

Health and Diet Information

A public service called the Consumer Nutrition Hot Line (800-366-1655) provides nutritional information, regularly updated nutrition messages, and free written materials on a wide range of nutritional topics. You may also speak to a registered dietitian.

A large study examined the death rates of people at five levels of physical fitness. The fittest group had the lowest death rate, but the largest decrease in death rates between the various groups were located in the second group--the moderate exercisers (walking 30-60 minutes/day).

According to a recent long-term project (the Framingham Heart Study), results indicated that "yo-yo" dieting can increase illness and death rates from coronary heart disease. It appears that maintaining weight loss is vital to your well-being.

At one time, baking soda was used in the cooking water of vegetables to preserve their color. This practice stopped, however, when it was discovered that baking soda destroys the vitamin C content of vegetables.

Average Americans consume twice the protein recommended by the national dietary guidelines, which suggest you obtain about 15% to 20% of your daily calories in the form of protein. This is very easy to do.

Determine the level of cholesterol in your blood by having a laboratory analyze a sample of your blood. If you have a blood cholesterol level of 240 mg per deciliter, you have twice the risk of heart disease of someone with a reading of 200 or less.

Exercise tends to increase HDL ("good") cholesterol, the type of cholesterol that seems to protect you from heart disease.

Fat and alcohol are about twice as fattening (contain twice the calories) as proteins and carbohydrates: an ounce of fat provides 270 calories, an ounce of alcohol provides 210 calories, and an ounce of protein or carbohydrate provides 120 calories.

Fat provides 9 calories per gram. Alcohol provides 7 calories per gram. Protein and carbohydrates provide 4 calories per gram. Fiber, minerals, vitamins, and water provide zero calories. To lose weight, cut back on high-fat foods and alcohol.

For a given weight, red meats tend to contain more fat than fish and poultry. For this reason, poultry and fish are generally leaner sources of protein.

For many people, all it takes to correct an elevated blood cholesterol level is to reduce their weight.

For referrals to registered dietitians in your area, write to the National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics (NCND) at 216 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago IL 60606-6995 or call their Consumer Nutrition Hot Line at 1-800-366-1655.

HDL stands for High Density Lipoprotein; it removes cholesterol from the blood and prevents the buildup of cholesterol in the walls of the arteries. HDL is known as "good cholesterol." Evidence indicates that high levels of HDL protect your heart.

Heart disease risk factors include smoking, high blood cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, being male, and family history of heart disease by age 55. By eliminating the first three factors, you reduce your risk of heart disease eight-fold.

High blood triglyceride may be a risk factor for coronary heart disease. Triglyceride is sensitive to alcohol. Eliminating alcohol from your diet usually causes a rapid and dramatic reduction in triglyceride levels.

High triglyceride levels in your blood, coupled with a high LDL cholesterol level appears to carry a very high risk of coronary heart disease. Triglyceride levels can be reduced by weight reduction, by decreasing alcohol intake, and a low-fat diet.

If you are obese, the location of your fat may be a more important factor in the risk of heart disease than the amount of fat. People who carry fat in the abdomen appear to be at greater risk than those carrying fat in the thighs, buttocks, or hips.

If your diet is nutritionally sound, simply reducing the size of your portions will help you become (or remain) trim. Eliminating one soda a day (160 calories) means a deficit of 58,400 calories in a year. This equals a weight loss of 16.5 pounds.

In 1985, the USDA and the Dept. of Health and Human services published guidelines for reducing the odds of developing certain diseases. After expert review, they were revised in 1990. See the Information section of NutriBase to obtain a free copy.

Ironically, most Americans suffer not from "under-nourishment," but "over-nourishment." Most Americans who take vitamin and mineral supplements don't need them.

It is possible to reduce high blood pressure by losing weight (assuming you are overweight) and by decreasing the intake of sodium. The ideal way to lose weight is to combine regular exercise with a well-balanced low fat diet.

LDL stands for Low Density Lipoprotein; it is the major carrier of cholesterol in the blood. High levels of LDL are correlated with premature heart disease. For this reason, it is known as "bad cholesterol." LDL is found in blood and not in food.

Many nutritionists recommend increasing the consumption of fish. One study from the Netherlands found that a group of men consuming as little as 1 oz. of fish daily had less than half the deaths from heart disease as a group that did not eat fish.

Most Americans obtain about 40% of their daily caloric intake from fat. The American Heart Association recommends you restrict this to 30%. The Japanese obtain about 20% of their calories from fat and have a lower rate of heart disease.

Most authorities feel that increasing fiber intake improves general health by promoting gastrointestinal function. The recommended daily fiber intake for adults is 20 to 35 grams. Check with NutriBase--some high-fiber foods are also high-fat.

Most nutritionists recommend an increase in the consumption of fruits and vegetables, especially cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower. Fruits and vegetables make ideal replacements for high-fat snacks.

National dietary guidelines recommend that about 15% to 20% of your daily caloric intake be protein. For most of us, this means cutting back on fatty meats, cheese, and eggs. Animal protein is our main source of cholesterol and saturated fats.

National dietary guidelines recommend that you take in enough calories to maintain a desirable body weight. The "Goals" section of NutriBase helps you determine what this "ideal" weight is and

what your caloric and nutritional requirements are.

National dietary guidelines recommend you obtain approximately 50% to 55% of your daily caloric intake in the form of carbohydrates. Good sources of complex carbohydrates are include whole grains, legumes, pasta, potatoes, and starchy vegetables.

National dietary guidelines recommend you obtain no more than 30% of your total calories from fat and 10% of your calories from saturated fat. A 2,000 calorie per day diet would be limited to 67 grams of total fat, 22 grams of which is saturated.

National dietary guidelines recommend you take in less than 300 milligrams of cholesterol per day. One large chicken egg contains approximately 200 milligrams of this odorless, white, waxy substance.

Obese persons suffer greater incidences of arthritis, gout, kidney disorders, varicose veins, gallstones, rashes, breast cancer, colon cancer, uterine cancer, and prostate cancer. Obese people also have shorter life spans.

Obesity has been defined as being over 20% heavier than your "ideal" weight listed in the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables (used by NutriBase). Obesity increases the likelihood of heart attacks, strokes, high blood pressure and diabetes.

On average, Americans obtain about 40% of their calories as fat and 28% of their calories from carbohydrates. The national dietary guidelines recommend that about 30% of our calories come from fat and 50% to 55% from carbohydrates.

One pound of fat is 3500 calories. To gain (or lose) a pound of fat in a week, increase (or decrease) your caloric intake by 500 calories a day. One additional soda a day (160 calories) corresponds to a weight gain of 16.5 pounds in a year.

Only a few states have laws to define the word "Nutritionist." In most states, anyone can call themselves a nutritionist whether they are qualified or not. Most unqualified "nutritionists" belong to organizations with scientific-sounding names.

Our bodies require approximately one quart of water for each 1,000 calories consumed. For most people, this is about six to eight glasses per day. Some of this water can come from foods you eat. (Fruits and vegetables are 80% to 90% water.)

Plan your menus in advance. By knowing what you are going to eat ahead of time, you avoid impulsive high-fat, high-calorie food selections. You also save money, eat better, and lose weight more effectively.

Populations living on low-fat diets tend to have a lower incidence of colon and breast cancers than populations living on high-fat diets. National dietary guidelines recommend getting no more than 30% of your caloric intake from fat.

Reducing your caloric intake by 250 calories a day and "burning" 250 additional calories a day by exercising will reduce your net caloric intake by 3500 calories per week. This is equivalent to losing 1 pound of fat per week... 52 pounds per year.

Risk factors for heart disease include smoking, high blood cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, being male, and family history of heart disease by age 55. If you have the first 3 risk factors, you have an 8-fold risk of someone with no risk factors.

68 million Americans suffer from some sort of cardiovascular disease--a disease responsible for almost half the deaths in the U.S. High blood cholesterol increases the risk of heart disease; reducing blood cholesterol levels lowers your risk.

Smoking, high blood cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, being male, and family history of heart disease by age 55 are heart disease risk factors. Because the first three risk factors are controllable, you may eliminate them if you wish to.

The American Heart Association recommends that you restrict your daily consumption of dietary cholesterol to 300 milligrams. One egg yolk contains just over 200 mg. The foods that contain the most cholesterol are eggs and organ meats.

The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were developed about 50 years ago by a statistician who found that people who maintained their body weight at the average weight for 25 year-olds lived the longest.

The national dietary guidelines: Eat a variety of foods. Maintain healthy body weight. Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol. Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, and grain products. Use salt, sugar, and alcohol in moderation.

There is good evidence of a powerful connection between diet and coronary heart disease (CHD). Taking in too many calories, too much saturated fats, and/or too much cholesterol elevates your blood cholesterol, which is a major risk factor for CHD.

To obtain reliable nutritional information, ask your doctor for a referral. For a list of registered dietitians in your area, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Consulting Nutritionists, 9212 Delphi Road, S.W., Olympia, WA 98502.

Unfortunately, almost a third of Americans are sedentary. Exercise helps reduce high blood pressure and obesity. Exercise also increases the interior size of arteries, decreases blood triglyceride increases HDL cholesterol ("good cholesterol").

Vegetable oils vary greatly in the amount of saturated fat they contain. Canola oil contains 6% saturated fat; coconut oil contains 92% saturated fat. Canola oil also contains more monounsaturated fat (62%) than any other oil except olive oil (81%).

Virtually all "crash" diets fail. Chronic dieters seem to be looking for the magical, easy weight-loss method. Since no such diet exists, those who seek it are destined to fail. The best diets demand the smallest sacrifices for the longest time.

Your diet plays a pivotal role in controlling high blood cholesterol, hypertension, obesity, and diabetes--all risk factors for coronary heart disease.

An alternative to giving up favorite foods is to make intelligent substitutions to some of the offensive ingredients.

If a product label tells you that it contains coconut oil, palm oil, palm kernel oil, cocoa butter or hydrogenated vegetable oil, don't buy the product. These "tropical oils" are excessively high in saturated fats.

A product can be "cholesterol free" and still be very undesirable from a nutritional standpoint. Many cholesterol free product are high in fats. Saturated fats have even a bigger negative impact

on blood cholesterol than dietary cholesterol does.

Avoid excessive sugar in your diet. Food labels often call sugars by their real names. Most ingredients ending in "ose" are actually sugars. Other names for sugars are "honey," "corn syrup," "molasses," and "natural sweeteners."

After exercise, your body burns calories at a higher-than-normal rate for a few hours. For this reason, it is often better (if you are trying to lose weight) to exercise 30 minutes twice a day (morning and night), rather than 60 minutes once a day.

Try to eat throughout the day. Four small meals a day is better than one large one. Skipping meals lowers your metabolic rate. This is your body's way of trying to store food energy (in the form of fat) in response to what it sees as starvation.

Excessively low-calorie diets are ineffective in helping you lose weight. These diets encourage you to lose muscle mass and water. That is why virtually everyone gains the weight back. Unfortunately, you become fatter and less muscular than you were before the diet.

Gaining muscle mass elevates your metabolic rate. This means you are burning more calories every hour of the day. (Muscles *require* calories; fat *is* calories.) Losing muscle (by aging, not exercising, or through fasting) lowers your caloric needs.

It may seem paradoxical, but you can actually lose weight by eating much more food. Since fat contains 9 calories per gram and carbohydrates contain 4 calories per gram, you can eat a lot more food by simply cutting down on your fat intake.

Fats are "calorically dense." That is, they pack more than twice the number of calories into each gram when compared to protein or carbohydrates. Because they are so filling, it is difficult to overeat high-carbohydrate foods like potatoes, pasta, rice, fruits, vegetables, and breads.