

You Weigh What You Eat

Gaining a pound a year might not seem like such a big deal – at first. But over several years, gradual weight gain can lead to obesity. According to a new Harvard study, what you eat is definitely linked to what you weigh. But the kind of foods you put on your plate might be more important than how much you eat. The study looked at the lifestyles of 120,000 people to learn what made people gain weight – in this case, an average of 3.35 pounds every four years. (That’s almost 17 pounds gained in 20 years!) Three factors seemed to make the biggest difference:

- How much they slept
- How active they were
- What they ate

Sleeping fewer than six hours or more than eight hours a night led to weight gain. Getting regular physical activity

helped people lose 1.76 pounds every four years. On the other hand, participants who watched television for 3 hours a day gained a pound over the same time period. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Americans watch about 3 hours of TV each day. In general, people gained weight when they ate potatoes, sweetened drinks, meat, and alcohol. People lost weight when they ate whole foods. “The idea that there are no ‘good’ or ‘bad’ foods is a myth that needs to be debunked,” says Dr. Frank Hu, a Harvard physician who worked on the research.

Recipe Re-Mix

Eating is a big part of holiday celebrations and family reunions. But if your family members are overweight, or have high blood pressure or diabetes, you might want to choose foods with them in mind. To make your traditional recipes and snacks healthier, use this link: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/activities/recipe_remix.html

Foods that cause weight gain:

- Potato chips – even fat-free chips
- Potatoes – including French fries
- Sugar-sweetened drinks
- Unprocessed red meat
- Processed meats
- Alcohol

Foods that help you lose weight:

- Vegetables
- Whole grains
- Fruits
- Nuts
- Low-fat or nonfat yogurt



New England Journal of Medicine & Purdue University

Eating lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts in place of processed foods can help you manage your weight.

New England Journal of Medicine & Harvard School of Public Health

Want Your Student to Get Good Grades?

When people smoke around a child, they increase the child’s risk of asthma and lung infections. Being sick a lot makes it hard for children to do well in school. A new study found that kids raised in a home with smokers were more likely to have learning disabilities or behavioral problems than were kids raised in a smoke-free home. Harvard researchers looked at results from the 2007 National Survey of Children’s Health. This included more than 55,000 children under age 12. Six percent of them were exposed to secondhand smoke in their home on a regular basis.

In the survey, parents were asked if a doctor or teacher had told them that their child had ADHD (attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder) or some other behavior or learning disorder. The researchers found that 8% of children exposed to secondhand smoke had learning disabilities. Another 6% had ADHD. And another 4% had behavioral and conduct disorders.



Also, children who lived in homes with smokers were 50% more likely to have two or three of these conditions. That was compared to children who lived with non-smokers. The study suggests that about 275,000 U.S. students do poorly in school because of secondhand smoke in the home.

About 4% of all school-age children have ADHD, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. And almost 1 million children have a learning disability, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

For your children’s sake, make your home smoke-free. Insist that they go only to smoke-free events. If you smoke, quit. At the very least, do not smoke in your home or car. It’s one of the best things you can do for you and your kids.

Pediatrics & Center for Global Tobacco Control, Harvard School of Public Health

Learn how to protect your children from secondhand smoke: www.kidslivesmokefree.org/patients



How to Live in the City and Stay Calm

People who live in large cities are more stressed than people who live in rural areas. They are also 21% more likely to develop anxiety and depression. Scientists aren't sure why this is so. But the causes may be linked to dealing with more noise, traffic, pollution and people. A recent study looked at how the brain of a city dweller worked compared to how the brain of a rural dweller worked – especially in social situations. Researchers found real differences. In the study, people were placed in stressful settings. The part of the brain that processes anxiety and fear (the amygdala) became much more active in urbanites than in rural dwellers.

This suggests that people who live in the city are more alert. It also suggests that they are more reactive to potentially harmful situations than are those who live in other settings. If you live in a city (as most of us do), try some of these tips for soothing your city stress:

- Try to live and work in areas with green spaces.
- Place potted plants in your house, and on your patio and windowsills.
- Keep your home setting as insulated as possible from outside noise.
- Use light-blocking shades or curtains to keep your bedroom dark at night.
- Organize your house, and get rid of clutter.
- Meditate.

- Breathe deeply and relax your muscles.
- Focus on today instead of fretting over the past or worrying about the future.
- Do calming hobbies such as photography, gardening, or crafts.
- Play a musical instrument.
- Watch a funny movie.
- Cut back on caffeine. A Duke University Medical Center study found that coffee raises stress levels.
- Get 7–8 hours of sleep every day.
- Schedule fun time with your family and friends.
- Walk, run, or bicycle through a local park.
- Take a weekend getaway to the beach, mountains, or another peaceful place.

Learn how the brain works and how it changes with depression, anxiety, and other mental conditions: www.nlm.nih.gov/brainbasics/index.html

Nature 474, 429 & Duke University Medical Center.

Have Diabetes. Will Travel.

Heading out of town? Leaving your troubles behind? Off on an important business trip? Whenever you travel, your diabetes comes along with you. And while having diabetes shouldn't stop you from traveling in style, you will have to do some careful planning.

Here are some helpful diabetes travel tips from the National Diabetes Education Program. http://ndep.nih.gov/media/diabetes_travel_article.pdf



How to Build a Healthy Meal

For almost 100 years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided food advice. At first, the focus was on selecting healthy foods from specific food groups. In the 1960s, fitness was featured along with good nutrition. Then the food pyramid was introduced in 1992. It advised eating a variety of foods and knowing how much of them to eat.

In June 2011, the USDA introduced a new website and graphic to help people more easily see what a healthy meal looks like. ChooseMyPlate.gov is based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (2010). Based on these guidelines, people are encouraged to eat smaller portions, make at least half their plate fruits and vegetables, and be physically active.

See the different food guides used since 1916: www.choosemyplate.gov/downloads/MyPlate/ABriefHistoryOfUSDAFoodGuides.pdf

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

Q: Is diabetes curable?

A: Go to <http://www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-diabetes.pdf> to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: evan@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

Health Challenge: "Follow the Mediterranean Diet" available at: www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-mediterranean.pdf. People in the countries around the Mediterranean Sea typically live a long time.

Q. Is diabetes curable?

A. The short answer is “yes, often,” but not always. By making the following major lifestyle changes, you could normalize your blood sugar levels:

- Lose any amount of excess weight.
- Get regular physical exercise such as walking briskly for 30 or more minutes a day.
- Eat primarily a plant-based diet – including more high-fiber foods and whole grains.
- Reduce your intake of refined foods (such as white bread, white rice, chips, soft drinks, sugar, and sweets).
- Limit your intake of red and processed meats. Also, cut back on saturated fats and trans fats. In their place, eat healthy fats (such as polyunsaturated vegetable oils and nuts).
- Don't smoke.

By making these changes, many diabetics are able to keep their blood sugar levels in control without



Is Diabetes



Curable?



taking medication. These changes can also prevent damage to the arteries, nerves, eyes, kidneys, and other organs.

However, if a person who had high blood sugar were to stop making these positive changes, the high blood sugar would quickly return. So in that respect, no, making positive lifestyle changes would not have cured diabetes. These lifestyle changes would have only brought it into remission.

Diabetes will often return later in life because the underlying problem is still there. This is true even for those who have controlled it for years with careful living. But because they were able to control it for years, the damage normally done to their bodies is much less. And there are fewer complications.

The bottom line is yes, there's a lot you can do to minimize the negative effects of diabetes through lifestyle change. In one study, for example, diabetics who simply exercised daily had their risk of death cut in half over the 10-year study.





Follow the Mediterranean Diet

CHALLENGE
Follow the Mediterranean Diet.

Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Keep a written record of the days you eat like people living around the Mediterranean Sea do.
2. Read "Live the Mediterranean Way" and "Eat Mediterranean-Style."
3. To complete the Challenge, you must eat a Mediterranean diet on at least 22 days this month.
4. Keep a record of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

Live the Mediterranean Way

People in the countries around the Mediterranean Sea live longer and suffer less chronic disease, such as heart disease or cancer, than do people living in the United States. No, it's not the air. It's the lifestyle, which is a lot different from that of most Americans.

People living in the Mediterranean region are much more physically active than Americans. They also traditionally have a stronger sense of family and community. They gather for relaxed meals and afternoon rests whenever possible. Life is not meant to be rushed, and food is meant to be savored.

Studies by Harvard researchers and others have linked the Mediterranean diet with lower rates of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, depression, and early death. According to Harvard, "a Mediterranean eating pattern benefits an Iowa accountant as much as a Greek farmer" in preventing or treating heart disease, lowering blood sugar levels, and even for losing weight.



Results from the ongoing Nurses' Health Study suggest that there are four ways you can decrease a woman's risk of sudden cardiac death:

1. Maintain a healthy weight.
2. Don't smoke.
3. Exercise for at least 30 minutes each day.
4. Eat a Mediterranean diet.

Italian researchers looked at 12 cohort studies to see if there was a link between the traditional Mediterranean diet, disease, and early death. A cohort study is one in which a group of people are involved in a study that lasts several years. More than 1.5 million people were included in the researchers' analysis.

The facts showed that people who ate a Mediterranean diet lived longer and were much healthier than people who did not. They were less likely to have heart disease and cancer. Plus, a Mediterranean diet reduced the risk of Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease.



Eat Mediterranean-Style

The traditional Mediterranean diet includes the native foods of North Africa, Italy, France, Greece, Turkey, and other parts of the Middle East. These countries differ culturally. But there are dietary characteristics shared by all.

The bulk of the traditional Mediterranean diet consists of whole plant foods. When meat is eaten, fish and poultry are the primary choice. Cheese or yogurt is usually eaten each day. Olive oil is the main source of fat, and honey is the most common sweetener.

You might already be following the Mediterranean diet and not know it. Here are the basics:

- ✓ **Pile on the vegetables.** Eat four or more servings each day – served raw, baked, steamed, or sautéed. If you're pressed for time, buy pre-packaged salads and pre-cut vegetables.
- ✓ **Eat fruit every day.** Eat at least four servings each day – fresh, frozen, dried, or cooked. Add pear slices, mandarin wedges, dried cranberries, or apple chunks to garden salads. Mix berries into yogurt. Whirl frozen fruit into a smoothie. Slice bananas onto whole-grain breakfast cereals.

More —>

✓ **Choose whole grains.** Whole grains are full of vitamins, minerals, and protein. Eat at least four servings each day. Replace white breads (including tortillas) with whole-grain versions. Try brown or long-grain rice, quinoa, or amaranth in place of white rice.



✓ **Bring on the beans.** Legumes, including lentils and chickpeas (garbanzos), are a great substitute for meat and an excellent source of protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Add them to soups, salads, stews, and casseroles. Eat at least 1 serving daily.



Buy Fresh

Traditionally, food is locally grown and prepared with very little processing. Buy fresh, locally grown foods whenever possible. Avoid highly processed convenience foods and fast-foods.

✓ **Go a little nuts.** Snack on pistachios or pecans, sprinkle slivered almonds over vegetables, and top salads with walnuts. Although nuts contain a healthy fat, they are calorie-dense, so limit yourself to a handful a day.

✓ **Use healthy fats,** such as olive, canola, and soy oils, in place of butter, shortening, and stick margarines.

✓ **Eat less red meat.** Limit red meat – if you eat it at all – to a few meals a month. (Yes, a month!)

✓ **Choose lean cuts** and smaller portions. Most of the month, eat plant proteins or skinless chicken, turkey, and fish – baked, broiled, or grilled. For omega-3s, eat flaxseed meal, walnuts, and cold-water, wild-caught fish (for example, salmon and lake trout).

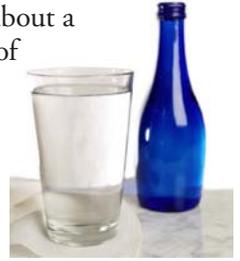
✓ **Spice up your meals.** To limit your salt intake, season your foods with garlic, onion, thyme, oregano, basil, cayenne, curry, ginger, and other herbs.

✓ **Eat naturally sweet foods.** Fruit makes a delicious dessert and is the treat of choice in the traditional Mediterranean diet. When you want added sweetener, try honey or stevia.



✓ **Drink plenty of water.**

Water? What about a small amount of red wine with meals? Wine is part of many Mediterranean meals. But



studies have linked alcohol with an increased risk of cancer, migraines, and other health problems. The antioxidants in red grape juice can help keep your circulation healthy without the risks of alcohol. And there are many studies that show the benefits of drinking water.

If you do drink alcohol, limit yourself to no more than one drink a day (for women) or two drinks a day (for men). Whether you choose wine or grape juice, drink it in addition to your 6-8 glasses of water each day.

✓ **Eat slowly.** Diet matters, but the leisurely pace of life also matters. Eating on the run and under stress can cause heartburn, poor absorption of nutrients, and obesity.

Search for traditional Mediterranean recipes here:
www.oldwayspt.org/recipesresources

American Heart Association, British Medical Journal, Center for the Advancement of Health, Harvard Women's Health Watch, & Journal of the American Medical Association





Follow the Mediterranean Diet

CHALLENGE
Follow the Mediterranean Diet.

Instructions

1. Post the Health Challenge™ Calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. To complete the Challenge, you must eat a Mediterranean diet on at least 22 days this month.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you ate a Mediterranean-style diet. You must meet this goal on at least 22 days during the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this health practice for a lifetime of best health!
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

| MONTH: | | | | | | | HC = Health Challenge | ex. min. = exercise minutes |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | Weight & weekly summary | |
| HC <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| ex. min. _____ | | |
| HC <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| ex. min. _____ | | |
| HC <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| ex. min. _____ | | |
| HC <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| ex. min. _____ | | |
| HC <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| ex. min. _____ | | |

_____ Number of days this month I ate a Mediterranean diet
 _____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity



Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____