



AVIATION MEDICAL BULLETIN™

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WALKING ON THE MILD SIDE

While more may be better, a little goes a long way. Epidemiologists at Harvard Medical School quizzed 45,000 women who had exercised for five years. They found that those who burned as little as 200 to 600 calories a week in exercise cut their heart disease risk by 30 percent. Those who burned 600 to 1,500 calories cut their heart disease risk nearly in half.

The results held even for those who smoked, were overweight or had high cholesterol. And, interestingly, tortoises had the same risk reduction as hares. Speed, it turned out, was not a factor. On average you can burn about 100 calories per mile walked.

Source: Health

GO AGAINST THIS GRAIN

If you're like most, you're not getting enough whole grains in your diet. Recent data indicates that more than 40 percent of U.S. adults consume zero whole grains daily. Unfortunately, all too many of us are eating the wrong kind of grain: refined grains.

Refined Grains

Refined grains are milled—a process that strips out both the bran and germ. This refining process also removes many nutrients, including fiber. Refined grains are found in white flour, white rice, and white bread and many of the foods Americans have come to love like flavored breads, cereals, crackers, desserts and pastries.

Remember, whole grains like brown rice, oats, quinoa, wheat berries and whole grain pasta should be a regular feature on your table, with processed grains eaten less often.

Source: Harvard Health Letter

SLIPPERY SAFETY

If you must cross a patch of ice or use ice-covered stairs, you can minimize the risk of a bone-breaking fall with the strategies illustrated below.

Face the railing. On icy stairs, grasp the railing with both hands and go up or down sideways, stepping on each stair with one foot and then the other.

Turn sideways. Another method is to turn 90 degrees away from the direction you're headed. Bend your knees slightly and take one tiny sideways step after another.

Shuffle ahead. On icy ground, bend your knees slightly and inch your way forward, taking one tiny step at a time.

Sit down. The safest but least dignified method, for long, treacherous ice sheets, is to just sit down and push yourself forward with your hands.

Source: Consumer Reports OnHealth

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LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE AT NIGHT

If you take blood pressure medication, consider taking it in the evening, rather than the morning. A recent review found that taking the drugs in the evening results in slightly lower 24-hour blood pressure readings. In addition, those who were told to take at least one hypertension drug at bedtime not only had better blood pressure control, but also had far fewer heart attacks, strokes and other cardiovascular events over a five-year period than those taking the drugs in the morning.

Source: the Journal of the American Society of Nephrology.

WHAT'S CONSIDERED A BIG BELLY

For optimal health, you want to keep your waist as small as possible and as close as possible to where it was in your early twenties (given you didn't have a large belly in your twenties). If your waist size has increased more than two inches since your early adulthood, it is very likely that you have some excess fat in your belly that is placing you at a higher risk of premature chronic disease.

Here are simple instructions for determining your waist size:

- ❖ Wrap a tape measure around your bare waist, just above your hipbones.
- ❖ Pull the tape measure until it is snug, but not pushing into your skin. Make sure it is level all the way around.
- ❖ Exhale, relax and then take the measurement.

For women

Less than 32 inches is optimal

More than 35 inches is considered high risk

For men

Less than 37 inches is optimal

More than 40 inches is considered high risk

The one good thing about belly fat is that it is typically the easiest fat to lose. Because it is so metabolically dynamic and lies in such close proximity to the liver and lots of large blood vessels, the body can more quickly mobilize and burn it.

Source: Health

BREAST CANCER/SMOKING LINK

Another reason for women to avoid smoking and secondhand smoke—they both increase the risk of breast cancer after menopause. Current smokers were 16 percent more likely than lifetime nonsmokers to develop breast

cancer, with those smoking for many decades at highest risk. An increased risk persisted for up to 20 years after women quit smoking. Women with the greatest exposure to secondhand smoke were also at increased risk. Previous studies on smoking—active or passive—and breast cancer have produced inconsistent results, but most recent research has suggested a link.

Source: American Cancer Society

HEART PALPITATIONS: A CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

Heart palpitations are sensations of rapid, fluttering or pounding heartbeats. They're often harmless. But sometimes they can be a sign of a serious underlying heart problem, such as an abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia). Common causes of heart palpitations include:

- Anxiety or stress
- Caffeine or nicotine use
- Fever
- Certain medications such as cold medicines and asthma drugs
- Overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism)
- Hormone changes associated with menstruation, pregnancy or menopause
- Exercise

If you're concerned about palpitations, consult your doctor. He or she may recommend heart monitoring tests to determine if you have an abnormal heart rhythm. These tests may include wearing a portable electrocardiogram device.

If you have palpitations accompanied by dizziness, shortness of breath, chest discomfort or fainting, seek prompt medical attention.

Source: Mayo Health Letter

STRENGTH TRAINING TO AVOID DIABETES

To reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes as you grow older, take up strength training. In a recent study researchers looked at more than 13,000 American adults and found that those with higher muscle mass (relative to body size) were more likely to have better insulin sensitivity and less likely to develop prediabetes or

diabetes than those with less muscle. It's well known that increased body fat, especially obesity, increases the risk of diabetes. But this research suggests that regardless of body weight, it's essential to maintain muscle strength.

Source: Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter

IT'S THE SEASON...

If you are coughing up green or yellow phlegm, don't assume you have a bacterial infection requiring antibiotics. A large study found that antibiotics did not speed recovery in adults coughing up discolored phlegm. Patients often ask for antibiotics—and doctors are often willing to prescribe them—for such symptoms, yet the drugs have side effects and add to the growing problem of antibiotic resistance. Mucus can turn greenish or yellow with any respiratory infection—viral or bacterial. If you continue to have discolored phlegm after 7 to 10 days, however, see your doctor.

Source: Health Radar

A POOR PROGNOSIS

What are the main causes of illness and premature death? Cancer? Smoking? Obesity? One often-overlooked cause is lack of money. More precisely, having less than a high school education—what researchers call low socioeconomic status (SES)—is a health hazard, especially when it comes to heart health.

Why do the poor have worse health? Dozens of reasons:

- higher smoking rates and exposure to pollutants
- higher rates of obesity
- lack of prenatal care
- the likelihood of holding dangerous jobs, to name a few.

The gap in life expectancy in the U.S. between an unskilled laborer and highly paid professional is about 4.5 years and has widened in recent decades.

Source: Mayo Clinic Health Letter

THE BEST NUTRITION TIPS EVER

✓ **Hide your weakness.** If you see it, you'll eat it. If you don't see it, you'll still eat it—but not so much. That's what a study at Google's New York office, dubbed "Project M&M" found. Office managers discovered that placing the chocolate candies in

opaque containers as opposed to glass ones, and giving healthier snacks like nuts and figs more prominent shelf space, curbed M&M intake by 3.1 million calories in just seven weeks. Out of sight, out of mind, out of mouth.

- ✓ **Use the 1 in 10 rule.** For every 10 grams of carbohydrate listed on the label, look for at least one gram of fiber. Why 10:1? That's the ratio of carbohydrate to fiber in a genuine, unprocessed whole grain. The recommendation comes from a study that evaluated hundreds of grain products; foods that met the 10:1 ratio had less sugar, sodium, and trans fats than those that didn't.
- ✓ **Boost flavor to cut calories.** Ever notice how everything inside a McDonald's--the burgers, the fries, the shakes--smells exactly the same? That sameness of scent is actually a tactic that can inspire you to consume more calories. A study found that the less distinctive the scent of a particular food, the more you'll eat of it. Adding herbs and sodium-free spice blends is an easy take advantage of sensory illusion that you're indulging in something rich—without adding any fat or calories to your plate.
- ✓ **Chill pasta to melt fat.** You can gain less weight from a serving of pasta simply by putting it in the fridge. The drop in temperature changes the nature of the noodles into something called "resistant starch," meaning your body has to work harder to digest it. Cold pasta is closer in structure to natural resistant starches like lentils, peas, beans, and oatmeal, which pass through the small intestine intact and are digested in the large intestine. But you've got to eat it cold: Once you heat the pasta up again, you destroy the resistant starch.
- ✓ **Dim the lights to get lighter.** A study of fast food restaurants found that customers who dined in a relaxed environment with dimmed lights and mellow music ate 175 fewer calories per meal than if they were in a more typical restaurant environment. That may not sound like a dramatic savings, but cutting 175 calories from dinner every night could save you more than 18 pounds in a year!
- ✓ **Eat before you eat.** Eating an appetizer of a broth-based soup or even an apple can reduce total calorie intake over the course of the meal by up to 20 percent, according to studies at Penn State. Consider that the average restaurant meal contains 1,128 calories. A 20

percent savings, just once a day, is enough to help you shed more than 23 pounds in a year.

✓ **Choose paper, not plastic.** Here's a simple way to improve the health of your shopping cart: A series of experiments looked at the effects of payment method on food choice. When shoppers used credit cards, they bought more unhealthful "vice" foods than they did "virtue" foods. Researchers suggest that you're less likely to impulsively buy junk food if it means parting with a hundred dollar bill than swiping plastic.

✓ **Water down the calories.** You've been told to drink 8 glasses of water a day, but why bother? Well, what if staying hydrated could strip pounds off your body? According to a study after drinking approximately 17 ounces of water participants' metabolic rates increased by 30 percent. The researchers estimate that increasing water intake by 1.5 liters a day (about 6 cups) would burn an extra 17,400 calories over the course of the year—a weight loss of approximately five pounds!

Source: Nutrition Action Healthletter

ONE DRINK TOO MANY

Even if you've had only one drink, think twice before driving. The blood alcohol limit for driving in the U.S. is 0.08 percent, but even blood levels as low as 0.01 percent increase the risk of a potentially deadly crash.

Drivers who had such low blood levels of alcohol and were only slightly tipsy tended to have more severe crashes than sober drivers. Not only can just one drink impair driving skills and reaction times, but slightly "buzzed" drivers are also more likely to speed and not wear seat belts.

Source: the Journal Addiction in September

BEWARE WOMEN

Smoking increases the risk of heart disease 25 percent more in women than in men. And the longer women smoke, the greater the discrepancy in coronary risk. Previous research has found that female smokers also have double the risk of developing lung cancer compared to men.

Source: Lancet

CLAIMS THAT DON'T HOLD WATER

You don't need to drink eight glasses of water a day to prevent dehydration and stay healthy. Every time this idea is reported researchers receive a fair amount of pushback. Don't schools and countless experts advise it? What about those people chugging from water bottles all day long? It's

still a myth, and no one really knows where it came from originally. Today this claim is often made by (no surprise) the bottled water industry.

The notion that we don't drink enough water—that is, at least eight glasses a day—"is not only nonsense, but is thoroughly debunked nonsense," according to a recent editorial in the British journal BMJ.

Here are some other water myths. Drinking lots of water does not improve kidney function or help kidneys eliminate toxins—let alone improve overall health. It won't bathe your organs in extra fluid and thus improve their function. Don't expect it to lower blood pressure, boost concentration in kids, improve skin tone or prevent headaches, despite the claims.

Yes, water is a great drink. If it comes from the tap, it's cheap and environmentally friendly. And yes, it may help you control your weight if it replaces caloric beverages. But that doesn't mean water promotes weight loss. How much to drink? If you're healthy and not exercising or working hard in the heat, thirst is your best guide. Most fruits and vegetables are about 90 percent water. Other beverages also provide fluid, as do soups and stews. Coffee and tea supply water, too; it's a fallacy that they cause a net water loss.

Older people do need to try to drink more water—older bodies cope less well with heat, and thirst may be a less reliable indicator. People with recurring kidney stones may also benefit from drinking more fluids.

Basic rule: If your urine is light yellow, you're drinking enough.

Source: Women's Health

SMALL ORGANS THAT DO A BIG JOB

Compared to most other organs, your kidneys are quite small—each is about the size of your fist. They are located in the back of the abdomen in the middle of your back, and they serve a very important purpose.

Do You Know What Your Kidneys Do?

Your kidneys essentially act as your body's waste management system. Their main job is to remove waste and excess fluid from your blood. Your kidneys work by cleaning your blood as it passes through tiny filtering units known as nephrons.

When blood passes through the kidney, the filters sift and hold on to the substances your body might need like

nutrients and water. Harmful wastes and extra water and nutrients are flushed away as urine. Your kidneys also produce several hormones that help to control your blood pressure, make red blood cells and activate vitamin D, which helps keep your bones strong.

How Do You Know If Your Kidneys Are Healthy?

If your kidneys' ability to filter blood is seriously damaged by disease, harmful toxins and excess fluid may build up in the body, which can have a serious impacts on your health. Although many forms of kidney disease do not produce symptoms until late in the course of the disease, some warning signs include high blood pressure, blood in the urine, more frequent urination (particularly at night) difficult or painful urination, puffiness around the eyes, and/or swelling of hands and feet.

Primary risk factors for kidney disease include diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure or a family history of kidney disease. Additionally, as we get older, we lose a little of our kidney function. If you are above 60 or have any of these risk factors, your healthcare provider can perform a simple blood and urine test to determine if you have chronic kidney disease.

Keep Your Kidneys Healthy!

You can help keep your kidneys in top condition by incorporating some healthy lifestyle habits:

- ✓ Exercise regularly—aim for 30 minutes a day
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ Follow a healthful diet that includes fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy foods
- ✓ Don't smoke or abuse alcohol
- ✓ Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol levels at the target set by your health care provider
- ✓ Keep sodium consumption low—aim for less than 1,500 milligrams of sodium each day
- ✓ Don't overuse over-the counter painkillers, like ibuprofen

Again, if you have diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease or a family history of kidney failure, you may be at risk for kidney disease. Schedule an appointment with your health care provider to get your blood and urine checked.

Source: Hope Health Letter

WHAT IS HEART DISEASE?

Bring up heart disease, and most people think of a heart attack. But there are many conditions that can undermine the heart's ability to do its job. These include coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathy, arrhythmia, and heart failure. Keep reading to find out what these disorders do to the body and how to recognize the warning signs.

What Is a Heart Attack? Every year, more than 1 million Americans have a heart attack -- a sudden interruption in the heart's blood supply. This happens when there is a blockage in the coronary arteries, the vessels that carry blood to the heart muscle. When blood flow is blocked, heart muscle can be damaged very quickly and die. Prompt emergency treatments have reduced the number of deaths from heart attacks in recent years.

Heart Attack Symptoms. A heart attack is an emergency even when symptoms are mild. Warning signs include:

- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Discomfort spreading to the back, jaw, throat, or arm
- Nausea, indigestion, or heartburn
- Weakness, anxiety, or shortness of breath
- Rapid or irregular heartbeats

Heart Attack Symptoms in Women. Women don't always feel chest pain with a heart attack. Women are more likely than men to have heartburn, loss of appetite, tiredness or weakness, coughing, and heart flutters. These symptoms should not be ignored. The longer you postpone treatment, the more damage the heart may sustain.

Sudden Cardiac Death. Sudden cardiac death (SCD) accounts for half of all heart disease deaths in the U.S., but it's not the same as a heart attack. SCD occurs when the heart's electrical system goes haywire, causing it to beat irregularly and dangerously fast. The heart's pumping chambers may quiver instead of pumping blood out to the body. Without CPR and restoration of a regular heart rhythm, death can occur in minutes.

Signs of Coronary Artery Disease. A precursor to a heart attack, coronary artery disease or CAD occurs when sticky plaque builds up inside the coronary arteries. This narrows the arteries, making it more difficult for blood to flow through. Many people don't know they have CAD

until a heart attack strikes. But there are warning signs, such as recurring chest pain caused by the restricted blood flow. This pain is known as angina.

Source: Intellihealth.com

CANOLA OIL SCARE

Ignore those scary rumors about canola oil that continue to circulate. The oil is not toxic, nor does it cause everything from heart disease to multiple sclerosis. It comes from a special type of rapeseed plant bred since the 1970s to remove any toxic components. The FDA and other agencies all agree that canola oil has no adverse effects. In fact, far from causing coronary artery disease, the oil is rich in heart-healthy unsaturated fat—notably alpha-linolenic acid (an omega-3 fat). It is a good, inexpensive choice as a cooking or salad oil.

Source: Nutrition Action Healthletter

LIFESTYLE CHANGES FOR ED

If you're a man with erectile dysfunction or other sexual problems, several lifestyle changes may help alleviate them. Such problems are often caused by physiological, medical or psychological factors. But a recent confirmed that lifestyle factors such as being physically inactive, smoking, drinking heavily (three or more drinks a day, on average) and using hard drugs, as well as being very underweight or obese, greatly increase the risk of erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation, painful orgasm or the inability to have an orgasm.

Source: the Journal of Sexual Medicine

HIGH COST HEART TESTS

If you're at low or average risk for heart disease and have no symptoms, you shouldn't undergo high-tech coronary screening tests such as CT angiography. A recent study shows why it's a bad idea. It found that when low-risk people were tested with CT angiography (which detects plaque buildup in coronary arteries), they were much more likely to be put on medication and undergo additional testing and invasive procedures during the next 18 months, compared to people who were not screened. But there was no benefit in terms of heart attacks or cardiac deaths, which were equally low in both groups. Some clinics promote such testing for the worried well, but we advise against it.

Source: the Archives of Internal Medicine

SMOKER'S BAD HABITS

There's no doubt that smoking is a bad habit. Now there's no doubt that smokers have other bad habits, too.

On the average, a man who smokes a pack of cigarettes a day will eat 20 percent more red meat than a nonsmoker. In addition, he'll average two-and-one half bottles of beer (or the equivalent) a day while non-smokers will average only half a bottle. And women who are heavy smokers eat only half as much fruit as nonsmokers.

The habits of those who quit smoking, on the other hand, are similar to those of nonsmokers

Source: American Health Foundation

HEART-STOPPING ACTION

Talk about a game going to sudden death. Swiss researchers recently found that men were up to 60 percent more likely to suffer a fatal heart attack during a televised sporting event than at other times. "It's the combination of stress, anger, and excitement," says Eugene Katz, M.D., the study author. His advice for at-risk guys: Pop an aspirin before the game, and get up and move around every half hour or so while it's under way; both strategies will help reduce the risk of clot formation.

Source: Men's Health

CHEATIN' HEART DISEASE

The most effective step you can take to prevent heart attack is to eat fruits and vegetables every day. So finds a major international study that searched for the strongest protective factors against an attack. The highest daily intake of fruits and veggies cut risk by a whopping 30% which was more than the reduction attributed to exercise in the 52 countries surveyed. Yet among Americans, only 27% of women and 19% of men eat the minimum of five daily fruit and vegetable servings, show data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Source: Prevention

TUNA VS. SALMON

Which canned fish has less mercury contamination?

Canned tuna is an easy, convenient protein source, but it's notorious for mercury contamination. Besides its well-known potential for damage to children's developing brains, accumulated mercury may impair adults' immune and reproductive systems and raise heart attack risk.

Try canned salmon or mackerel instead, say Purdue University researchers who tested 272 cans of fish. They found that mercury levels averaged 45 ppb (parts per billion) in canned salmon and 55 ppb in mackerel, compared with as much as 340 ppb in tuna in oil.

If you love tuna, opt for cans labeled chunk light tuna in water. Although they have less healthy omega-3 fats than salmon and mackerel, they averaged only 54 ppb of mercury.

Source: Prevention

MENOPAUSE AND HEART DISEASE

A healthy lifestyle can help offset a woman’s increased risk for heart disease after menopause.

Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh found that postmenopausal women who followed a low-fat/low-calorie diet and exercised regularly had less buildup of plaque on their artery walls than women who didn’t make these lifestyle changes.

Women in the diet and exercise group also avoided gaining weight and their LDL “bad” cholesterol did not rise.

Source: Looking Forward

IT’S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT!

Many New Year’s resolutions will be made about health behaviors, and almost as many will be broken. But take heart – recent research shows small changes make a big difference:

1. A UCLA study comparing diets of overweight and normal-weight adults found normal-weight people ate one more fruit serving per day.
2. A Harvard study found drinking one extra can of sweetened soda per day was linked with a weight gain of 15 pounds per year.
3. The National Institute on Aging found daily activities such as gardening, household chores, and climbing stairs helped older adults live longer.

These steps can increase your odds of success:

1. Pick one simple daily health behavior to change – one less soda, on fruit serving instead of a snack or dessert, climbing stairs instead of using the elevator.
2. Set a date to begin.
3. Make the change together with family and/or friends.
4. Reward yourself for small victories.

Changing health habits can be difficult. But we know

from smoking research that the more often you try to quit, the more likely you are to succeed. As the old adage goes: “If at first you don’t succeed....”

Source: William J. Mayer, MD, MPH

WHAT AM I GOING TO EAT?

To be successful at dieting, don’t think about what you’re not supposed to eat. “As soon as you put a prohibition on something, you are vulnerable to temptation,” says C. Peter Herman, PhD, author of a study that found that just thinking about dieting can trigger overeating.

Rather than thinking about what you’re not going to have, think about what you are going to have. Joy Bauder, author of *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Total Nutrition*, says, “Think about what you are going to have: confidence and inner strength from knowing that you’re in control.”

Source: Health

EXERCISE, EXERCISE, EXERCISE

In real estate, it’s “location, location, location.” In weight loss, it’s “exercise, exercise, exercise.”

Studies show that those who are successful at losing weight are those who incorporate exercise into their dieting regimen. And the really successful ones are those who exercise an hour a day.

You can get in shape exercising a half hour a day. But it’s been shown that to lose weight, it takes an hour.

Source: Hope Health Letter

WALKING OFF CALORIES

Want to know how many calories you are burning during your walk (or run)?

1. Divide your weight by 132
2. Multiply the result by 75
3. Multiply that result by the number of miles traveled

Source: Harvard Men’s Health Watch

A WORD TO THE WISE

Carefully read restaurant menus for clues to fat and calorie content. The words baked, braised, broiled, grilled, poached, roasted and steamed can mean less fat and calories.

Source: Prevention

WE HELP KEEP you flying!

Our AeroMedical Staff can get pilots back to work faster, while taking the risky guesswork out of aviation medical concerns.



Harvey Watt, the company's founder, invented Pilot Loss of Medical License Disability Insurance in 1951. As a Captain for Eastern Airlines, Harvey saw firsthand the devastation a minor medical deficiency and the subsequent disability it caused could wreak on the families of his fellow airmen. Traditional disability policies only cover a pilot's disability while the medical condition is such that the doctors will not release a pilot to work. However, pilots have to be certified by the FAA to return to work. The FAA certification process can take months, years, or simply not be possible for many conditions while non-airmen would be able to continue working with. A head injury, for example, will often require a 3 year "wait and see" grounding period. Because disability products wouldn't pay while Harvey's friends were dealing with certification issues and disabled, he invented the Loss of Medical License Disability Plans. Soon thereafter, his best friend, a Delta pilot, developed a heart condition that the FAA deemed a permanent disability. Thanks to his new policy, Harvey Watt was able to give his friend a tax free lump sum payment, which Harvey considered the most rewarding day of his career.

For more information on our line of pilot insurances available, please visit harveywatt.com to see products designed specifically for your airline/union.

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