



Binge Drinking Can be Deadly



Julie Ehlinger, ARNP

A study published from South Korea in August 2010 has shown that binge drinkers who have high blood pressure (over 168/100) are at increased risk of dying from heart attack or stroke.

We know that alcohol is toxic to heart muscle and can cause cardiomyopathy, or heart muscle weakness.

Alcohol also increases the risk of atrial fibrillation, an irregular heart rhythm.

This new study suggests more risk, particularly for men who drink more than six drinks at a time.

The research included 6,100 men and women from a rural farming community in South Korea, who were studied for almost 21 years.

Not enough women reported binge drinking to draw conclusions.

Men who were binge drinkers, having six or more alcoholic drinks at a time, had a four-fold increased risk of dying from heart attack or stroke.

Men who were heavy binge drinkers, having 12 or more drinks at a time, had a 12-fold increased risk.

A drink is defined as either one 12-ounce beer, a 4-ounce glass of wine, or one ounce of liquor.

Binge drinking is a common pattern of excessive alcohol use in the United States. Most people who binge drink are not alcohol dependent.

The American Heart Association continues to recommend no more than two drinks daily for men, or one drink daily for non-pregnant women.

Small to moderate amounts of alcohol may help decrease the risk of stroke, but this study suggests that more is not better!

Exercise:

Decrease your risk for dementia and arthritis symptoms

You have all heard how important it is to exercise when you have heart failure, but did you know it helps with memory skills and reduces the pain of arthritis?

I want to share with you two articles I recently read that remind us of other values of exercise.

One article by Dr. Ann reports that staying active, no matter what age you are, helps keep your mind sharp.

People in their 50s who are active are 40 percent less likely to develop any dementia in their 70s. If you are not exercising much during your 50s, you are 45 percent more likely to develop memory loss.

In a study of over 8,000 post-menopausal women, the higher the weight, the more one's thinking skills and memory significantly declined. Exercise helps with weight loss. It also mentioned that people deficient in Vitamin D were more likely to have intellectual impairment. If you were severely deficient, you were 394 percent more likely to have reduced thinking skills.

Another article related to exercise and arthritis was published in *Medpages Today*. It reported a study claiming people who exercise and increase their physical activity have less pain and more ability to function.

The study reported that a person needs to increase physical activity by at least a few hours each week. It also noted we tend to lose interest with exercise *and* need to be reminded to continue healthy habits.

SO....here is your reminder to keep up your exercise—especially as the weather changes!



Connie Wessels, RN, MSN

Heart Failure Education & Support Group



Pat Fisher, RD, LD, CDE
Dietitian
Hy-Vee

“Holiday Foods for
a Happy Heart”

Wednesday, November 17
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Registration at 1:45

Mercy Medical Center,
6th Floor Auditorium

Call 584-3232 to register

It's Vaccine Season Again



Trevor Hmielewski
Pharm-D

The leaves are changing and the nights are getting colder. Fall is here, so it must be vaccine season again!

It is important that you understand which vaccines you should receive, and why these vaccines are helpful to your overall wellness. Here are some helpful reminders below.

Flu Vaccine

Those who should receive the flu shot include:

- People age 50 and older
- People living in nursing homes or other long-term healthcare facilities
- People with chronic health conditions like heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, or a weakened immune system
- Children age 6 months to 19 years
- Pregnant women, and those who plan on becoming pregnant
- People who care for or live with persons at a high risk of becoming sick

This year, the seasonal flu shot includes the H1N1 vaccine, so people only have to receive one shot. It also includes the two other most common strains of flu going around this year. Flu can be very serious. It results in many hospitalizations and deaths each year, especially for people age 65 and older.

Pneumococcal Vaccine

Those who should receive pneumococcal vaccine include:

- All adults age 65 and older
- People older than 65 who have not received the vaccine within five years, and who were younger than 65 when they first received the vaccination
- People age 2-64 with chronic health conditions like heart failure, diabetes, and COPD.

The pneumococcal vaccine is a one-time shot for those over age 65. It is important to receive because it protects you from getting pneumonia.

Questions?

Remember, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider. This is what we are here for—to help keep you healthy!

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Meeting the New Sodium Goal

Many of you are aware and compliant with the guideline for sodium intake of less than 2000 mg of sodium a day.

You may have achieved this by reading your food labels, putting away your salt shakers, and adjusting to the taste of new seasonings.

Now there is a new challenge.

Earlier this year the American Heart Association suggested the sodium level be lowered even further to no more than 1500 mg/day. The USDA is now making the same recommendation.

I'm sure you are taking a deep breath and wondering how this is going to be possible. The dietitians are doing the same.

We have decided that what we all need to do is take a closer look at what we are really eating, and see if there is room for improvement.

Here are some interesting facts. The natural sodium content of the foods we eat accounts for 10 percent of our sodium intake.

Discretionary use of sodium via table and cooking salt contributes five to ten percent of sodium intake. The other 75 percent of sodium intake comes from salt added during food processing.

The simple solution to reducing our sodium intake would be to not use processed food. However, this is not always possible. Following these basic tips is a starting point for sodium reduction:

1. Do not use salt in cooking or at the table.
2. Avoid foods with salt visible on them (i.e., pretzels).
3. Limit use of canned meats and vegetables.
4. Enjoy your fruit. They are not high sodium foods.
5. Look for low-sodium dairy products.
6. Eliminate junk food.
7. Be cautious of baked products. Salt is an ingredient in most baked products.
8. Limit use of convenience foods such as pizza.
9. Decrease intake of fast foods.

Keep in mind, for many people, salty taste preference is influenced by exposure. If you grew up in a home where salt was added during cooking and at the table, you are used to a very salty palate.

This can be reduced over time as you re-train your taste buds. Over a three to four week time period you will be able to notice a difference.



Becky Hilby, RD, LD, CDE