Chemistry 103

Report on Health News

Work either individually or with a partner on a combination oral presentation/written report concerning health claims made by various sources.

In a binder, I’ve collected a few excerpts of the campus health newsletter, sent out by North’s Wellness Center director Chris Mogadam. Look these over and select one of them as your topic that you will further research. Sign up for a date for your oral presentation on the calendar in the front of the binder, along with the topic you will be presenting. The written report is due at the time of your presentation.

What I would like you to do is to find out more about biomolecule mentioned in the article. Find its condensed structure, where humans obtain it from, and, to the best of your ability, determine whether there is a plausible mechanism for the health claim made about this molecule in the article.

What is due on the date you sign up for:

• Five to ten-minute report about the molecule, using at least one visual aid that contains the structural formula of the molecule. Your talk must discuss the type of molecule it is (e.g., is it a steroid? glycoprotein?), where do humans get it (what type of food? or what organ manufactures it?), and whether there might be a biochemical justification for the claim made in the article. This part is worth 20 points.

• Two to three-page written report (word-processed, double-spaced, proofread) summarizing your talk. At the end of the report, give a bibliography of sources that you used in obtaining your information. For web-based information, cite the sponsoring organization or author, URL and the date that site was last updated. This part is worth 20 points. You may write longer than two pages if you wish.

If you have a partner, both of you will receive the same score, so choose your partner carefully!

Where to begin research:

Some of the articles contain the journal reference from which the information was gathered. Otherwise, you can start by either going to www.drweil.com where a lot of these excerpts were from, but that may prove to be difficult for older articles. Certainly there are many other sites that discuss such information, such as www.webmd.com. Beware! There is a lot of misinformation out there because many sites are not edited or reviewed.

Another approach is to access our library’s resources — and not just the books! Through the library’s computers you can access both MEDLINE (which is free but may not get you to the actual article on-line) and Health Source (which is also free to you as a North student but will require a password and thus a chat with the reference librarian), which are two sources of on-line articles and other information.
You can also start by going to talk to Chris Mogadam in the Wellness Center, the source of the campus newsletter. Explain that you are a Chem 103 student and that you are researching a particular biochemical and do not have many references.