Bringing Research to LIFE

Upcoming Events

Café Scientifique

NATURE AND NURTURE (NOT VERSUS): THE NEW SCIENCE OF EPIGENETICS

Epigenetics steps in where mapping the human genome left off. Nature says we inherit our genetic make-up or DNA code from our parents. Many believe this code and the genes it represents set the ‘program’ for who we are and what health risks we might possess. Nurture (or epigenetics) says that this program can be ‘hacked’ by life experience, either increasing or decreasing health risks already in our DNA code.

Expert:

Dr. Kirk McManus
Dr. Mojgan Rastegar

Moderator:

Dr. Peter Cattini

January 28, 2013 – 7pm
McNally Robinson Booksellers
1120 Grant Ave., Event Atrium
RSVP to: Research_Communications@umanitoba.ca or 204-474-6689

Experience Research Undergraduate Research Award

Researcher/Student Meet and Greet

If you might be interested in connecting with a professor in the Health Sciences from the Bannatyne Campus or want to learn about what those professors are doing, join us for this ‘one stop shop’ opportunity to meet, interview and make your decisions for the award application.

January 9, 2013 – 1 to 7 pm
MPR, University Centre
Refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact:

Lindsey Troschuk
204-789-3493

BY KATIE CHALMERS-BROOKS
For The Bulletin

School of Medical Rehabilitation professor Dean Kriellaars recently received his own gift, one that recognized his efforts to instigate change. He was named the 2012 Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Campbell Outreach Award, which goes to a University of Manitoba staff member who unquestionably demonstrates meritorious service in outreach activities.

Kriellaars says, He lets his kids play video games, but only after they’ve had adequate exercise. Fitness guidelines recommend kids age five to 17 get 60 minutes of daily exercise at an intensity that makes them sweat and breathe heavier. Only 50 per cent of elementary school kids do so. By the time they’re in middle and high school, that percentage drops to less than 10.

Kriellaars’ research shows 29 per cent of Manitoba children are overweight or obese. But obesity is just one possible side-effect of being a couch potato. Physical inactivity negatively impacts the development of our brain, heart, bones and muscle. In fact there are over 40 different conditions linked to being sedentary.

Plan to succeed. Kriellaars knows it can be tricky to avoid indulging at parties when you don’t want to come across as a party pooper. He suggests explaining your good intentions to the host ahead of time – either prior to the party or before a big slice of pie is handed your way. And if you want to up your chances of sticking to your game plan, avoid alcohol. “Or your willpower to not consume is gone,” Kriellaars says.

Don’t wait until Jan. 2. Now is the time to act to improve your health or you’re setting yourself back. People can gain 10 pounds between Thanksgiving and the New Year. “I routinely see that,” Kriellaars says. The sooner you can “break up with bad behaviours” the better. These are behaviours that typically go back to our youth. One of Kriellaar’s studies of teenage girls age 16 and 17 found that during a night out partying with their friends, drinking alcohol and eating fast food, they consumed an average of 3,500 calories, which translates into one pound of fat. To burn that amount with exercise, you would need to run a full marathon. “The penalty for food is really, really high. People don’t realize that,” says Kriellaars, noting that 20 intense minutes on the treadmill burns only about 150 calories, what you’d find in a small granola bar.

Schedule in exercise time. This is important for adults and kids. Go for a walk as a family after dinner; it’s not high intensity but it keeps everyone away from the fridge and cuts back on snacking.

Few kids have the freedom to explore and play today as children did in past generations. Structured activity is the norm and requires greater effort to find out what kids are into. Kriellaars suggests parents have their children bring a friend and try a bunch of different classes – from kickboxing to climbing to yoga – and see what they like best. In doing so, they are giving themselves a gift. “An activity present,” Kriellaars says. “Something they can keep for the rest of their lives.”