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January 2015

Dear Friends,

I know, the holidays are over, but I could not resist above photo of Murphy and Buddy, two very lucky fellows who are residing with personal friends of ours, the Murrays.

Murphy the Golden has been hanging around the household for the past 8 years, and when his long-time companion, also a Golden, died last year, was a very sad puppy. So when the Murrays adopted another rescue, Buddy, in May, things looked up again for the whole family. I just LOVE happy endings, especially when animals are the cause of it!

Jim and I along with our old dog Nikki made another trip to the land of sunshine, mosquitoes, gnats, and other flying and biting creatures, to Florida. Of course Jim is very happy with the biting creatures; he has his eyes and mind set on doing some damage to the fish population. Once again our neighbors are very happy to see him, because Jim provides them with all the fish they can eat. I am lucky if I can feed him twice a year with that kind of "meat", but that does not stop him from trying to fill up my freezer.

Of course we are staying in touch with the Shelter. Reb and Ted are very capable of taking care of things and don't need us. And Mary's cat-household is always functioning perfect, without any help of the rest of us.

The Limestone Post office is forwarding your mail to me once a week, so I still can deposit your donations, and pay the bills. The names of our supporters have to wait until we get back, then I will post them all in the newsletter.

And since I really can't tell you much about our animals right now, I just let you in on some interesting health tips for us humans:

The Link between Nightshades, Chronic Pain and Inflammation

Few people are familiar with the term nightshade vegetables, and many will be surprised to learn that consuming foods from this plant group may be contributing to their pain and inflammation. Nightshades belong to the Solanaceae family which includes over 2,000 species. They also include some of the most popular foods consumed today; such as tomatoes, potatoes, all types of peppers, and eggplant. Although not truly nightshades, blueberries, huckleberries, goji berries and ashwaganda all share the same inflammation-inducing alkaloids.

The Solanaceae family contains cholinesterase inhibiting glycoalkaloids and steroid alkaloids including, among others, solanine in potato and eggplant, tomatine in tomato, nicotine in tobacco, and capsaicin in garden peppers. The glycoalkaloids in potatoes are known to contribute to Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and negatively affect intestinal permeability. (1,2)

According to Dr. Marvin Childers, "When these inhibitors accumulate in the body, alone or with other cholinesterase inhibitors such as caffeine or food impurities containing systemic cholinesterase inhibiting pesticides, the result may be a paralytic-like muscle spasm, aches, pains, tenderness, inflammation, and stiff body movements." (3) These symptoms may dissipate in a few hours or days if ingestion is stopped, based on the sensitivity of the individual, the amount of nightshades consumed on a regular basis and their level of inflammation. However for some heavy consumers of nightshades the process of inflammation and pain reduction can take up to 3 months.

After reading the symptoms associated with nightshade consumption, it is easy to understand why one of the major problems attributed to nightshade is arthritis. Arthritis is also the most common disability in the U.S. (4,5) Statistics from a 2007-2009 study show that doctor diagnosed arthritis affects 49.9 million people in the United States alone (6). Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis affecting more than 20 million people. More than 2 million people are affected by rheumatoid arthritis, the most disabling and painful form of arthritis.

Arthritis has no boundaries to gender, race or age, it affects young and old alike. (5, 7) In fact it may be surprising to some that an estimated 294,000 children (age 18 and under), have some form of arthritis. (7) In 2003 the medical cost of arthritis alone was approximately 128 billion annually.(4) Since 1994, disability-related costs for medical care and lost productivity have exceeded an estimated \$300 billion annually in the United States, this includes arthritis and other rheumatoid related illness. (8)

Add to these numbers the report released in 2011 by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, where an estimated 116 million adults live with chronic pain, which costs the United States \$635 billion annually in health care and lost productivity. (9) So the question is how much of these problems are nightshade related? That is the question some researchers are asking, as they believe that

arthritis is often misdiagnosed in people who may in fact be experiencing severe side effects of nightshade consumption.

Many who suffer with arthritis or an arthritis related disease such as lupus, rheumatism, and other musculoskeletal pain disorders, have found that consuming foods from the nightshade family is in fact adversely affecting their health. Norman F. Childers, PhD, founder of the Arthritis Nightshades Research Foundation stated: "Diet appears to be a factor in the etiology of arthritis based on surveys of over 1400 volunteers during a 20-year period. Plants in the drug family, Solanaceae (nightshades) are an important causative factor in arthritis in sensitive people." (3)

Three month challenge

If you want to know if nightshades negatively affect you, take the three month challenge. Avoid all nightshades for three months. (It's called a challenge for a reason). Be careful to note the nightshade list, and become a label reader as some homeopathics, prescriptions, over the counter medications as well as numerous processed foods contain nightshades. Prescriptions and over the counter medicines may require a discussion with your pharmacist or a phone call to the manufacturer of your over the counter medicines to determine ingredients.

After three months, begin to reintroduce one nightshade at a time. Take note of any aches, pains, stiffness, and loss of energy, headaches, respiratory problems or any other symptoms. You may find as many others have, that the quality of your daily health will dramatically improve after eliminating nightshades from your diet.

The nightshade list

- tomatoes (all varieties, including tomatillos)
- potatoes (all varieties, NOT sweet potatoes or yams)
- eggplant (aubergine)
- okra
- peppers (all varieties such as bell pepper, wax pepper, green & red peppers, chili peppers, cayenne, paprika, etc.)
- goji berries
- tomarillos (a plum-like fruit from Peru)
- sorrel
- garden huckleberry & blueberries (contain the alkaloids that induce inflammation)
- gooseberries
- ground cherries
- pepino Melon
- the homeopathic "Belladonna" [note: this is highly precautionary as homeopathics contain virtually no measurable "active" chemical]

- tobacco
- paprika
- cayenne pepper

Soy sauce made in the U.S. is generally made with genetically modified (GMO) soy beans, which are cut with the nightshade plant Petunia. The condiments black/white pepper and pepper corns are not nightshades

Other ingredients and products to avoid

- Homeopathic remedies containing Belladonna [note: this is highly precautionary as homeopathics contain virtually no measurable "active" chemical]
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications containing potato starch as a filler (especially prevalent in sleeping and muscle relaxing medications)
- Edible flowers: petunia, chalice vine, day jasmine, angel and devil's trumpets
- Atropine and Scopolamine, used in sleeping pills
- Topical medications for pain and inflammation containing *capsicum* (in cayenne pepper).
- Many baking powders contain potato starch
- Don't lick envelopes, many adhesives contain potato starch
- Vodka (potatoes used in production)

So, there you have it, **NO MORE FOOD!** Let's just live of love and air

Gabriele, Mary, Jim, Ted and Eric

