



Prevention or cure?

Most of us know that diet plays a role in our general health, but over the years it has also been shown that specific foods can enhance our chances of avoiding certain diseases, and help us cope better with some conditions. This month's newsletter looks at the facts, to help you make realistic, informed choices.



IN THIS ISSUE

[Lower Your Risk](#)

[Heart to Heart](#)

[Bone Health](#)

JOIN OUR LIST

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

SWEET SURPRISE

Issue: #8

August/2008

Health & Wellness Newsletter

Dear Rachel,

Many human resource directors, controllers, and general managers find themselves biting their nails at health insurance renewal time? Well, you are not alone. With brokers delivering 40, 50, and even 60 percent renewals, we are all aware that in the United States health care expenditures have been growing above the overall rate of inflation--three to four times the rate of inflation, to be more specific.

Health care costs, however, are not the only area where companies are feeling the effects of the poor health of their workers. Presenteeism--when workers remain on the job despite being sick or injured and unable to perform at full capacity--also carries a high cost. Employers who are able to reduce their total health-related costs, including both insurance premiums and costs associated with lost productivity and performance, will have a

Enjoying a small amount of flavonoid-filled dark chocolate may prevent clogged arteries and reduce your risk of developing heart disease. Also, eating up to 3.6 ounces daily can be as effective as beta-blockers and ACE inhibitors at lowering blood pressure, notes a recent Archives of Internal Medicine study.

Shopping shortcut: "Look for dark chocolate that has at least 60 percent cocoa, such as Dove Dark," McManus says.

Make it even healthier: Choose a calcium supplement that's also dark chocolate, like Adora Calcium Dark Chocolate.

Bonus Benefits: Studies have shown that eating chocolate releases serotonin, the feel-better brain chemical.

THE RED WONDER

competitive advantage. That being said, creating a wellness program at your place of business can have a significant impact on decreasing the costs associated with presenteeism, absenteeism, and workers' compensation.

Taking proactive steps to counteract the costs incurred as a result of an unhealthy workforce is key. Wellness programs are aimed at fixing our nation's health problem rather than allowing it to continue to run rampant. Currently, over 95 percent of our nation's health expenditures, including most of the billions of dollars employers spend on health coverage, is committed to diagnosing and treating diseases only after they become problems. Even more troubling is that of the factors that contribute to premature mortality, 40 percent of them can be directly attributed to behavior.

In order to ensure that your organization will win the health care battle, we need to design and implement a proactive wellness program. A good start is encouraging your team to eat better and make better nutritional choices. Read on to learn more.

Lower Your Risk

Cancer

Although many factors are associated with an increased risk of cancer, it's estimated that 30 percent of all cancers may be the result of our diet. Here are some tips to help you to reduce your risk.



Achieve and maintain a healthy weight

Obesity is associated with a marked increase in colorectal cancer, and some hormone-dependent cancers, such as breast and endometrial cancers.

Eat more fruit and vegetables

At least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day can reduce the risk of many different types of cancer. The exact reason for this is unknown, but it may be related to their fibre content, vitamins and minerals, other plant chemicals such as flavonoids, or the combination of all these nutrients. Vitamin and mineral supplements may be a useful addition to the diet for some people, but they aren't a substitute for fresh fruit and vegetables.

Eat more fiber

On average, most people need to eat about 50 per cent more fiber than they currently do to meet the recommended intake of 18g per day. Fiber is important to increase stool weight, which enables waste to pass easily from the body. Cancer of the large bowel is the second most prevalent cancer,

Take two tart cherries and call me in the morning. While your doc may not say that yet, she might soon: A new animal study from University of Michigan shows that consuming a powdered version of tart cherries can lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels, as well as decrease the body's ability to store fat in the liver. It's not yet known if cherry-rich diets will have a similar effect on people, but University of Michigan researchers are hopeful.

Shopping shortcut: Tart and sour cherries are the same thing; they come dried, frozen, canned, or in juice form.

Make it even healthier: Sprinkle the dried variety on cereal or salad, or use cherry juice to oomph up your a.m. smoothie.

Bonus benefits: People who exercised and drank two 12-ounce glasses of tart cherry juice daily for eight days reported less muscle pain than those who sipped a placebo, finds a 2006 study.

affecting one in eight people. By increasing stool weight by 25 per cent, the incidence of this disease could be reduced by up to 15 per cent.

Eat less fat

A high-fat diet is linked to an increased risk of colorectal cancer. (See the advice on fat intake in the cardiovascular section).

Drink alcohol in moderation

Excessive intake of alcohol has been linked with an increased risk of cancer of the mouth, liver and throat. Women should limit their intake to no more than two to three units a day, men to no more than three to four units a day, and try to have two or three alcohol-free days each week.

Anti-cancer diets

There are a range of so called anti-cancer diets which claim to prevent or even cure cancer. Often these diets recommend excluding whole groups of foods and aren't supported by scientific evidence. Before considering following any diet which claims to prevent or cure disease, consult your PCP or a registered dietician.

Heart to Heart

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) kills one in three people. While there's no single cause and some contributing factors can't be altered, others are a consequence of our lifestyle, which we can change.

Risk factors

Irreversible factors that can lead to heart disease:

- getting older
- being male
- genetic/family history of CVD

Factors that are potentially reversible or could be modified:

- cigarette smoking
- increased levels of cholesterol, triglycerides, or low-density lipoprotein (LDL) in the blood
- being overweight
- waist circumference (above 81cm/32in for women, 89cm/35in Asian men and 94cm/37in European men)
- high blood pressure
- being inactive



THE 'IT' SPICE

Curry may very well be the spice of life:

Curcumin, the antioxidant that gives the condiment its color, has been shown to halt tumor growth and destroy cancer cells in lab tests. "Our research revealed that this ingredient may help prevent a variety of diseases, including multiple myeloma, lymphoma, and breast, ovarian, and pancreatic cancers," says Bharat Aggarwal, PhD, a professor of cancer medicine at the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. At this point, it's still unclear exactly how much curry you should eat to help avoid disease, Aggarwal says. Experts simply recommend using the spice liberally to reap the rewards. For recipes, check out the book *5 Spices, 50 Dishes*, by Ruta Kahate.

Shopping shortcut: For the most bang for your buck, opt for pure turmeric powder rather than curry powder. Turmeric is curry's main ingredient and contains a higher concentration of good-for-you curcumin,

- diabetes
- having a tendency for blood clotting

Dietary changes

Making small changes to your diet is one of the simplest and most effective ways to reduce your risk of CVD. You can do this by:

Reducing fat in your diet, especially saturated and trans-fats.

Eating more fruit and vegetables, wholegrain food and soluble fiber.

Drinking alcohol in moderation.

1. Fat

Reducing the proportion of fat in your diet, especially saturated fat, can help to reduce blood cholesterol levels. There's a strong link between high blood cholesterol levels and the risk of heart disease. For those who don't have CVD and those not considered to be at high-risk of CVD, normal blood cholesterol levels are below 5mmol/l (as measured by your PCP). You should aim to consume no more than 35 percent of your total calories from fat; less than ten percent of all calories should be from saturated fat.

Trans-fatty acids are a particular kind of fat produced when plant-based oils are hydrogenated to produce solid spreads, such as margarines. They're often found in confectionery and processed food like pastry, biscuits and cakes. They've been found to have the same effect on cholesterol levels as saturated fat and should be avoided as much as possible. Thankfully, many manufacturers have now modified processing techniques to keep these fats to a minimum. Check labels for hydrogenated fats.

When reducing total fat, it's important not to cut fat completely from your diet. It's the old message of everything in moderation. In fact, essential fatty acids such as omega-3s, which are found in oily fish, have been shown to further reduce the risk of CVD.

How to modify your fat intake:

- Use butter and other spreads sparingly
- Choose lean cuts of meat
- Grill, bake or steam food rather than frying them
- Swap saturated fats such as butter and cream for poly- or monounsaturated fats such as sunflower, rapeseed or olive oil
- Limit your intake of trans-fats from processed food
- Eat two to three portions of oily fish each week

Certain plant-derived compounds, called stanol or sterolesters and isoflavones, have been shown to reduce cholesterol levels. Spreads, yogurts, drinks and soya 'dairy alternatives' are now available containing these products. Clinical trials show that when used regularly, they can reduce high cholesterol levels.

2. Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are rich in many essential nutrients including vitamins

according to a report in the journal *Nutrition and Cancer*. Most grocery stores sell it.

Make it even healthier: Sprinkle curry or turmeric powder over cauliflower or any member of the cabbage family. The curcumin-veggie pairing significantly increases the spice's cancer-fighting ability, found Rutgers University scientists. The research was on prostate cancer, but experts are optimistic about curcumin's ability to combat colon and breast cancers as well.

Bonus benefits: The antioxidants found in curry may also help break up plaques in the brain that cause Alzheimer's disease, say UCLA scientists.

THE NEXT NUT

C and E and carotenoids (which are all antioxidants). They may help to protect the heart by limiting the damaging affects of cholesterol on body tissues. Aim for at least five servings of fruit and vegetables a day.

A serving of fruit is:

- one piece of medium-sized fresh fruit, for example, half a grapefruit, a slice of melon, or two satumas
- two or three small pieces of fruit, for example, plums, apricots
- one handful of grapes
- one medium banana
- seven strawberries
- three heaped tablespoons of fruit (stewed or tinned in juice)
- one small glass fruit juice (150ml)
- one heaped tablespoon of dried fruit, for example, raisins or three dried apricots

A serving of vegetables is:

- three heaped tablespoons of cooked vegetables, for example, carrots, peas or sweetcorn
- one side salad (the size of a cereal bowl)
- one tomato, or seven cherry tomatoes

3. Wholegrains

Studies of large groups of people in the US have shown that diets rich in wholegrain food can reduce the risk of CVD by up to 30 per cent. You can include wholegrain food in every meal by choosing wholegrain breakfast cereals, wholemeal bread and wholegrain varieties of pasta and rice.

4. Soluble fiber

Soluble dietary fiber, found in oats, beans and pulses, can help to lower cholesterol, although the effect is modest. These should be included as part of an overall healthy balanced diet, at least two to three times each week.

5. Alcohol

Consuming moderate amounts of alcohol - between one and two units a day - has been found to reduce the risk of CVD. This is because alcohol affects the amount of cholesterol in the bloodstream and makes it less likely that clots will form. However, high intakes of alcohol are associated with increased risk. It's also worth noting that saving up your weekly units for a weekend binge doesn't offer the same benefits.

6. Soya protein

A diet that includes at least 25g of soya per day has been associated with reductions in some forms of cancer and CVD. Soya protein is also an excellent substitute for meat and is available in a convenient and tasty form in many ready-made meals. Another good source of soya protein is soya milk and yogurt.

Pistachios are the new health nut. Why is that? New research from the University of Toronto shows that they may reduce the risk of diabetes by decreasing the effect of carbs on blood sugar levels. "Pistachios are high in protein, fiber, and healthy monounsaturated fat," explains study author Cyril Kendall, PhD, "all of which contribute to the slowing of carbohydrate absorption in the body." Shopping shortcut: Buy salt-free nuts that are still in the shell. "You're less likely to overeat when you have to work for your snack," says Kathy McManus, RD, a FITNESS advisory board member and director of the department of nutrition at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. Make it even healthier: To sidestep calorie overload, don't just add pistachios to your diet; swap them for an unhealthy high-fat snack, such as chips or cheese and crackers. Bonus benefits: Other recent research has shown that eating 2 to 3 ounces of pistachios a day can help significantly raise your level of good cholesterol (HDL).

Bone Health

Osteoporosis, or brittle bone disease, affects one in five men and one in two women. Not only is it painful, it can also lead to severe disability and even premature death. But there are preventative measures you can take.



Thin and brittle bones occur due to the loss of bone mineral, which maintains the strength of our bones. This loss occurs over many years. The risk of osteoporosis depends on the amount of calcium stored in the bones in earlier life and the rate of loss during middle and old age.

There are a number of ways to help our bodies build strong and healthy bones, especially during childhood and adolescence. A diet rich in calcium and an active lifestyle are especially important. After about the age of 30 it's difficult to increase bone mass, but regular weight-bearing exercise can help to maintain your bone strength and reduce the rate of loss of bone mineral.

Protecting your bones can begin at any age. Here are a number of ways you can ensure healthy bone growth:

- Include at least 800mg of calcium in your diet each day. This is roughly equivalent to a pint of milk, 100g almonds, 50g of steamed tofu or a large bar of chocolate.
- Add green leafy vegetables such as broccoli, kale or spring greens, which are also rich in calcium, to your meals.
- Take regular weight-bearing exercise such as walking or running, or high-impact activities such as aerobics.
- The elderly - or anyone who is confined indoors for any reason - might consider taking a vitamin D supplement. The best source of this vitamin is sunlight exposure, which may be limited in these circumstances.
- Avoid excessive intakes of salt, alcohol and caffeine - all of these are thought to speed up the loss of bone mineral density.

Pistachios are full of vitamin B6 and copper, too, which help increase energy.

THE TOMATOE

Red tomatoes are full of lycopene, a substance that helps lower your risk of cancer, heart disease, and macular degeneration. But orange tomatoes offer two and a half times more. Apparently, they contain a form that the body can more easily absorb.

Shopping shortcut: The tomatoes used in the study were lab-grown, but researchers say that eating orange- or gold-colored heirloom tomatoes will offer similar benefits.

Make it even healthier: Lycopene is fat-soluble, so you'll absorb more by pairing tomatoes with a healthy fat like olive oil.

Bonus benefits: One cup of orange tomatoes provides 338 percent of the RDA for vitamin A.

Sapoznik Insurance offers the value-added benefits of personalized service to each of our clients.

Sapoznik Services - Our staff works directly for you dealing with carriers to resolve issues regarding appointments, prescriptions and claims.

Employee Open Enrollment Assistance - We have created an indispensable system that relieves much of the common pressures found in many HR departments.

Our services include: reviewing existing plan designs, analyzing benefit structure, initiating the quoting process and overseeing your open enrollment procedures.

Live Customer Support - No more endless automated menus. Speak to one of our friendly customer service representatives and get your answers fast.

DISCLAIMER

All content within this Health & Wellness newsletter is provided for general information only and should not be treated as a substitute for the medical advice of your own doctor or any other health care professional. Sapoznik Insurance is not responsible or liable for any diagnosis made by a user based on the content of any external internet sites listed, nor does it endorse any commercial product or service mentioned or advised on any of the sites. Always consult your own PCP if you're in any way concerned about your health.

[Forward email](#)

 **SafeUnsubscribe**®

This email was sent to rachels@sapoznik.com by rachels@sapoznik.com.

[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe](#)™ | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Sapoznik Insurance | 1100 NE 163rd Avenue 2nd Floor | Miami | FL | 33162