

National Heart Forum news briefing – 7 February 2003

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- New task force to shape the voluntary and community sector – N Ireland

Nutrition

- Study finds fish oils 'keep arteries clear'
 - 'Cut 100 calories a day to lose weight'
 - McDonalds considers nutritional labelling
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News

New task force to shape the voluntary and community sector – N Ireland

Des Browne MP, Minister with responsibility for Social Development has announced the membership of a new Task Force on Resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector. The Task Force will consider how the sector can continue to make a substantial contribution to the achievement of government objectives and to the well being of civic society.

<http://www.ni-executive.gov.uk/press/sd/030207a-sd.htm>

Nutrition

Study finds fish oils 'keep arteries clear'

Doctors have discovered how oily fish protects against heart disease and stroke. Thie et al. of Southampton University randomised 188 patients awaiting surgery to remove fatty deposits in their arteries to receive either omega-3 fish-oil, sunflower-oil or placebo capsules daily. They found that omega-3 oils stopped the build up of fatty deposits in the arteries. Fatty deposits if left unchecked, could block key routes to the heart or brain triggering an attack or stroke. Lancet Vol. 361, No. 9356 (08 February 2003).

BBC news online: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/2732647.stm>

Lancet: <http://www.thelancet.com/journal/current>

'Cut 100 calories a day to lose weight'

Eating just 100 fewer calories a day - about three bites of a burger or one biscuit - could prevent the average weight gain each year. Using data from national surveys, Hill et al. estimate that affecting energy balance by 100 kilocalories per day (by a combination of reductions in energy intake and increases in physical activity) could prevent weight gain in most of the population. Science 2003 299: 853-855.

BBC news online report: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/2731973.stm>

Abstract (registration required): www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/abstract/299/5608/853

McDonalds considers nutritional labelling

Times (06/02/03): McDonald's is to introduce nutritional messages on its packaging. This is to address health concerns raised by criticism of fast-food chains linking them with obesity. A Big Mac contains 493 calories and 22.9g fat.

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