



AVIATION MEDICAL BULLETIN™

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BEST DIETS OF 2015

Here are the top diets for weight loss, diabetes, and heart health.

No. 10: Ornish

Coming in at number 10 on the Best Overall list is the diet named for Dr. Dean Ornish. He says it can reverse heart disease.

No. 9: The Biggest Loser

The Biggest Loser diet, made famous by the popular TV show, has a simple formula: Eat right and exercise.

No. 8: Jenny Craig

With its prepackaged meals, Jenny Craig tells you what to eat and when. You get 70 meal options, plus one-on-one counseling sessions. Expect to spend around \$100 a week.

No. 7: Volumetrics

On the this, you focus on eating things like nonstarchy fruits and veggies, nonfat milk, and broth-based soup.

No. 6: Flexitarian

Flexitarian is a mashup of two words: flexible and vegetarian. Flexitarians weigh 15% less than those who eat more meat, says the brain behind the plant-based plan.

No. 5: Weight Watchers

With Weight Watchers, everything you eat has a point value based on its nutrition and how hard it is for your body to burn off. U.S. News calls it the easiest diet to follow and the best for weight loss.

No. 4: Mediterranean

The Mediterranean diet comes from the island of Crete, where the Greeks are 20% less likely to die of coronary artery disease than Americans.

No. 3: Mayo Clinic

The Mayo Clinic diet urges you to ditch those harmful

habits, like eating in front of the TV, and form new healthy ones, like exercising.

No 2: TLC

The TLC diet stands for Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes. Say so long to fried foods, fatty meats, and whole-milk dairy. The key is to cut back on how much fat you eat, especially the saturated kind that raises your cholesterol.

No. 1: DASH

DASH wins top honors as the Best Overall Diet. That's Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, and its goal is to prevent or help lower high blood pressure. It can also trim your waistline and cut your chances of diabetes.

Source: U.S. News & World Report

MYTH: BETTER DROWSY THAN DRUNK

Most people are aware of the dangers of driving drunk, but they may not take sleepiness seriously. That's a mistake. Researchers have found that going 18 to 24 hours without sleep is similar to being legally drunk, when it comes to driver impairment. Like alcohol, sleepiness and fatigue lead to poor judgment and reaction time, not to mention the risk of dozing off.

Source: Mayo Clinic Health Letter

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TOP HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR HEART

You can dramatically lower or nearly wipe out your chances of a heart attack and heart disease by following healthy lifestyle habits. Two recent studies show it's true whether you're a man or a woman, and even if you already have risk factors like high cholesterol.

The healthy habits for guys and ladies aren't quite the same (although they're similar), and researchers didn't directly compare what works for men vs. women.

What Works for Women?

One of the new studies followed nearly 70,000 women for 20 years. The women reported on their habits, such as diet and exercise, and gave the researchers other health information every 2 years. At the start of the study, the women were an average age of 37 and none had diabetes or diseases of the heart or blood vessels.

Not only did the women who followed all six healthy habits nearly get rid of their heart attack risk -- cutting it by 92% -- they also lowered their odds of getting a risk factor, like high blood pressure, by 66%.

Here are the six habits that mattered:

- Don't smoke.
- Have a normal body mass index (BMI).
- Get moderate to vigorous exercise for at least 2.5 hours a week.
- Watch 7 or fewer hours of television weekly.
- Drink one or fewer alcoholic beverages daily.
- Eat a healthy diet of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fish, or omega-3 fatty acids -- as well as limit sugary drinks, processed and red meats, trans fats, and sodium.

Meeting all of these habits can be a lofty goal. Less than 5% of the women followed them all.

But it's not a case of all or nothing. Even women who reported only one or two healthy behaviors had a lower risk of heart disease than those who did zero.

Having a normal BMI had the most impact on lowering the risk.

Even for women who developed risk factors, such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol, following at least four of the habits was linked with a lower risk of getting heart disease, compared to women who followed none.

The study reinforces research showing that what works for older women also works for younger women -- those who

are premenopausal and who may not consider themselves old enough for a heart attack. These habits are important because the overall death rate from heart disease in the U.S. has increased among younger women ages 35 to 44.

What Works for Men?

In another recent study that looked at men and heart disease, researchers followed more than 20,000 men for 22 years. At the study start, the men were ages 45 to 79 with no histories of heart or blood vessel diseases, diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol. They gave the researchers info on their health habits during the study, too.

The researchers found that following these five habits cut men's heart attack risk by 86%:

- Don't smoke.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Drink alcohol moderately: about two or fewer drinks daily.
- Be physically active -- walk or cycle at least 40 minutes daily.
- Have a waist circumference of less than 37 inches.

The researchers found that only 1% of the men followed all five healthy habits. A healthy diet and moderate drinking had the most impact on reducing men's risk, they found.

A Heart Doctor's Opinion

The research gives valuable perspective about how bad health habits, even in young adults, can have ill effects.

You really can see your bad habits, at a certain point in time, negatively influence you in the future.

In the past, women were often told, even by their doctors, that they were protected from heart disease until they reached menopause. The recent study on women changes the mindset of doctors now not to give that bad advice anymore. Women and men need to pay attention to good habits early in life.

Both studies suggest a valuable payoff. Even if you practice just some of the healthy habits, you are likely to stay free of heart disease.

Source: Health News

IMPROVE WALKING 100%

According to walking coach Bonnie Stein, your arms are so important to proper walking that she teaches it first. She says proper arm swing can improve your walking performance by as much as 100%. The secret is simple. First, keep the elbows bent at an 85- to 90-degree angle.

Your thumb will brush your waistband during every stroke when they are in this correct position. If your thumbs are brushing your pockets or--even worse--your thighs, you need to bend your elbows more.

Second, keep your elbows in close to your body. If they are away from the body, that will encourage lateral (side-to-side) motion and reduce your walking speed.

Remember these two things and you will walk faster and become fitter.

Source: Prevention

THE SECRETS OF THIN PEOPLE

Thin people have thin parents.

Genes are only partially responsible. "Perhaps 30 percent of being thin is genetic — the rest is environment," says James O. Hill, Ph.D., director of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, in Denver. If you're raised playing sports and eating healthy, unprocessed foods, chances are you'll continue those habits into adulthood, significantly raising your odds of staying slim.

Holly Johnson, age 45, a co-owner of a Sarasota, Florida-based marketing and public-relations firm and the mother of an eight-year-old, describes her father as a "beanpole" and says her mother still weighs "within three pounds of what she did when she married my dad."

But while genetics were clearly in her favor, Johnson credits healthful home-cooked meals for creating a model of good eating that helps her maintain her weight. "We always had breakfast and dinner together," she says. "I was brought up with family meals, and now my family sits down every night and lights candles. Dining and healthy eating are important to me."

Source: WebMD Healthletter

7 MOST EFFECTIVE EXERCISES

Does Your Workout Really Work? Done right, these seven exercises give you results that you can see and feel. You can do them at a gym or at home. Good technique is a must. If you're not active now, it's a good idea to check in with your doctor first.

1. Walking

You can walk anywhere, anytime. Use a treadmill or hit the streets. All you need is a good pair of shoes.

How to: If you're just starting to walk for fitness, begin

with five to 10 minutes at a time. Add a few minutes to each walk until you get to at least 30 minutes per walk. Then, quicken your pace or add hills.

2. Interval Training

Interval training boosts your fitness levels and burns more calories to help you lose weight. The basic idea is to vary the intensity within your workout, instead of going at a steady pace.

How to: Whether you walk, run, dance, or do another cardio exercise, push up the pace for a minute or two. Then back off for 2 to 4 minutes. Exactly how long your interval should last depends on the length of your workout and how much recovery time you need. Repeat the intervals throughout your workout.

3. Squats

Squats work several muscle groups -- your quadriceps ("quads"), hamstrings, and gluteals ("glutes") -- at the same time.

How to: Keep your feet shoulder-width apart and your back straight. Bend your knees and lower your rear as if you were sitting down in a chair. Keep your knees right over your ankles. Add dumbbells once you can do at least 12 reps with good form.

Squats Done Right

Practice with a real chair to master this move. First, sit all the way down in the chair and stand back up. Next, barely touch the chair's seat before standing back up. Work up to doing the squats without a chair, keeping the same form.

4. Lunges

Like squats, lunges work all the major muscles of your lower body. They can also improve your balance.

How to: Take a big step forward, keeping your back straight. Bend your front knee to about 90 degrees. Keep weight on your back toes and drop the back knee toward the floor. Don't let the back knee touch the floor.

Lunges: Extra Challenge

Try stepping not just forward, but also back and out to each side, with each lunge. Add dumbbells to lunges once your form is down pat.

5. Push-Ups

Push-ups strengthen your chest, shoulders, triceps, and core muscles.

How to: Facing down, place your hands slightly wider than

shoulder-width apart. Place your toes on the floor. If that's too hard, start with your knees on the floor. Your body should make a straight line from shoulders to knees or feet. Keep your rear-end muscles and abs engaged. Bend your elbows to lower down until you almost touch the floor. Lift back up by pushing through your elbows, Keep your torso in a straight line throughout the move.

Push-Ups: Too Hard? Too Easy?

If you're new to push-ups you can start doing them by leaning into a kitchen counter. As you get stronger, go lower, using a desk or chair. Then you can move onto the floor, starting with your knees bent. For a challenge, put your feet on a stair, bench, or couch.

6. Crunches -- Method A

Start by lying on your back with your feet flat on the floor and your head resting in your palms. Press your lower back down. Contract your abdominal muscles (abs) and in one smooth move, raise your head, then your neck, shoulders, and upper back off the floor. Tuck in your chin slightly. Lower back down and repeat.

Crunches -- Method B

You can also do crunches with your feet off the floor and knees bent. This technique may keep you from arching your back. It also uses your hip flexors (muscles on your upper thighs below your hip bones).

Mastering Crunches

Keep your neck in line with your spine. Tuck in your chin so it doesn't stick out. Breathe normally. To keep chest and shoulders open, keep your elbows out of your line of vision.

7. Bent-Over Row

You work all the major muscles of your upper back, as well as your biceps.

How to: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, bend your knees, and bend forward at the hips. Engage your abs without hunching your back. Hold weights beneath your shoulders, keeping your hands shoulder-width apart. Bend your elbows and lift both hands toward the sides of your body. Pause, then slowly lower your hands to the starting position. You can perform with a bar or dumbbells.

Mastering Bent-Over Rows

First, do this move without weights so you learn the right motions. If you have trouble doing bent-over rows while standing up, support your weight by sitting on an incline bench, facing backward.

Source: Harvard Health Letter

5 FIBS YOUR DOCTOR IS FED UP HEARING

“Sure, doc, I eat all my veggies and exercise every day.” Many of us are guilty of these little white lies. The fibs you feed your doctor may seem harmless, but they can have a big impact on your health care.

Surveys show that at least 1 in 4 people don't tell the truth, exaggerate, or purposely leave out details during an exam. Maybe you feel ashamed or just want to avoid a lecture.

But guess what? Your doc is on to you.

Slight tells like avoiding eye contact and fidgeting send clues to your doctor. Plus, he's heard every tall tale in the book.

Doctors can't assume you're telling the whole truth. I have grandmothers who are not taking their meds and executives who drink.

Here are some common lies doctors know you're telling and why you need to fess up.

1. I only do _____ on the weekend.

“I only drink on the weekend. I only party on the weekend. I only smoke crack or eat lard on weekends,” says Donald Ford, MD, when asked about his list of pet peeve fibs. “We fool ourselves into thinking that an unhealthy behavior is OK when we're in control of it and it's done in a manner that is socially acceptable.”

Take alcohol, for example. Most patients won't admit to how much they really drink. Only 1 in 6 even mention it in the exam room. If you say you only had three beers this week, chances are your doc thinks you had a six-pack. Usually, “whatever a patient tells [us] is half of what they actually do drink,” says Brian Doyle, MD.

Fess up because ... Drugs and excess alcohol don't do a body good. It's important to talk about current and past habits. Why? “Maybe that brief fling with drugs in college really is the reason for elevated liver enzymes,” Leavey says. “Your doctor may not even begin to suspect [it's due to] lingering hepatitis.” So fess up about that beer binge you have every Monday night or the party drugs you take. Don't worry about getting into trouble.

2. I watch what I eat.

If you've ever said, ‘Sure, doc, I eat a balanced, healthy diet,’ you're not alone. “People often exaggerate the extent to which they practice good [eating] habits. It's OK to indulge every now and then, but be honest about your slip-ups.

Fess up because ... Enjoying a fatty burger or sweet frappé before an appointment could lead to abnormal blood test results and unnecessary treatment. Telling the doctor you eat correctly when you really don't could [result in] being prescribed a medication to control your cholesterol, for example. This could produce side effects and be less effective than simply continuing to have good eating habits.

3. It's just a vitamin.

Did you tell your doctor about that over-the-counter supplement you took to help you sleep or fight a cold? "Patients [often] neglect to tell us about the pills they take because it was over-the-counter or it was [a friend's]. So they don't tell us, and we might miss something," Ford says.

Fess up because ... Everything you put in your body -- air, water, food, medicine, vitamins, minerals -- affects your health. Some supplements may have side effects that can interfere with your prescription drugs or other conditions you have.

4. I take my medicine as directed.

Three out of four people have trouble taking medicine as directed. Some never even fill their prescription. Others don't tell their primary care doctors about drugs given to them by other doctors. Don't mix meds without asking first.

Fess up because ... Medicine doesn't work if you don't take it. It can be dangerous if you take more than you should. You might even become resistant to it, meaning that the drug stops working altogether. On the flip side, stopping cold turkey could cause more health problems. And if you don't take your full dose of antibiotics, your symptoms could come back.

5. I'll get to it later.

"I'll quit smoking after spring break." "I'll get my mammogram next month." "That colonoscopy you ordered is on my to-do list." These are all common fibs.

Fess up because ... It's not that every single thing should be urgent. It's just that there's no reason to delay on things that make us healthy. At the end of the day, your medical record is only as good as the information you give. Failing to give the complete and honest story may result in ineffective or even dangerous treatment.

Source: Harvard Heart Letter

ADD YEARS TO YOUR LIFE: EAT FRESH PRODUCE

Eating seven or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day can reduce your risk of premature death from any cause by as much as 42 percent.

Research found that fruit and vegetable consumption, measured over a seven-year period, was associated with significant reductions in death, especially from cancer (a 25 percent lower risk) and cardiovascular disease (a 31 percent lower risk). As portions increased, risk of death decreased.

The strongest protective effects came from fresh vegetables, which included salad. Fresh and dried fruit appeared to contribute to a longer life, but fruit in the canned and frozen category didn't. The researchers say that typically high levels of sugar in canned fruit may be the driving factor behind the poor showing in the canned and frozen category, because frozen fruit is generally considered nutritionally similar to fresh fruit.

While seven or more servings a day may sound daunting to some people, it's OK to start small and gradually increase consumption to reap more of produce's positive effects: One or two servings a day yielded a 14 percent decreased death risk, while three to five servings were associated with a 29 percent decrease.

Source: Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health.

UNDERSTANDING THE HIGHS AND LOWS

A total cholesterol number below 200 is desirable, but there's more to the complete picture.

When it comes to HDL or "good cholesterol," the higher the better. Men should aim for 40 or above, women 50 or above.

An LDL "bad cholesterol" under 130 is the target for most people. But that can drop to less than 100, depending upon your overall risk for heart disease. The optimum number for triglycerides is below 150.

Not smoking, losing weight, if needed, and exercising briskly for at least 30 minutes every day will help raise your HDL as well as lower LDL and triglyceride levels.

Other ways to lower LDL: Eat more foods high in soluble fiber such as oats, apples, and beans. Restrict animal (saturated) fats and trans fats.

Limit alcohol and foods high in sugar. When lifestyle

changes aren't enough, your doctor may prescribe medication.

Source: American Heart Association; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

TEEN DRIVING

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), you have good reason to be terrified of your teen driver. AAP's policy statement "The Teen Driver," has some sobering statistics:

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 16 to 20 year-olds, killing around 5,500 people each year.
- Teens don't just kill themselves. While teenagers account for only 6% of drivers, they are responsible for 14% of fatal crashes.
- The crash rate for 16 to 19 year-olds is twice that of 20 to 24-year-olds, three times that of 25 to 29-year-olds, and four times that of 30 to 69-year-olds.
- The first year of driving is the most dangerous: 16-year-olds get in 35 crashes per 1 million miles, compared with 20 crashes per 1 million miles for 17-year-olds. The rate for the general population, on the other hand, is 4 crashes per 1 million miles.

Risk Factors for Teen Car Crashes

Inexperience is the major reason for these grim realities. Crashes are even more likely when you mix inexperience with risk-taking behavior that is part of being a teenager, such as speeding. Here are other risk factors for car crashes:

Having other teenagers in the car – "The most dangerous way a teenager can get to and from school," the report says, "is by riding in a car with a teenaged driver." If just one other teenager gets in the car with a 16 or 17-year-old driver, the risk of a crash goes up 40% compared with driving alone. If two friends get in, the risk doubles; with three or more teens, the risk quadruples.

Alcohol and marijuana use – Teenagers are less likely to drink and drive than adults, but are more likely to crash if they do drink and drive. Marijuana use is more common than alcohol use in some areas of the country, and the alcohol/marijuana combination is particularly deadly.

Nighttime driving – 58% of fatal crashes occur between 9 PM and midnight. Fatigue, teenaged passengers, alcohol, and inexperience with night driving are factors.

Safety-belt use – Many teenagers think that it's uncool to wear a seatbelt or that they don't need to wear one for short distances, or they worry about a safety belt wrinkling their clothes.

Type of vehicle driven – Teenagers tend to drive smaller cars, which have less crash protection, and older models, which have fewer safety features.

Distractions – Driving with a cell phone multiplies the crash risk four-fold. Interestingly, using a hands-free cell phone doesn't really decrease that risk. It's the distraction that's the problem with inexperienced drivers, which explains why eating, drinking, and adjusting the radio or climate controls cause more crashes than cell phones.

Source: IntelliHealth

JOGGING SHOES

Looking for a pair of shoes to jog in? Then follow these tips:

Buy the real thing. Buy running shoes, not aerobic or basketball or cross-training shoes, but shoes made specifically for running.

Go to a specialty running store. Find a store that specializes in running shoes. You'll find the largest selection and the most knowledgeable people to help you find the right shoe.

Do these three things. (1) Go late in the day when your feet are at their largest. (2) Bring along the socks you'll be running in. (3) Have both feet measured. If foot size is different, buy shoes fitted to the larger foot.

Be fastidious about fit. Shoes should be snug but not tight. There should be room at the front of the shoes for your feet to spread during running. You should be able to fit your thumb between the end of your big toe and the end of the shoe. Your heel should fit snugly.

Take the shoes for a test run. Most running stores will allow you to jog around in the shoes you are considering. Do it. If the shoes are not comfortable, try another pair.

Source: Runner's World Magazine

CHEWING TOBACCO ZAPS POWER

Young ballplayers have been led to believe that chewing tobacco while on the field relaxes them and helps them to play better.

A new study suggests that chewing tobacco decreases

power. Twenty male college athletes were asked to do heavy leg extensions to record the maximum they could lift. Later they chewed tobacco and tried again. Leg strength was reduced by 9 percent. Researchers think that nicotine is responsible for the strength loss.

Source: Men's Health

EATING AND THEN WORKING OUT

"You can exercise and digest food at the same time if you exercise at a pace you can maintain for more than a half hour," says Nancy Clark, RD, director of nutrition services at SportsMedicine Brookline in Massachusetts. If you plan an intense workout, however, she recommends waiting several hours after a big meal.

Source: Self

HYDROCORTISONE CREAM

Hydrocortisone is a natural hormone produced by the body. It is used in topical ointments to relieve a variety of rashes and other skin irritations generally lumped under the term of contact dermatitis. Mild cases of poison ivy, insect bites and various allergies usually respond to cortisone cream.

Cortisone, however, does not help with acne, athlete's foot, ringworm, cold sores or bacterial infections. In fact it can make these conditions worse.

If cortisone hasn't cleared up the skin condition in three days, get medical advice. And, it should be used on children only upon medical advice.

According to the letter, long term use reduces its effectiveness.

Source: UC Berkeley Wellness Letter

HAVABANANA

Going on a long jog or bicycle ride? Take along a banana. Bananas are high in potassium, which assists with muscle contraction, calcium retention, nerve action, heart and kidney function and blood pressure regulation.

Source: The Fitness Bulletin

FREE THROWS

After working six months with a psychologist on his foul-shooting problems, Shaquille O'Neal said, "After all that time I still couldn't shoot fouls but my psychologist could hit 10 for 10."

Source: Coach and Athletic Director

GOOD FAT, BAD FAT, WORSE FAT

Not all body fat is the same.

Good fat. The body has to have some fat. Vitamins A, D, E and K are stored in body fat. Body fat also insulates the body from cold and cushions organs against jostling and trauma. And fat is essential for the metabolism of sex hormones.

Bad fat. But when there is too much fat, there is obesity and that is bad. Obesity increases the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, gallstones and cancers of the prostate, colon and female breast and reproductive organs.

Worse fat. While excess fat is not good, where the fat is stored on the body can make it worse. Fat that tends to be in the upper body (abdominal -- "beer belly" or "apple" shape) rather than the lower body (hips and thighs -- "pear" shape) has several unique properties that make it particularly unhealthy.

First, abdominal fat tends to release more free fatty acids which impair the function of insulin. Second, these free fatty acids cause the liver to overproduce triglycerides. Third, upper-body fat cells have an enzyme that activates cortisone which contributes to diabetes and hypertension.

If you are overweight, you can take the "mirror test" to see if you are an "apple" or a pear. A more accurate method is to calculate your waist-to-hip ratio.

Simply measure your waist at its narrowest circumference and your hips at their widest circumference. Then divide your hip size into your waist size.

Waist size (inches) divided by Hip size (inches) = ratio

The risk of heart attack and stroke increases progressively in men with ratios above 1.0. For women the danger begins at 0.8. And the increase in risk is substantial. Men with ratios above 1.0 have twice the death rate as those below 0.85.

The hip-to-waist ratio is a powerful predictor of a man's risk of heart disease and stroke.

Source: Harvard's Men's Health Watch

ASK THE EDITOR

Have a health related question? Email your concerns to mark@fitnessnewswervice.com and we will find the

answer.

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