



AVIATION MEDICAL BULLETIN™

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A NEW STANCE ON DIETARY CHOLESTEROL

In the past, you may have read or even heard from your doctor to limit your dietary cholesterol. That advice is now changing. In the U.S. government's 2015-2020 "New Dietary Guidelines for Americans" the limit on cholesterol has been removed. Previously, American adults were advised to limit cholesterol in their diet to 300 milligrams a day, which is about the equivalent of two eggs.

Why has the limit been removed? A good amount of scientific research suggests that there is not a strong connection between dietary cholesterol and blood cholesterol. In fact, the cholesterol in your diet is only responsible for a small fraction of your total blood cholesterol.

Your body naturally produces most of the cholesterol on its own. Other factors that contribute to blood cholesterol levels include smoking, obesity, physical activity, age, family history and even certain medications. So, all of these elements must be taken into account when it comes to maintaining healthy blood cholesterol.

Does this mean I can eat whatever I want? No, of course not! The new Dietary Guidelines stress moderation and advise that individuals still aim to limit or avoid saturated fats and trans fats (i.e.: fatty meats, fast food and high-fat dairy products, which all contain cholesterol). Research shows that your liver produces more cholesterol when you eat a diet high in saturated and trans fats. Animal proteins such as meat, dairy, fish and eggs all contain cholesterol and typically have no fiber. It is important to eat animal proteins in moderation to avoid a negative impact on your blood cholesterol. Exercise also helps keep blood cholesterol in a healthy range.

Experts recommend that adults get their blood cholesterol tested at least once every four to six years. Talk to your doctor about your cholesterol level and follow his/her recommendations.

A CLOSER LOOK AT CHOLESTEROL

When your blood cholesterol is tested, you will see a total cholesterol reading, as well as individual readouts on the following:

LDL Cholesterol

LDL cholesterol is considered the "bad" cholesterol because it contributes to plaque, which is a thick, hard deposit that can clog arteries and make them less flexible. Ideally, you want your LDL less than 100 mg/dL. An LDL above 190 is considered very high.

HDL Cholesterol

HDL is considered "good" cholesterol because it helps remove LDL cholesterol from the arteries. An HDL level of 60 mg/dL or higher is considered to be protective against heart disease. Anything lower than 40 puts you at an increased risk of heart disease.

Triglycerides

Triglycerides are another type of fat, and they're used to store excess energy from your diet. High levels of triglycerides in the blood are associated with atherosclerosis. A triglyceride reading below 150 is considered ideal.

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CHOLESTEROL BY THE NUMBERS

Americans are making great strides with their cholesterol. Check out these stats from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

5.4% Between 1999 and 2012, the percentage of American adults with high total cholesterol decreased from **18.3%** to **12.9%**.

2% The percentage of American adults with high LDL (the bad kind) has dropped about 2% since 2000.

69.4% of Americans age 20 and older report that they had their cholesterol checked within the last 5 years. Experts recommend that adults get their blood cholesterol tested at least once every four to six years.

PASTA POWER

It's estimated that the average person eats about 20 pounds of pasta each year. This high number is largely due to pasta being an easy, quick, delicious and affordable dinner for many of us. But we often hear pasta being referred to as a "sinful" food or a meal that will wreck our waistlines. So what's so bad about pasta?

Most pasta you see on your grocer's shelves are the refined, processed variety (although you may now start to see other, healthier options—more on that later). During the refining process, the nutrient-rich outer bran shell and inner germ layer are removed from the grain. This process strips the wheat of much of its fiber, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients, leaving you with an almost nutritionally defunct product. Further, refined carbohydrates like white pasta are less satisfying than their whole wheat counterparts. This is in part because your body absorbs processed grains relatively quickly, so an hour or two later you may feel hungry again. They also contain less fiber and protein both of which help to keep you satisfied.

Luckily, there are some pasta options and swaps that will leave you feeling satisfied while also packing a nutritional punch (unlike the added empty calories found in white pasta).

What to look for in the pasta aisle

When you toss pasta into your grocery cart, make sure you're grabbing a whole grain variety. 100 percent whole grain pasta means that all three components of the wheat kernel (the bran, germ and endosperm) are included. Since nothing is stripped during processing, whole grain pastas offer healthy doses of fiber, vitamins and minerals.

To determine if a pasta is 100 percent whole grain:

Look for the word "whole" on the ingredients list.

All grains and flours should be preceded by the word "whole."

Ensure the front of the package states "100 percent whole grain" or "100 percent whole wheat."

Make sure you specifically see "100 percent" on the label. And keep in mind that even something labeled as 100 percent whole grain doesn't mean that it contains only whole grains. The product could also contain sugar, malt syrup, and invert sugar—not exactly what you'd call wholesome ingredients.

Look for products that contain the yellow whole grain stamp.

The whole grain stamp is used on foods that contain at least half a serving (8 grams) of whole grains. The black and yellow stamp lists the number of grams of whole grain per serving, and if all of the grain is whole grain, the stamp also includes a "100% banner."



STAY HEALTHY THIS COLD & FLU SEASON

Go outside (yes, even if it's cold!) to get some daily fresh air. Experts note that one reason we get sick when it's colder is because we're sharing more inside (often contaminated) air. It's simply a myth that cold air will make you sick. Quite the contrary in fact—so bundle up and spend some time outside!

Track spikes with online tools. Flu season generally begins in November and peaks in February. Your local city or town may experience spikes or lulls in flu activity and you can get in the know by using online tools like the CDC's flu tracker: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivitysurv.htm>

Keep your nails short and clean them. Dirt and germs get trapped underneath your nails and are then released over the course of the day as you touch things (like your face) and move around. Keeping your nails short and taking extra care to keep them clean helps ensure you are not harboring harmful germs.

Hold your breath if you see or hear someone sneeze nearby. A recent study revealed that coughs and sneezes travel much farther distances than previously thought. You can help prevent these infectious substances from entering your body by simply holding your breath for 10

to 15 seconds when someone sneezes or coughs.

Buy a value-pack of pens. Pens you use at the bank or to sign a restaurant check have likely been touched by hundreds of people who may have left nasty germs behind. Having your own, clean pen handy at all times can reduce your chances of picking up a virus this season.

Eat fish a few times a week. Oily fish like salmon and sardines are great sources of vitamin D. People with low levels of this vitamin are more susceptible to colds.

If you drink alcohol, keep it to no more than one a day for women, and no more than two for men. Studies have shown that excessive alcohol suppresses the immune system by reducing the ability of white blood cells to effectively kill bacteria.

Don't mindlessly pop cold pills. Several over the counter (OTC) medications can help relieve cold and flu symptoms, but don't take them without reading the warning and dose information on the package. Some medications can interfere with prescription drugs, while others are only meant to be taken for a few days. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about an OTC med.

Stay home from work when you first feel ill. It's likely that you'll get your co-workers sick if you "brave it" into the office. Plus, not taking the time to rest and take care of yourself could slow your recovery.

Get some movement every day. Exercising is key to preventing illness because it keeps your immune system strong and healthy. Most experts recommend 30 minutes of moderate activity (like brisk walking) a day. Remember that you can break activity up throughout the day and any type of movement is better than none!

Wipe off your smart phone. You are constantly touching it and then placing it on your face when you use it to talk. Use a disinfectant wipe to clean it daily and while you're at it do the same with items like your refrigerator, keyboard, doorknobs, light switches and remote controls.

Hang out with a group of friends. Researchers gave college freshmen a flu vaccine and found that those with larger social networks produced more flu-fighting antibodies than those who hung out in smaller groups. Students who reported feeling lonely also produced fewer antibodies.

Use a humidifier in your home. The flu virus can survive and is more likely to spread in dry, low-humidity conditions (which are often the conditions during winter). A humidifier can help fight the spread of most viruses.

Get a flu shot every year. It's usually free or very inexpensive through your insurance or employer and it only takes a minute. It's one of the best things you can do to protect yourself and your family from the flu virus.

Stay nourished. A healthy, nourishing diet is more important than ever if you're sick or are just trying to keep from getting sick. A study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that mice on a low-cal diet that were exposed to the flu virus took longer to recover and were more likely to suffer ill effects than those who were well-nourished.

Wash your hands often! Yes, it seems obvious, but many adults fail to do this. It's far and away the best known method for preventing infection.

CONVINCING REASONS TO START RUNNING

Many people mistakenly believe that running is only for the ultra-fit. This actually couldn't be further from the truth. Indeed, you can pick up running at any given moment (more in the column on this page as to how to start), and there's a lot of good science behind why you should do so:

1 You'll likely live longer. Researchers followed adults (ages 50 and older) for 21 years. At the end of the study, 85 percent of the runners were still alive while only 66 percent of the non-runners were alive.

2 It could protect your joints and strengthen your knees and bones (yes, you read that right). You may have had family or friends warn you that running is terrible for your knees. For people with healthy knees, that is not necessarily true. Running may increase bone mass, and even helps stem age-related bone loss. Further, studies show that running could improve knee health. Running appears to stimulate cartilage in an effort to repair minor damage. Experts believe that the impact of body weight when the foot hits the ground increases production of certain proteins in the cartilage that make it stronger.

3 It will make you happy and more focused. A study proved that just 30 minutes of running during the week for three weeks boosted sleep quality, mood, and concentration during the day. Moreover, mounting research shows that when you run, your brain releases endocannabinoids, molecules that can make you feel happy. Runner's high is real!

4 It's free! OK, you do need to invest in a good pair of running shoes, but other than that, you can run anywhere, (as long as it is a safe place) at any time, at no cost.

5 It's a major calorie blaster. A one-hour run can burn upwards of 600 calories. Additionally, running can help blast belly fat. A study found that out of 100,000 runners those who ran 35 or more miles per week gained less weight in their bellies throughout their mid-life years than those who ran less than nine.

6 It's a great way to bond with friends. Yes, running is a solo activity, but you can run alongside friends. And, signing up for a fun run or 5k with a group of friends is a great way to keep each other accountable with your training, and you can share and celebrate the feeling of accomplishment together after crossing the finish line!

HOW TO START A RUNNING REGIMEN

No doubt about it, you can easily become a runner or pick up running again if it's been a while (note: if you have any pre-existing conditions or health concerns, contact your healthcare provider before starting a running routine).

Here are some simple steps that will get you moving:

Lace up. All you really need is a good pair of running shoes. Visit your local sporting goods store and have an employee measure your feet. Ask for their recommendations, and remember that if the shoes feel even the slightest bit uncomfortable at the store they will feel worse when you start running.

Warm up. You want to ensure your muscles are loose and ready to run. Take 3 to 10 minutes to warm up with a brisk walk.

Start slow and add speed and distance gradually. Start at a pace that is comfortable for you. This usually means being able to run and carry on a conversation. If you're out of breath and having trouble getting out even a few words, you're going too fast. Run until you feel tired or a little uncomfortable. This could mean a few minutes or a few miles. Gradually add distance and intensity as you build endurance (this could take weeks, don't try to double your running distance in just a few days).

Cool down. Take 3 to 10 minutes to cool down with an easy walk and some light stretching.

Rest. For most beginners, it's usually not a good idea to run every day (to avoid soreness and injury). You can certainly work out in between your rest days though. Try cross-training, light weight training, swimming or brisk walking on your "rest" days.

ATHLETES NEED BIGGER SHOES

Are your feet tired after a workout? You may be wearing shoes that are too small for you. The American Orthopedic Foot and Ankle Society suggests that you should buy athletic shoes in the afternoon when your

feet are the largest.

Also, in trying on shoes for fit, when you press your heel against the heel counter (back of the shoe), there should be an inch of space between your toes and the tip of your shoe.

A NEW APPROACH TO EATING

Three meals a day? No way. Many Americans likely are grazing throughout the day, with chow-downs spread over 15 hours or more, according to one study.

Researchers found that:

- ✓ Less than a quarter of daily calorie consumption occurred before noon.
- ✓ More than one-third occurred after 6 p.m.

A follow-up experiment showed that limiting eating to 10 hours a day resulted in weight loss.

Basically this new study helps confirm what we already suspect. Eating sporadically and at all hours is just not good for our health. Instead, the researchers recommend making an effort to plan ahead for regularly scheduled meals and to avoid eating after dinner.

BEEN SICK? TOSS THE TOOTHBRUSH

When is the last time you replaced your toothbrush? Change your toothbrush regularly, especially after being sick. Bacteria can build up on your toothbrush. The American Dental Association recommends that you replace your toothbrush every three to four months, or sooner if the bristles are frayed.

5 WORKOUT BLUNDERS YOU DON'T KNOW YOU MAKE

1. **Not warming up** — Muscles need to get used to physical activity. Begin slowly and gradually increase intensity.
2. **Not drinking enough water** — If you wait until you're thirsty to drink water, you're already on your way to dehydration.
3. **Lifting too much weight** — Never lift more than your muscles can bear. Gradually increasing resistance is better and safer to improve muscle strength.
4. **Jerking while lifting weights** — Jerking can lead to strain and injury, with your back muscles being particularly vulnerable.
5. **Not stretching enough** — Stretch right after activity, while your muscles are warm and flexible, to prevent injuries.

TYPE 2 DIABETES ARE YOU AT RISK?

There are several risk factors that affect your risk for type 2 diabetes. Some of the risks are lifestyle behaviors you can change, and some like your age, you can't. Once you know your risks you can take steps to lower them, so you can lead a longer, healthier life.

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes:

- Overweight
- High blood glucose (sugar)
- History of diabetes during pregnancy, called gestational diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Unhealthy cholesterol
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking
- Unhealthy diet
- Excessive alcohol use

6000 CALORIES

Recent data shows that the average American drinks 1.5 cans of soda each day, which equates to about 6,000 calories a month.

THE SECRETS OF HEALTHY AGING

No doubt about it—the choices you make will affect how you'll age later. Although you certainly can't turn back the clock, you can slow it down. In fact, according to the longest and most comprehensive aging evaluation ever conducted—the Harvard Study of Adult Development—it's clear that there are specific behaviors that help ensure longevity:

Don't smoke or quit now if you do. Mountains of research clearly show that smoking is linked to chronic illness and death. In the shorter term, smoking speeds up the aging process, damaging your cells, making your skin more prone to wrinkles and yellowing your teeth (just to name a few).

Maintain a healthy weight. Maintaining a healthy weight not only helps lower your risk for serious health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers, but it also helps you feel good about yourself, and gives you more energy to enjoy life—which are essential to happy and healthy aging.

Try to exercise 30 minutes every day. According to a study in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, if you stay aerobically fit, you can delay biological aging by 10 or more years. Several other studies link exercise to healthy aging. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity a day, such as a brisk walk, light jog or bike ride.

Maintain meaningful social relationships. Research from the New England Centenarian Study suggests that socializing appears to enhance health, and may even increase longevity. On the flip side, loneliness and isolation may increase the risk of high blood pressure, depression, and Alzheimer's disease. So, have your friends over for dinner—it's actually good for you!

Learn new things. Learning and doing new things can help improve the "wiring" in your brain, which helps you keep your mental acuity as you age. Research also indicates that a sense of curiosity and creativity help transform older people into seemingly younger ones. Read a book, take a class or do a crossword puzzle to keep mentally sharp.

DON'T FORGET TO HYDRATE

It's just as important to stay hydrated in winter as it is in summer, even though you might not feel as thirsty. Drink water before, during and after your winter workouts.

CONSIDER MORNING WORKOUTS

Shorter and colder days seem to make it more difficult to do the activities we enjoy (taking a walk outside after work when it's dark and cold is not too appealing). So, consider waking up a bit earlier if you can, and exercise when daylight hits.

SIGNS OF ADDICTION

- ✓ An inability to resist a certain behavior (i.e., smoking, drinking, taking illicit drugs, etc.) even when you have a desire to quit.
- ✓ A need to increase the intensity or frequency of the behavior.
- ✓ Giving up or limiting social, occupational or recreational activities because of the behavior.
- ✓ Feelings of distress, anxiety, restlessness or violence if unable to engage in the behavior.
- ✓ If any of these items apply to you, seek the help of a health care professional.

YOUR BODY ON ANXIETY

Anxiety activates your body's stress response. When you feel anxious, nearly all the cells, tissues and organs in your body go into overdrive, which can cause several different physical reactions including:

- Trembling
- Churning stomach, nausea and or diarrhea
- Headache, backache
- Heart palpitations
- Numbness or "pins and needles" in arms, hands or legs
- Sweating/flushing

- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Trouble falling or staying asleep

Chronic (long-term) anxiety can ultimately damage your body over time. If your anxiety is causing adverse physical reactions, seek the help of a health care professional.

HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT PROTEIN

Protein is essential to your health, providing your body with the fuel it needs to carry out vital functions. Protein can be found in a wide array of foods, but it's important to choose your protein wisely, as too much of certain proteins like red or fried meat can damage your health.

Here are five tips to help you harness the healthy power of protein:

- 1. Eat plant protein.** Plant proteins are naturally low in saturated fat and high in fiber. Beans (such as kidney, pinto, black, red), peas (split peas, chickpeas, hummus), and soy products (tofu, veggie burgers) are all great options. Nuts and seeds are another excellent option—just be sure you don't eat more than a handful a day, as most nuts and seeds are high in fat.
- 2. Choose lean or low-fat meat.** Opt for meats and poultry that are at least 90 percent lean. Also be sure to trim or drain fat from meat and remove poultry skin.
- 3. Limit fatty red meats to special occasions.** The Harvard School of Public Health notes that consuming more than 18 ounces of red meat per week may increase your risk for colon cancer.
- 4. Eat seafood every week.** Seafood like shellfish, salmon and trout are excellent sources of protein. If you like seafood, eat it twice a week in place of meat or poultry. Select from a variety of seafood, such as shrimp, salmon, trout and herring.
- 5. Check the Nutrition Facts label.** If you're eating processed food or canned beans or meat, check the nutrition label and keep a special eye on sodium. Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting sodium to less than 2,300 mg a day, or 1,500 mg if you're age 51 or older.

RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS OF BREAST CANCER

When breast cancer forms, signs and symptoms usually do not immediately occur (that's why regular mammogram screening is so important). As the cancer grows, however, symptoms such as the following may appear:

- ◇ A lump in the breast or armpit.
- ◇ Irritation or dimpling of breast skin.

- ◇ Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area or the breast.
- ◇ Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood.
- ◇ Any change in the size or the shape of the breast.
- ◇ Pain in any area of the breast.

See your doctor if you experience any of these symptoms.

ELECTROCARDIOGRAM (ECG/EKG)

All first class pilots are required to have a resting EKG AFTER THEIR 35TH AND ANNUALLY AFTER THEIR 40TH BIRTHDAY. If you have your exam the day before your 35th/40th birthday the EKG should not be due till your next FAA flight medical exam.

Pilots are always nervous about the FAA medical exam, and the EKG adds that much more anxiety. My recommendation is to have your personal doctor preform a resting EKG sometime before your 35th birthday to check to see if you have any EKG abnormality.

If you have had ANY heart symptoms, chest pain, palpitation or skipping heart beats, feeling light headed, etc, or ANY family history of heart problems, heart attack, pacemaker implant, heart surgery, etc, it is even more important you see your doctor and have a cardiac checkup and, at least, a resting EKG to check for any heart problems.

If anything is found a referral to a cardiologist and complete work up is recommended. If everything is normal, the information should be forwarded to the FAA to add to your file. That way, if there is ever a question about your heart status, a workup is already complete.

If you go to your AME and the EKG is abnormal, first ask the doctor to repeat the EKG and check to make sure the leads (wires) are hooked up to the right places. One common problem with abnormal EKGs is that the person performing the EKG hooked the wires up wrong, which makes the EKG look abnormal.

Some other problems that can be taken care of in the AMEs office: Bradycardia, slow heart rate and PVCs (premature ventricular contractions). If either of these are found on the EKG, the AME should have you run in place for a couple minutes, while the EKG wires are still attached to you, and repeat the EKG. For Bradycardia if the heart rate goes above 44 beats per minute or if there are one PVC or less on the EKG, the EKG passes FAA limits and can be submitted.

If your heart rate doesn't rise above 44 beats per minute, or it is above 110 beats per minute, you have more than one PVC, you have 2 or more PAC, (premature atrial

contractions), there is a new RBBB, (right bundle branch block), or a left axis deviation of more than -44 degrees will be required to have a cardiac workup.

If you have an experienced AME, they should be able to recommend a cardiologist that they work with that can do the evaluation and supply the AME the reports within 14 days. That is the time limit the AME can hold the FAA flight physical before it is has to be transmitted into the FAA computer system. If the information cannot be completed in the 14 day time, the AME will have to defer the exam to the FAA and the AME will no longer be able to issue your medical certificate. When your cardiac workup is complete, you will need to submit the information to the FAA for one of the FAA doctors to review and approve your medical, and the FAA will issue your medical and send it to you. This can significantly delay you getting your medical.

If this happens to you, please contact me as soon as possible so I am able to help in expediting the issuing of your FAA medical certificate.

You can email DrGordon@PilotDr.com,
Robert J. Gordon, D.O., Senior A.M.E. #21056

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO EXERCISE?

You may have heard or read that exercising too close to bedtime can interfere with your sleep. However, recent research reveals that this may not be the case. There was the thought that working out vigorously too close to bedtime may over- stimulate your body, making it difficult to fall asleep. Now some experts have found that it actually depends on the individual.

If you find that physical activity in the evening makes it difficult for you to wind down, try to do it earlier in the day or perhaps decrease the intensity. If you find that evening exercise tires you out and makes you feel sleepy and ready for bed, then you should certainly keep up with that routine.

WHAT'S IN A NUMBER?

A typical serving of plain, Greek yogurt has about 6 grams of sugar. It also packs 15 to 20 grams of protein and about 20% of your daily calcium needs.

Some flavored yogurts pack 25-29 grams of sugar per serving. That's more sugar than a Twinkie! Make sure you read the labels before consuming what you think may be a healthy food.

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