The Okinawans What Makes Them Special

The island of Okinawa, in southern Japan, has more people over the age of 100 per 100,000 people than anywhere else in the world. Okinawa also has the lowest death rates from cancer, heart disease, and stroke—the top three killers in the United States. Okinawans have the highest life expectancy for both men and women over 65, and Okinawan women have the highest life expectancy of all. In addition, Okinawans over 100 years old are more active and have a higher quality of life than their counterparts in other parts of the world.

So what are the Okinawans doing right? This question has fascinated scientists and doctors for years, and been the topic of many studies. What those studies have shown might help us all live a longer and healthier life.

How They Do It

The Okinawans do their best to avoid smoking; they eat a low-calorie yet healthful diet, consisting of whole, natural foods from island sources, along with many fruits and vegetables. They get lots of fresh air and sunlight every day and also do not drink alcohol excessively. In fact, their lifestyle is not excessive in any way.

Limiting Calories

Of the many reasons why Okinawans have such healthy **golden years**, the most important of these seems to be the low number of calories they consume. One interesting practice from Okinawan culture is known as **hari hachi bu**, which basically means “eating until you are 80 percent full.” They never eat until they feel too full. This low-calorie diet seems to be one significant reason why Okinawans live such long and healthy lives. After all, how many obese 80- and 90-year-olds do you see walking around?

Living Proof

The Okinawan centenarians are proof that a healthy diet and lifestyle equals a longer life with better physical condition. Just following the basics of the Okinawan way of life may improve our chances of living longer, with better health and a positive outlook for the remaining years of our lives.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1. The reading passage is primarily about …

A. why too many calories are not good for people
B. why Okinawans have long, healthy lives
C. which diseases are the biggest killers
D. changes in the Okinawan diet

2. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a leading cause of death in the United States?

A. Stroke
B. Cancer
C. Heart disease
D. Alcohol

3. Okinawans have the highest life expectancy in the world for …

A. women over 65 only
B. men over 65 only
C. both men and women over 65
D. both men and women over 100

4. Under which heading does the author talk about the specific cultural practice that may aid in Okinawans living long, healthy lives?

A. What Makes Them Special
B. How They Do It
C. Limiting Calories
D. Living Proof

5. Which of the following is not mentioned as a key part of the Okinawan lifestyle?

A. Excessive sunlight
B. Fruits and vegetables
C. Fresh air
D. Limiting alcohol

6. What is hari hachi bu?

A. Eating only 80 calories per meal
B. Eating until one is only partially full
C. Eating 80 percent fruits and vegetables per meal
D. Eating only healthy foods

LIVEWORKSHEETS

7. In paragraph 4, what does "golden years" refer to?
A. The years that they eat only healthy food
B. They years that they eat only low-calorie foods
C. The years that they are active
D. The later years in their lives

8. The author says that Okinawans don't only live longer than others, they…
A. have better tasting food than others
B. have to limit what they do to stay healthy
C. are healthy and active, even when they are older
D. become obese when they are in their 80s or 90s

9. Under which heading does the author suggest that anyone can follow the Okinawans' lifestyle?
A. What Makes Them Special
B. How They Do It
C. Limiting Calories
D. Living Proof

10. A better title for this passage might be …
A. The Okinawans: Cultural Practices
B. The Okinawans: Secrets for a Longer Life
C. The Okinawans: What They Eat
D. The Okinawans: An Aging Population

LIVEWORKSHEETS