
CENTRAL PA HEALTH CARE QUALITY UNIT NEWSLETTER FOR HEALTHY OUTCOMES

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Indoor tanning is strongly linked to melanoma risk

From Harvard Health Newsletter, Women's Health Watch Volume 18 – Number 1

Indoor tanning now attracts about one million people every day — more than two-thirds of them women and most of them under age 30. Since 1980, while the incidence of many other cancers has leveled off or fallen, melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, has become more common. According to the National Cancer Institute, melanoma rates among white women ages 20 to 49 more than doubled between 1975 and 2007. Many health organizations (including the American Academy of Dermatology Association and the Skin Cancer Foundation) have concluded that tanning salons and indoor tanning devices are linked to the rise in melanoma, and these groups are demanding stricter regulations.



A study at the University of Minnesota — published in the journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers, and Prevention* (June 2010) — offers the strongest case yet for that link. Researchers collected information from 1,167 Minnesotans diagnosed with melanoma between 2004 and 2007 and compared them with 1,101 age- and gender-matched people without melanoma who were drawn from the state list of driver's license holders. Researchers asked participants when they started indoor tanning, how long and how often they tanned, and what devices they used. They were also asked about burns resulting from indoor tanning and other melanoma risk factors, including family history of the disease.

Overall, indoor tanning was associated with a 74% greater likelihood of developing melanoma. Moreover, the greater the frequency and intensity of exposure, the greater the risk. For example, a person with 50 or more hours of indoor tanning (or more than 100 sessions or 10 or more years) was 2.5 to 3 times more likely to develop melanoma than a person who had never tanned indoors. The risk was even higher for those who used so-called high-intensity or high-pressure devices: they were three to four times more likely to develop melanoma than people who hadn't tried indoor tanning. (According to the American Cancer Society, high-pressure tanning bulbs can deliver up to 15 times the sun's ultraviolet radiation.) The researchers conclude that no indoor tanning should be considered safe.

Indoor tanning may actually be riskier than sunbathing. In this study, it was more closely linked to melanoma than either recreational sunbathing or routine sun exposure through outdoor work. That doesn't mean you should head for the beach instead of the tanning salon; any tanning is a sign of skin damage and may increase your risk for skin cancer.

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The information offered in this newsletter is to increase your awareness of health related conditions and situations and not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. If you believe you or someone you support has a condition, please seek the advice of a physician.

BEANS, BEANS, the musical fruit.....



From Harvard Health Newsletter – Men's Health Watch, Volume 15 – Number 8

When most Americans think of beans, they think first of garden-type fresh beans such as green beans, string beans and wax beans, and green peas. But nutritionists think first of legumes (leg'umes). Botanists tell us they are characterized by seed-bearing pods and include grain legumes (lentils, chickpeas, and dry beans and peas such as black, lima, pinto, kidney, and navy beans). As a group, legumes are a good source of protein and dietary fiber. They have no cholesterol and very little fat and sodium, yet they provide lots of potassium and some calcium and iron as well as B vitamins

You don't have to eat a hill of beans to get a mountain of benefits. But men who eat beans regularly appear to have a reduced risk of prostate cancer, precancerous colon polyps, and (in overweight individuals) pancreatic cancer. In these respects, legumes are the anti-red meat — and the same is true when it comes to metabolic abnormalities and cardiovascular disease.

An analysis of data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that people who eat beans have lower body weights, smaller waist circumferences, and lower blood pressures than people who don't eat beans. Because of their high fiber content, legumes can also help control blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

All this should add up to better cardiovascular health, and it does. A 19-year study of 9,632 American men and women found that people who eat legumes four or more times a week enjoy a 22% lower risk of coronary artery disease than those who eat legumes less than once a week. And a 10-year Japanese study reported protection against stroke for women, but not men.

Legumes are nutritious and inexpensive. They can add flavor, color, and texture to any menu. But there is a hitch: they can trigger bloating and flatulence. One of the virtues of legumes is that they contain complex carbohydrates that can't be digested by human intestinal enzymes. These carbohydrates have very little caloric value but they are filling. Some help lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels; others make stools softer, bulkier, and easier to pass. But there is a rub. Humans can't digest these carbohydrates, but bacteria in the intestines can — and in the process, they produce gas.

Fortunately, gas doesn't have to be taxing. To minimize the problem, introduce legumes into your diet slowly. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids. Before you cook dried beans, wash them and soak them overnight or at least for two hours, then rinse them and change the water before you boil them up.

If gas is still a problem, try using a nonprescription enzyme that will start breaking down the carbohydrates before the bacteria in your colon can get to them. Alpha-galactosidase (Beano, generic) is available as tablets that you swallow before you start eating or as drops that you place on your legumes before you eat them. The same tactic may help with other "gassy" foods, such as broccoli and cauliflower.

Legumes are the neglected nutrients. They are inexpensive and tasty, but they do take some planning, both to cook them right and to eat them without getting intestinal gas. Still, it's not inconvenience or even gas that has banished beans from the typical American diet. Instead, the problem may stem from cultural prejudices, since legumes are a dietary staple in much of the developing world.

Legumes come in almost endless varieties: black beans, kidney beans, navy beans, pinto beans, black-eyed peas, green or yellow split peas, red or green lentils, lima beans, soy beans, and chick peas (garbanzo beans) are but a few of the legumes you can add to your menu. All are versatile and healthful. Soybeans are particularly excellent as a source of protein, iron, and calcium. Remember, though, that commercial processing can add undesirable amounts of salt and fat to legumes; canned baked beans and split pea soups are examples of good foods gone bad.

Barbecue Food Safety



From USDA Food Safety Tips (www.fsis.usda.gov)

Cooking outdoors was once only a summer activity shared with family and friends. Now more than half of Americans say they are cooking outdoors year round. So whether the snow is blowing or the sun is shining brightly, it's important to follow food safety guidelines to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying and causing foodborne illness. Use these simple guidelines for grilling food safely.

From the Store: Home First: When shopping, buy cold food like meat and poultry last, right before checkout. Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in your shopping cart. To guard against cross-contamination -- which can happen when raw meat or poultry juices drip on other food -- put packages of raw meat and poultry into plastic bags. Plan to drive directly home from the grocery store. You may want to take a cooler with ice for perishables. Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours. Refrigerate within 1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F. At home, place meat and poultry in the refrigerator immediately. Freeze poultry and ground meat that won't be used in 1 or 2 days; freeze other meat within 4 to 5 days.

Defrost Safely: Completely defrost meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks more evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing or thaw sealed packages in cold water. You can microwave defrost if the food will be placed immediately on the grill.

Marinating: Meat and poultry can be marinated for several hours or days to tenderize or add flavor. Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. If some of the marinade is to be used as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion of the marinade before putting raw meat and poultry in it. However, if the marinade used on raw meat or poultry is to be reused, make sure to let it come to a boil first to destroy any harmful bacteria.

Transporting: When carrying food to another location, keep it cold to minimize bacterial growth. Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40 °F or below. Pack food right from the refrigerator into the cooler immediately before leaving home. Keep the cooler in the coolest part of the car.

Keep Cold Food Cold: Keep meat and poultry refrigerated until ready to use. Only take out the meat and poultry that will immediately be placed on the grill. When using a cooler, keep it out of the direct sun by placing it in the shade or shelter. Avoid opening the lid too often, which lets cold air out and warm air in. Pack beverages in one cooler and perishables in a separate cooler.

Keep Everything Clean: Be sure there are plenty of clean utensils and platters. To prevent foodborne illness, don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meat and poultry. Harmful bacteria present in raw meat and poultry and their juices can contaminate safely cooked food. If you're eating away from home, find out if there's a source of clean water. If not, bring water for preparation and cleaning. Or pack clean cloths, and wet towelettes for cleaning surfaces and hands.

Precooking: Precooking food partially in the microwave, oven, or stove is a good way of reducing grilling time. Just make sure that the food goes immediately on the preheated grill to complete cooking.

Cook Thoroughly: Cook food to a safe internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria.

NEVER partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later.

Reheating: When reheating fully cooked meats like hot dogs, grill to 165 °F or until steaming hot.

Keep Hot Food Hot: After cooking meat and poultry on the grill, keep it hot until served - at 140 °F or warmer. Keep cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they could overcook. At home, the cooked meat can be kept hot in a warm oven (approximately 200 °F), in a chafing dish or slow cooker, or on a warming tray.

Serving the Food: Use a clean platter when taking food off the grill. Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. Any harmful bacteria present in the raw meat juices could contaminate safely cooked food. In hot weather (above 90 °F), food should never sit out for more than 1 hour.

Leftovers: Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers. Discard any food left out more than 2 hours (1 hour if temperatures are above 90 °F).

Stand up for your Heart



From Harvard Health Newsletter – Heart Letter Volume 21 – Number 1

“*Too much TV may lead to shorter life.*” Headlines like that one flooded the media after the publication of an Australian study linking time spent watching television with higher chances of dying from cardiovascular disease. Television watching in itself probably wasn’t to blame, unless a steady visual diet of reality shows, crime dramas, and sitcoms damages the heart by numbing the mind. **Sitting is the more likely culprit.** If you are like most Americans, you sit for most of the hours you are awake. A handful of studies on inactivity and health might get you to reconsider that position.

Researchers have long focused on the health benefits of physical activity. Studies looking at the flip side are now highlighting the costs of inactivity.

- The Australian researchers who made headlines followed the health and habits of nearly 9,000 adults, all initially free of cardiovascular disease, for almost seven years. Those who watched television for four or more hours a day were almost 80% more likely to have died of cardiovascular disease over the course of the study than those who watched fewer than two hours a day (*Circulation*, Jan. 26, 2010).
- Ten healthy Danish men volunteered to cut the number of steps they took each day from about 10,000 to under 1,500. In just two weeks, their muscles had become less sensitive to insulin (an early step toward diabetes), they had gained extra fat in the abdomen, and they had lost a significant amount of leg muscle (*Journal of Applied Physiology*, May 2010).
- In a study of 1,700 Canadian adults, those who said they sat for most of the day were 54% more likely to have died during the 11-year study than those who sat less than half of the time. The researchers saw the same trend of more deaths with more sitting even when they looked only at people who reported that they exercised regularly (*Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, May 2009).

Stand or move

The message from these studies and a host of others is that activity trumps sitting. That doesn’t mean you need to spend several hours a day exercising. But the more standing and walking you do, the better. Adding activity to the day is good for almost everyone. But it has the biggest payoff for people who aren’t already active.

In an eye-opening study of military veterans living in California, researchers divided the 4,384 participants into five groups based on the amount of physical activity they got each week. As expected, the number of deaths during the eight-year study decreased from the least active group to the most. The unexpected finding was that the biggest decrease was seen between the least active group and the group just above it (*Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, August 2009). This suggests that for people who aren’t active, the investment of even a small amount of time in extra activity can pay big dividends.

If you sit for most of the day when you aren’t sleeping, even if you exercise, anything you can do to be more active will be good for your heart, arteries, muscles, and bones. That includes going out for a walk, working in the garden, or standing while you read, watch television, or work