for us as individuals to continually increase car usage year after year. Changing driving habits can be hard but, ultimately, people and the region will suffer unless we start to incorporate walking, cycling and public transport into at least some of our trips."

For more information on how you can change your ways, visit the One Small Step campaign website at www.onesmallstep.ie.

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