

Kaw Valley **Senior Monthly** **FREE!**

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INSIDE



Midland Care will open a new adult day health care program. The program, based on a medical model, will make its home in the former Woodlawn Elementary School building in North Lawrence. - page 4



Neuvant House held its grand opening and ribbon cutting on June 18-20. The facility's staff is trained to care for individuals with Alzheimer's and other kinds of memory loss. - page 5



Foraging is not just for people during hard times—it's green eating at its purest. - page 10

KEVIN GROENHAGEN PHOTO



Dr. Irving A. Cohen

SENIOR
profile

Cohen helps patients lose weight naturally

By Kevin Groenhagen

After Dr. Irving A. Cohen retired from his position with the Colmery-O'Neil VA Medical Center in Topeka, he began taking a personal interest in weight reduction.

"I was trying to do all the right things that authorities were recommending and the government was

pushing," Cohen said. "I was trying to watch my blood pressure and weight. However, I gained 50 pounds or so."

Cohen had a good reason to be concerned about his blood pressure and weight. Everyone on his father's side of his family had died young from heart disease.

Cohen decided to look at the re-

search on weight reduction and determined that the experts had missed the boat. During the 1970s, the federal government set goals encouraging a reduction in dietary fat and an increase in carbohydrates for all Americans. According to Cohen, this was the take-off point of a low-fat fad. Unfortunately, that fad, which the

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE THREE

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I	Business Card Directory.. 21	Nostalgia Notebook..... 30
N	Bookshelf 22	Personal Finance 10, 11
D	Calendar 16	Pet World 25
E	Health & Fitness 12, 13	Puzzles and Games 28, 29
X	Humor 23	Retire Smart 14
	Mayo Clinic..... 9	Travel Troubleshooter..... 24
	Naturally Savvy..... 8	Wolfgang Puck's Kitchen...26

Dr. Cohen

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

government continues to promote today, has greatly contributed to the obesity epidemic in this country.

Reacting to the new dietary guidelines, food processors developed low-fat products that were loaded with both high levels of carbohydrates and appetite-enhancing stimulants to cover the bland taste of substitute ingredients. Just as farmers fatten livestock by feeding them carbohydrate-rich grains and Sumo wrestlers bulk up by eating rice carbohydrates, Americans gained weight after eating these carbohydrates.

Cohen eventually developed a computer model to predict the fat-burning potential for weight-reduction diets. He compared its predictions for an optimum diet to other weight-reduction diets. When he did, he found that two important historic weight-reduction diets relied on these same principles. One was developed by Dr. Wilhelm Ebstein, a 19th century German physician-scientist. Unfortunately, Cohen had to travel to Washington, D.C., to read an English version of Ebstein's work. The other was the weight-reduction method of Hippocrates, which Ebstein had cited in his work. After having a French version of Hippocrates' work translated into English, Cohen found that the 2,400-year-old dietary advice of the father of rational Western medicine fit well with his 21st century computer model. This led Cohen to call his weight-reduction program the "New Hippocratic Diet."

While you can lose weight with almost any diet that allows you to eat less than you need, most will leave you hungry. According to Cohen, the New Hippocratic Diet reduces hunger by maintaining steady fat-burning. Without this steady fat-burning state, known as ketosis, our bodies continue to store more and more energy in the form of fat.

In order to maintain a state of ketosis, Cohen's diet calls for a starting point of 60 grams of fat, 40 grams of protein, and 10 grams of carbohydrates each day.

"If you burn about 2,000 calories each day, this mixture should provide about 37 percent of your energy needs, maintain a moderate to strong state of fat-burning, and result in a about two pounds of weight loss each week," Cohen explained.

Eating more grams of fat than carbohydrates goes against what the federal government has recommended. However, as Cohen noted in his book, *Dr. Cohen's New Hippocratic Diet Guide:*

How to Really Lose Weight and Beat the Obesity Epidemic, the belief that eating fat makes you fat is a myth.

"Eating more food than your body needs makes you fat, in whatever form it takes!" Cohen writes. "Your body is programmed to take any extra energy you provide and store it for emergencies and lean times. Ounce for ounce, fat does contain more energy than any other food, but that fact is meaningless. To store fat, your body needs to receive a signal from a high insulin level. A high sugar level drives that insulin level! The quickest way to get fat is to stuff yourself with any form of carbohydrates that will turn into sugar."

To help his patients with their diet plans, Cohen's book includes a list of "foods to clear out" and a list of "foods to stock." Foods to clear out include sugar, honey, corn syrup, maple syrup, grains, peas, beans, alcoholic beverages, and all foods that contain monosodium glutamate (MSG). These foods are responsible for food cravings. Foods to stock include liquid calorie-free sweetener, meats and poultry without added broth, fresh and frozen green vegetables, lettuce, salad mixes, spinach, nuts, MSG-free canned tuna packed in olive oil, and real cheese, real sour cream, real heavy whipping cream, real butter, and real mayonnaise.

Cohen emphasizes the importance of reading labels and knowing what

ingredients really are.

An example Cohen cites in his book is the use of "natural coloring" on labels. Food industry regulators have chosen "present in or produced by nature" for their definition of "natural." Using this definition, any product is "natural" if it is made from something that ever grew, moved, or crawled. Therefore, "natural coloring" on a strawberry ice cream or strawberry yogurt label may actually be cochineal dye, a red dye made from the dried and pulverized bodies of female cochineal insects of the beetle family *Dactylopiidae*. This dye might also appear on labels as "carmine" or "cochineal extract."

MSG is another ingredient to look out for on food labels.

"The food manufacturers don't want you to know that they put MSG in their foods to make them taste better," Cohen said.

One example of hidden MSG is "vegetable broth," which is often added to packaged meats and fish.

"Vegetable broth is not like someone's vegetable soup," Cohen explained. "That broth is a chemical broth."

Other aliases for MSG you might find on labels include hydrolyzed vegetable protein, hydrolyzed soy protein, vegetable protein, yeast extract, and fermented soy product. According to Cohen, you should never trust the phrase "No Added MSG"

when you see it on a label.

Cohen also advises to watch out for hidden sugars when buying sugar substitutes.

To make his point, he grabs a packet of a popular brand of saccharin in powder form. The first ingredient listed on the label is dextrose, which is a natural carbohydrate derived from corn. Other brands of artificial sweeteners in powder form use maltodextrin, which is also a carbohydrate derived from corn.

"It's all right if you have just one packet," Cohen said. "However, it can cause a problem when you have several a day."

Therefore, Cohen prefers that his patients use liquid, calorie-free sweeteners, although he notes that he has seen one brand of stevia leaf extract in powder form that uses inulin fiber instead of dextrose or maltodextrin. Stevia is a naturally sweet, zero-carbohydrate herb native to Paraguay.

Cohen realizes that there has been a debate going on for decades about the potential health risks associated with sugar substitutes.

"Remember, the debate about supposed harm from sugar substitutes is largely hypothetical, but the health risk from sugar is real and devastating," he writes. "Do not be afraid of sugar substitutes, be very afraid of sugar."

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE FIVE

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Dr. Cohen

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

And if sugar is something to fear, we have more reason to fear it today than ever before. According to Cohen, the average American consumed about four pounds of sugar (not counting maple syrup) every year at the time of the Revolutionary War. *U.S. News & World Report* reported in 2005 that the average American consumed 114 pounds of sugar in 1967 and 142 pounds of sugar in 2003. Given that, it should be no surprise that nearly two-thirds of Americans are either overweight or obese. Along with the higher incidence of obesity, we see more cases of hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and type II diabetes.

"With the New Hippocratic Diet, we can get most type 2 diabetics off medication, and their test results are better than when they were on medication," Cohen said. "I'll have another book, *Reversing Diabetes*, out soon that is an expanded version of the plan to help those with type 2 diabetes."

The *New Hippocratic Diet* also includes a chapter on meal plans and recipes to help Cohen's patients start their diets. He expects to publish a companion cookbook for his diet plan some time this fall. His patients came up with many of the recipes in the cookbook.

Cohen entered medical school as a "mature" student after starting out in the computer field.

"I became more interested in helping people," Cohen said. "I started my residency in internal medicine. But I realized I was seeing people 20 or 30 years after they should have

been helped. It's one thing to see someone with heart disease after 30 or 40 years of smoking. It's another to get them to stop smoking when they're younger so they won't develop heart disease. I found out that there was a recognized medical specialty for preventive medicine, so I changed specialties."

Cohen also holds a Master of Public Health degree from John Hopkins University, and served as chief resident of Preventive Medicine at John Hopkins University, where he supervised other physicians in the largest non-governmental Preventive Medicine program in the nation. He holds certification in Addiction Medicine by the American Society for Addiction Medicine, was an adjunct professor in the History of Medicine at the University of Kansas Medical Center, and served as the Robert Hudson Fellow in the History of Medicine.

In addition to his own weight-loss program, Cohen directs the weight-loss program at the Marian Clinic in Topeka. Founded by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth in 1988, the Marian Clinic provides health care to uninsured, low-income individuals and families. Cohen works with patients to help them lose weight before they develop hypertension, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

In an effort to educate the public about his weight-loss program, Cohen offers free seminars through his practice, Preventive Medicine Associates. He'll conduct his next seminar in Topeka on Saturday, July 10.

For more information about Cohen's weight-loss program, his books, or his seminars, please visit www.PreventiveMedicineAssociates.com or call (785) 783-7779 or 1-888-933-9833.

Neuvant House holds open house, ribbon cutting



KEVIN GROENHAGEN PHOTO

Neuvant House of Lawrence, along with the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, June 18, at 1216 Biltmore Drive in Lawrence. After the ribbon cutting the facility was open for tours. In addition, Neuvant House and some of the local businesses that had a hand in building Neuvant House hosted a tailgate party/fundraiser for Alzheimer's in the parking lot of the building. The open house continued on June 19 and 20 with live music by local musicians and Alzheimer's fundraisers each day. Above Lisa Nielsen, vice president of Neuvant House, prepares to cut the ribbon as Julie Joslin, the facility's administrator, staff members, and guests look on.

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