

# Health Notes

## Be careful not to wear teeth away

Are you wearing your teeth away? These days, most of us are concerned about our dental health and we try hard to prevent tooth decay and gum disease. However, tooth erosion or wearing of the enamel is becoming a more common problem today as people are keeping their teeth longer. Since dental erosion is irreversible and difficult to treat, prevention is the best policy.

Although a certain amount of tooth wear is to be expected with age, it's important to recognize when teeth are wearing abnormally and to understand why this is happening. Usually, dental erosion is related to a number of factors, but one of the most common causes is too much acidic substance in the diet, both in food and drinks. Consuming large quantities of soft drinks can be very harmful. Acidic foods, including some citrus fruits and vinegar-based substances, if eaten excessively can destroy the enamel.

Conditions where persistent vomiting can occur, such as pregnancy and bulimia (an eating disorder), also contribute to dental erosion. Acid reflux from chronic indigestion, hiatus hernia and alcoholism are other factors that contribute to loss of enamel. Certain medical conditions and drug treatments, especially if they cause your mouth to be dry, can lead to tooth wear as well.

Some types of work increase the risk of tooth erosion because they expose workers to higher levels of acidic or abrasive substances. A chef or wine taster may experience this as could industrial workers exposed to acidic or abrasive chemicals.

People who often grind their teeth or brush improperly can also experience tooth wear. Hard toothbrushes and abrasive toothpaste can also be harmful and they should be avoided.

Tooth erosion can effect the quality of your smile because the enamel wears prematurely. Your teeth may become sensitive as enamel is lost and in severe cases, the dentin becomes exposed. Dentin is the sensitive layer found under the enamel layer of your teeth. This can be painful, especially when eating or drinking cold items. As the teeth wear, they can become brittle and may be more likely to break; your ability to speak properly could also be affected.

Prevention is the best approach, but if you suspect that your teeth are wearing more than normal it's important to identify the problem and correct it. The cause can be controlled to prevent any more damage. Make sure you have a healthy, balanced diet and avoid sugary and acidic foods and drinks.

See your dentist or hygienist regularly for check-ups, as they are often the first to recognize signs of dental erosion.

For more information about preventing abnormal tooth wear, call the Halton Region Health Department at (905) 825-6060, ext 7697, toll free 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866), TTY (905) 827-9833 or visit our Web site at [www.region.halton.on.ca/health/](http://www.region.halton.on.ca/health/).

Health Notes is prepared by staff of the Halton Region Health Department.

## Seminar on understanding depression to be held Thursday at banquet hall

*Psychiatrist will give overview of depression from diagnosis to treatment; will be available for question-and-answer period*

The public is invited to attend a free seminar, 'Understanding Depression: Causes, Symptoms, Treatments' Thursday at 707 Galaxy Banquet Hall in Oakville.

The seminar, organized by Halton Healthcare Services, will begin at 7 p.m. Refreshments and displays will be available prior to the seminar at 6:30 p.m.

Dr. Karl O'Sullivan, psychiatrist, will provide a comprehensive overview of depression from diagnosis to treatment and will be available for a question and answer period.

Experiences of failure commonly result in temporary feelings of worthlessness and self-blame, while personal losses cause feelings of sadness, disappointment and emptiness. These feelings are normal, and they usually pass after a short time, however this isn't the case with depressive illness.

Depression becomes an illness, or clinical depression, when the feelings are severe, last for several weeks and begin to interfere with one's work and social life.

Depressive illness can change the way a person thinks and behaves and how the person's body functions. Depression is the most treatable mental illness.

To reserve a seat for the seminar or for more information, call (905) 338-4379 or e-mail to [elittle@haltonhealthcare.on.ca](mailto:elittle@haltonhealthcare.on.ca).

If you're unable to attend this event and would like more information on this topic, call your physician or the Canadian Mental Health Association at 1-888-468-8236.

Our Healthy Living section is a monthly feature in The Champion.

### Free Health Education Session "BREAST HEALTH WORKSHOP"

Tuesday, October 22, 2002

7:00 to 8:30pm

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- the Mammacare method of breast self-examination using silicone models

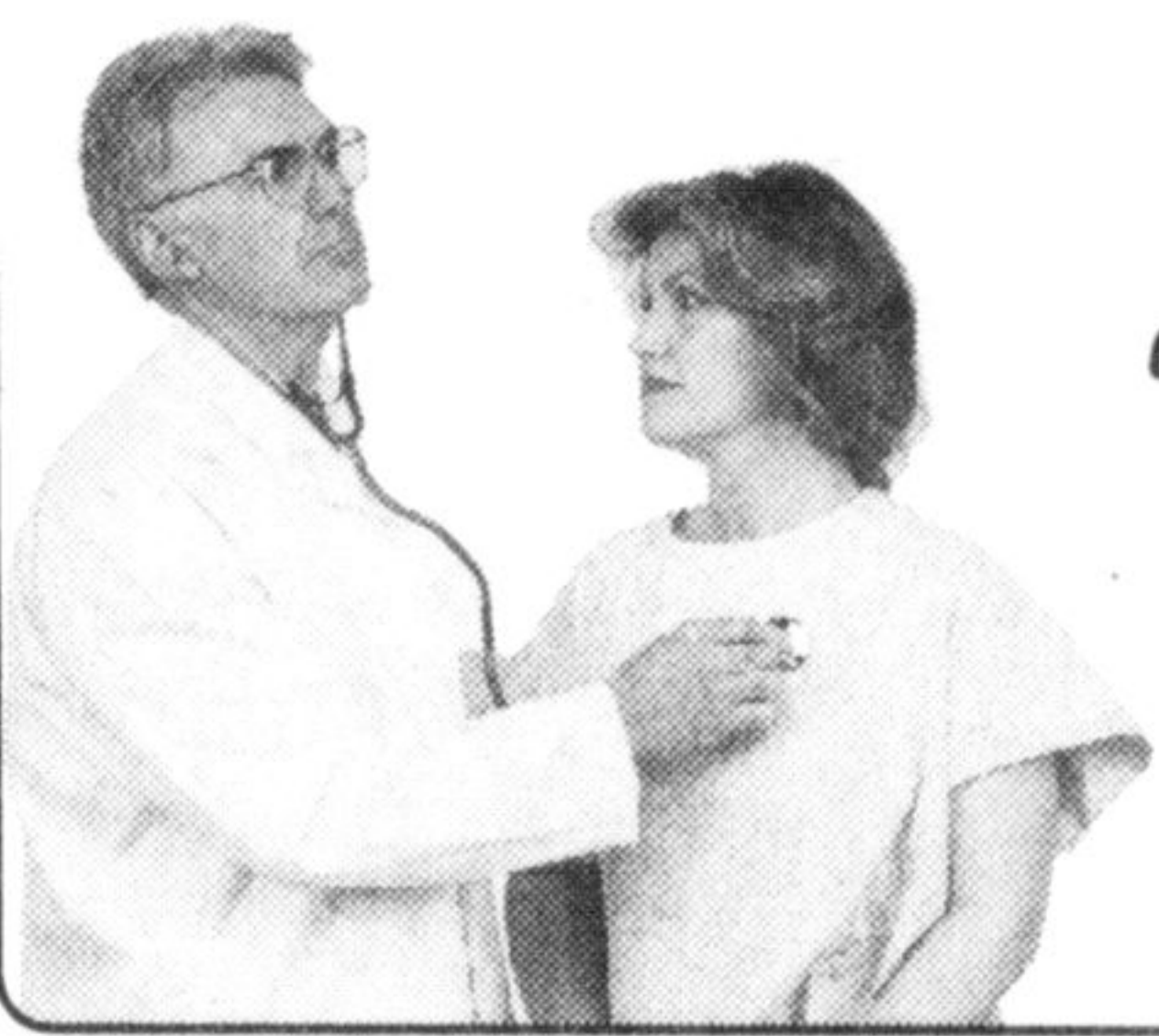
For more information or to reserve your seat call or email

905-338-4379

[cpopp@haltonhealthcare.on.ca](mailto:cpopp@haltonhealthcare.on.ca)

October is... BREAST HEALTH MONTH

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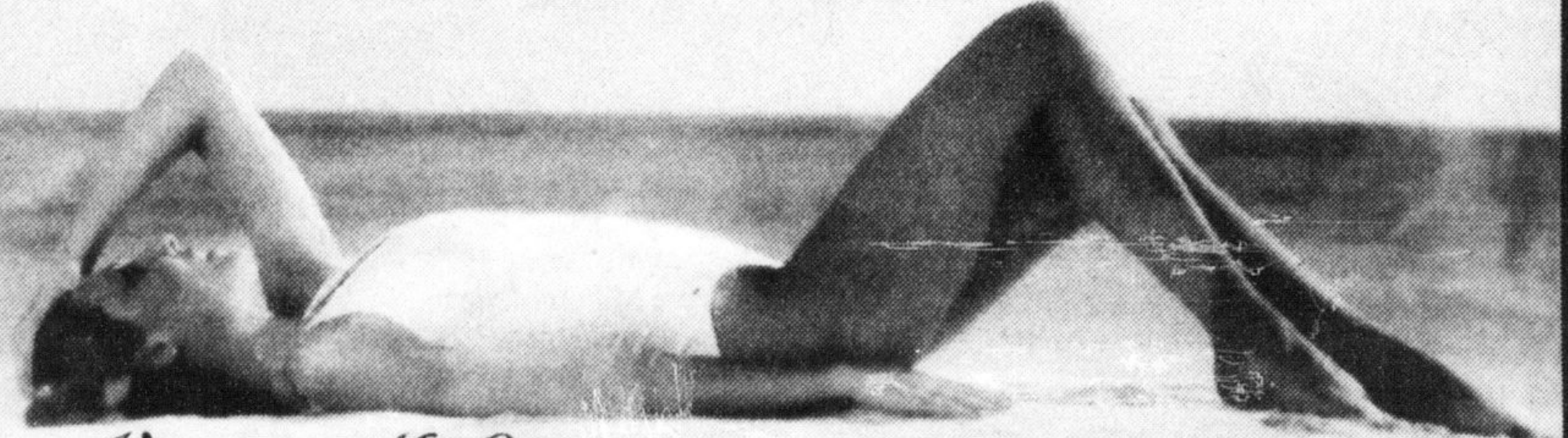
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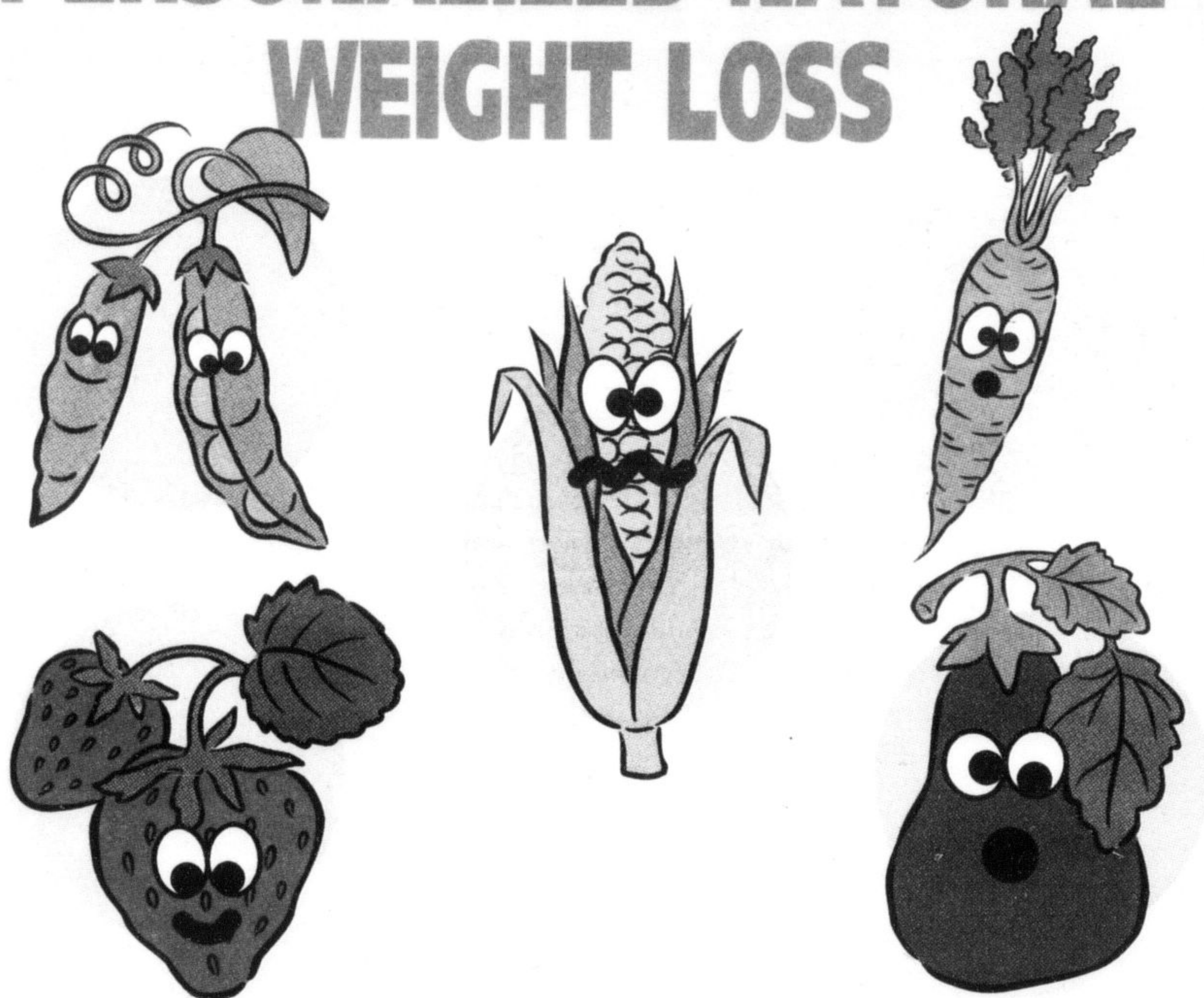


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