FOOD AND FITNESS

June 2011

Volume 111

NOT SO FAST WITH THE SALTSHAKER!

"Reductions in sodium lead to an increased risk of disease and death", according to the president of the Salt Institute, Lori Roman. This comment was in response to a study reported in the May 4 Journal of the American Medical Association. In that study researchers who analyzed urine sodium excretion from almost 3700 study participants with no previous heart disease found higher death rates over the following 8 years for those with lower urinary sodium excretion. But before you slice the ham and reach for the salt shaker consider a few possibilities.



- Average age of the study participants was 41.
- Dietary sodium intake was not reported.



- Sodium excretion was determined by a single 24 hour urine collection.

One such study will not cause the American Heart Association to change its advice to limit dietary sodium to <1500 mg per day for those over the age of 50. Previous evidence still supports reducing dietary sodium intake to reduce risk of heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease. So talk this over with your doctor before you eat the ham sandwich!

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Websites of interest

- americanheart.org
- sitandbefit.org

EXERCISE SAFELY IN HOT WEATHER

Ah, it's "summertime and the livin' is easy", but the exercise is hot and sticky and potentially dangerous! It is very important to keep your exercise program going year round, summer included. But, when the temperature soars and humidity rises, you will need to take extra care while exercising to avoid dehydration and heat exhaustion.



Both exercise and air temperature increase your body temperature. Exercising in hot weather puts additional strain on your body. To cool you down your body circulates more blood to the skin to help get rid of the heat. Sweating also helps to dissipate heat by evaporative cooling. If the humidity is high, your sweat stays on the skin because it cannot evaporate—this causes additional stress.



Some common heat-related illnesses are dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and sunburn. Scary stuff. But, most serious heat illness can be prevented by following basic guidelines:



First of all, **use common sense**— don't exercise outside when the temperature is above 90 degrees or the humidity is high. On these days:

Exercise inside, walk at the mall or at the health club. **Choose** a cooler time of day to exercise, early in the morning or late in the evening.



Exercise in a swimming pool.

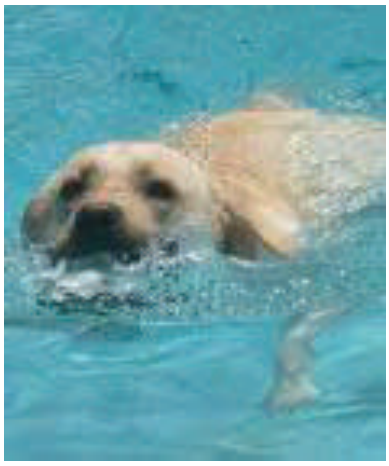
Stay well hydrated. Drink

EXERCISE SAFELY IN HOT WEATHER

plenty of fluid in hot weather, even if you don't feel thirsty. Water is the best choice. Avoid drinks that contain caffeine or alcohol.

The easiest way to determine your level of hydration is to observe the color of your urine. It should be almost clear. If the urine appears concentrated and the color is dark this is a sign that you could be getting dehydrated and you will need to drink more water.

Reduce your exercise intensity. Through the fall, winter, and spring the weather was cooler or you may have been exercising inside. Gradually increase the length and intensity of your exercise in summer to give your body a chance to adapt to the heat.



Wear clothing that is loose-fitting and both lightweight and light in color. Wear a light-colored hat if you are out in the sun.



Always wear sunscreen to avoid sunburn. If you are outside for a great deal of the day, be sure to reapply sunscreen frequently, especially if you sweat heavily.

Stop exercising and get out of the heat if you experience any symptoms of a heat related illness. Be aware of symptoms such as weakness, headache, dizziness, irritability, muscle cramps, nausea, or chills. Drink water and rest. If symptoms don't improve, seek medical help.

Summertime—the livin' is easy and the livin' is fun! Enjoy the warm temperatures. Keep up your exercise routine and maintain your fitness. But use common sense and stay safe.





MAKING FRIENDS WITH LYCOPENE



Lycopene is the substance that is associated with the red color in tomatoes, watermelon, pink grapefruit, apricots and other red fruits and vegetables. This nutrient acts as an antioxidant in the body, protecting cells against damage from the free radicals formed naturally when body cells burn oxygen for energy.

Why is lycopene important for health? A number of studies have demonstrated that men who get more lycopene in their diet have lower risk of prostate cancer. In a 1995 Harvard University study conducted with 47,894 men, researchers found that eating 10 or more servings a week of tomato products was linked with a reduced risk of prostate cancer by as much as 34 percent. Although other factors may also be involved, we can't go wrong including more red fruits and vegetables in the diet.



As an antioxidant, lycopene helps protect against other diseases as well. As part of a healthy diet and active lifestyle lycopene can help reduce levels of LDL cholesterol (the "bad" cholesterol) in the blood. At a recent medical conference, researchers presented findings on lycopene's potential protection against male infertility, osteoporosis, skin cancer, varicose veins, eye disease, and prostate, breast and endometrial cancers.



Where can we find lycopene? Lycopene is not produced in the body, so its benefits can only be obtained by eating foods rich in lycopene. Cooked or processed tomato products, such as tomato sauce, spaghetti sauce, tomato juice, ketchup and pizza sauce are, by far, the major sources of lycopene in the typical American diet.

Lycopene is better absorbed by the body when it is consumed in cooked tomato products. In one study, heat processing released up to 2.5 times the lycopene from tomatoes, making it more available and absorbable in the body. However, a good amount is also absorbed when tomatoes are eaten in a fresh raw state!!

Lycopene is fat-soluble, so it may be absorbed better in the presence of fat. This doesn't mean you always have to pour grease directly on the tomato to absorb the lycopene from the tomato.

MAKING FRIENDS WITH LYCOPENE

However, salad dressings containing oil can be delightful over tomatoes! You will have fat in the same meal if you:

- Eat the tomato in a Caprese salad (tomatoes, fresh mozzarella cheese, fresh basil and olive oil.



- Eat the tomato in a mixed greens and vegetable salad with a light vinaigrette dressing.
- Eat the tomato sauce with a whole grain pasta or whole grain pizza crust—whole grains contain fat naturally.



- Have a slice of tomato on your cheese sandwich on whole grain bread.



Fruits such as watermelon and pink grapefruit will contribute lycopene to the diet as well.



Easy ways to increase your consumption of lycopene:

- Start your meal with a cup of tomato soup. Add some fresh basil for a gourmet taste. (See this month's recipe corner!)
- When making your own spaghetti sauce, add tomato paste and a little olive oil.
- For a refreshing snack, drink a glass of reduced sodium tomato or vegetable juice.
- Top omelets, chicken breasts and/or baked potatoes with salsa.
- Look for cut-up watermelon in the produce department and at the salad bar.





- Make grape or cherry tomatoes a part of every hors d'hoeuvre tray.
- And don't forget the catsup!



RECIPE CORNER

Fresh Tomato Appetizers

10 oz. fresh grape tomatoes

12 oz. fresh mozzarella cheese, cubed

1/3 cup balsamic vinegar

Small bunch basil leaves

Wooden skewers

Wash and drain tomatoes and basil leaves. Prepare cheese by cutting into one inch cubes. Thread tomatoes, basil and cheese cubes alternately on skewers then sprinkle with vinegar. Serve at room temperature or chill if you prefer. This recipe makes a great summer snack or appetizer.



Pizza "Light"

Pizza doesn't have to be a "heart attack on a plate"! Here's a simple way to make a lighter pizza that adds lycopene.to your diet.



1 8" Italian Pizza Crust

1 Tablespoon olive oil

2 Tablespoons prepared pesto sauce

1 large or two medium fresh tomatoes, sliced

3 Tablespoons fresh Parmesan cheese, grated **or**

3 Tablespoons white reduced fat cheese

3 large leaves fresh basil, loosely cut or oregano

Preheat oven to 450º. Place crust on baking sheet. Brush with olive oil and then layer ingredients, starting with pesto, adding tomatoes, cheese and basil leaves. Bake in preheated oven for approximately ten minutes. Allow to cool five minutes before cutting and serving. Makes two servings.

Herbed Tomato Soup

2 1/2 lbs. tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and cut up (about 6 cups) **or**

2 (16 oz.) cans tomatoes with juice

1/4 c. lightly packed fresh basil leaves or parsley

1 c. chicken broth or low sodium chicken broth

1 tbsp. sugar

1/4 tsp. salt

Dash ground red pepper

Dash ground black pepper

Dash bottled hot pepper sauce

RECIPE CORNER

Garnish– use any fresh herb you may desire.

With a blender or food processor puree about half of the tomatoes and all of the basil or parsley. Transfer pureed tomato mixture to a medium saucepan. Repeat blending or processing with remaining tomatoes.



Stir chicken broth, sugar, salt, red and black peppers, and hot pepper sauce into the tomato mixture. Bring to a boil then reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Serve immediately or transfer to a covered container and refrigerate.



To serve, ladle warm or chilled soup into small bowls. If desired, garnish each serving with a fresh herb.

Makes 6 (3/4 cup) servings.

Snappy Gazpacho

Serve with tuna salad sandwiches for a picnic lunch that packs pizzazz as well as nutrition!

2 cups V-8 juice

2 cups seasoned tomato juice, or Bloody Mary Mix

1/2 small Vidalia onion, minced

1 avocado, peeled and cored

½ green pepper, seeded

1 small cucumber, peeled and sliced

2 cups fresh tomatoes, peeled and seeded

3 stalks celery, cut into short pieces

3 tablespoons fresh lime juice

3 tablespoons fresh cilantro

1 teaspoon hot sauce

Salt and pepper to taste

Wash and prepare all vegetables according to recipe. In a blender or food processor, combine juices, vegetables and seasoning. Blend until combined but still slightly chunky. Chill at least three hours before serving. For easy summer living, serve in paper cups.





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SNIPPETS OF NEWS YOU CAN USE

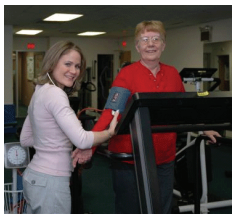
Check out these health tips that may help your health—talk them over with your doctor:

Journal of the National Cancer Institute Online—coffee drinking has been linked to lower rates of prostate cancer.



Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association—participating in Cardiac Rehabilitation after coronary angioplasty for blockage in the heart's arteries increases long-term survival rate by about 50%. Medicare covers 80% of the cost.

Journal of Aging—people who reduce calorie intake by 25% over a period of time can reduce



core body temperature. This may result in living longer.

Annals of Internal Medicine—Older adults who are obese are more likely to develop problems with day-to-day activities, such as bathing, getting dressed, and going to the bathroom. Increasing physical activity may help this situation more than dieting for weight loss would.