



The Connection Between Diet and Disease

As Americans grow fatter, the concern about the connection between diet and disease increase. Today, more than half of U.S.

adults are either overweight or obese. Alarmingly, more

than 20% of our children are overweight. This epidemic of "fatness" increases the risk of developing chronic disease such as diabetes, hypertension and some types of cancer.

Hypertension

Blood pressure is the pressure of the blood flowing through your vessel walls. If your pressure is high, your heart must work much harder to maintain adequate blood flow to your body. If high blood pressure continues untreated, it can damage your heart muscle. It can also put you at an increased risk for heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, brain damage and impaired vision.

Hypertension is more prevalent in African Americans than whites. It usually starts at an earlier age and is more severe. There is good news though! Many of the factors that put you at risk for hypertension are completely within your control.

Action Steps

- Losing excess weight is the most important step you can take to lower your blood pressure.
- Quit smoking. Nicotine causes a narrowing in small blood vessels make blood flow harder.
- Move, move, move. Establish a regular habit of physical activity.
- Eat a diet low in fat and cholesterol.
- Reduce the amount of sodium you consume.

For more information, please contact:

The American Society of Hypertension

Phone: (212) 696-9099

Website: www.lifeclinic.com

Of the 50 million Americans with high blood pressure, the leading contributor to heart disease, 35% don't even know they have it.

Cardiovascular Disease is the number one cause of death in America. The American Heart Association reports that at least 58,800,000 Americans (one in four) suffer from some form of heart disease.

Cardiovascular Disease

When plaque builds up in the vessels that carry blood to the heart, less blood gets to the heart causing coronary artery disease. This can lead to angina (pain in the chest) or a heart attack. There are several risk factors for developing this dangerous condition: high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, obesity, being male, a family history of the disease and high cholesterol. You, of course, cannot change some of your risk factors but you do have complete control over whether or not you smoke and what you choose to eat.

To reduce your risk of developing heart disease, experts recommend you lower your cholesterol.

Action Steps

- Add foods to your diet that are low in cholesterol and saturated fats but high in soluble fiber. **Increase** your intake of: whole-grain breads and pasta, brown rice, bagels; fruits and vegetables; 1% or fat-free milk; fish, skinless poultry, lean cuts of meat, soy products; egg whites, egg substitutes; olive oil or canola oil. **Decrease** your intake of: potato chips, French fries and other junk foods; vegetables cooked in butter, cheese or cream sauce; fried foods; whole milk; bacon, sausage and organ meats; egg yolks; cheesecake, pastries, doughnuts, ice cream; and butter and margarine.
- If you smoke, quit.
- If you are overweight, try to lose weight. A healthy diet and a consistent exercise program should whittle away the pounds.

For more information, please contact:

The American Heart Association

Phone: 1-800-AHA-USA-1 (800-242-8721)

Website: www.americanheart.org

Cancer

There are more than 100 different types of cancer and the disease will eventually strike one in every four people. Diet is considered a factor in 20 to 50 percent of all cases. Research indicates that a diet rich in plant foods, such as whole grains, vegetables, fruits and beans, may reduce risk for certain types of cancer, such as colorectal, oral and esophageal. Some research has indicated a connection with the consumption of animal products, such as red meat, with an increased risk of cancer in the colon and prostate.

Action Steps

- Eat a diet rich in high-fiber foods. Diets with 25 to 35 grams of fiber daily are associated with a lowered risk of colorectal cancer. Fruits, vegetables, beans, legumes and whole grains are great sources of fiber.
- Consume cruciferous vegetables—cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and brussel sprouts—often. These foods contain bioflavonoids which have been associated with a lower risk of colorectal cancer.
- Consume foods rich in antioxidants, such as carotenoids found in yellow, orange and green vegetables; vitamin C found in citrus fruits, tomatoes and strawberries; selenium found in grain products and vitamin E.
- Follow the seven Dietary Guidelines for Americans paying special attention to eating a varied diet rich in fruits, vegetables and grains, restricting fat to 30% of total calories, exercising regularly and drinking alcohol only in moderation.

For more information, please contact:

The American Cancer Society
Phone: 1-800-ACS-2345
Website: www.cancer.org

Sources:

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Diabetes

Diabetes prevents a person's body from producing or properly using insulin, the hormone needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) estimates that approximately 17 million Americans have diabetes. Unbelievably, one-third are unaware they have the disease. Diabetes is more common in African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. These groups need to be especially mindful of the possibility of diabetes.

The effects of untreated and uncontrolled diabetes can be devastating to a person's body. People with diabetes have an increased risk for heart attack, stroke and complications related to poor circulation. In addition, people with diabetes also suffer from skin disorders, foot problems, gum disease, retinopathy and kidney damage. It is clearly a disease that must be taken seriously. The good news is diabetes complications can be prevented and treated.

Action Steps

A healthy diet is very important for people with diabetes. The ADA recommends the following dietary guidelines:

- Limit fat to 30% or less of daily calories.
- Limit saturated fat to 10% or less daily calories.
- Limit protein to 10 to 20% of daily calories. For those with initial signs of diabetes-induced kidney disease, restrict protein to 10% of daily calories.
- Limit cholesterol to 300 milligrams or less daily.
- Consume about 20 to 35 grams of fiber daily.

For more information, please contact:

The American Diabetes Association
Phone: 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)
Email: AskADA@diabetes.org
Website: www.diabetes.org

Diabetes is the fifth deadliest disease in the United States. According to the American Diabetes Association, there are 17 million people or 6.2% of the population in the U.S. who have the disease. Nearly six million of those don't know they have it.