MORETON
POPULATION HEALTH

Health Insights

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Study Finds Dopamine, Biological Clock Link to Snacking, Overeating and Obesity

During the years 1976 through 1980, 15% of U.S. adults were obese. Today, about 40% of adults are obese. Another 33% are overweight. Coinciding with this increase in weight are ever-rising rates of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and health complications caused by obesity, such as hypertension. Even Alzheimer's disease may be partly attributable to obesity and physical inactivity.

In a study published recently in the journal *Current Biology*, Ali Güler, a professor of biology at the University of Virginia, and his colleagues demonstrate that the pleasure center of the brain that produces the chemical dopamine, and the brain's separate biological clock that regulates daily physiological rhythms, are linked, and that high-calorie foods – which bring pleasure – disrupt normal feeding schedules, resulting in overconsumption. Using mice as study models, the researchers mimicked the 24/7 availability of a high-fat diet, and showed that "anytime snacking" eventually results in obesity and related health problems.

Güler's team found that mice fed a diet comparable to a wild diet in calories and fats maintained normal eating and exercise schedules and proper weight. But mice fed high-calorie diets laden with fats and sugars began "snacking" at all hours and became obese.

"This lights-on-all-the-time, eat-at-any-time lifestyle recasts eating patterns and affects how the body utilizes energy," he said. "It alters metabolism – as our study shows – and leads to obesity, which causes disease. We're learning that when we eat is just as important as how much we eat. A calorie is not just a calorie. Calories consumed between meals or at odd hours become stored as fat, and that is the recipe for poor health."

University of Virginia. "Study finds dopamine, biological clock link to snacking, overeating and obesity." ScienceDaily. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/01/200103111717.htm (accessed January 16, 2020).

Drinking 1% Rather Than 2% Milk Accounts For 4.5 Years of Less Aging In Adults

A new study shows drinking low-fat milk – both nonfat and 1% milk – is significantly associated with less aging in adults.

Research on 5,834 U.S. adults by Brigham Young University exercise science professor Larry Tucker, Ph.D., found people who drink low-fat milk experience several years less biological aging than those who drink high-fat (2% and whole) milk.

"It was surprising how strong the difference was," Tucker said. "If you're going to drink high-fat milk, you should be aware that doing so is predictive of or related to some significant consequences."

Tucker investigated the relationship between telomere length and both milk intake frequency (daily drinkers vs. weekly drinkers or less) and milk fat content consumed (whole vs. 2% vs. 1% vs. skim). Telomeres are the nucleotide endcaps of human chromosomes. They act like a biological clock and they're extremely correlated with age; each time a cell replicates, humans lose a tiny bit of the endcaps. Therefore, the older people get, the shorter their telomeres.

And, apparently, the more high-fat milk people drink, the shorter their telomeres are, according to the new BYU study, published in Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity. The study revealed that for every 1% increase in milk fat consumed (drinking 2% vs. 1% milk), telomeres were 69 base pairs shorter in the adults studied, which translated into more than four years in additional biological aging. When Tucker analyzed the extremes of milk drinkers, adults who consumed whole milk had telomeres that were a striking 145 base pairs shorter than non-fat milk drinkers.

Nearly half of the people in the study consumed milk daily and another quarter consumed milk at least weekly. Just under a third of the adults reported consuming full-fat (whole) milk and another 30 percent reported drinking 2% milk. Meanwhile, 10% consumed 1% milk and another 17% drank non-fat milk. About 13% did not drink any cow milk.

"It's not a bad thing to drink milk," Tucker said. "You should just be more aware of what type of milk you are drinking."

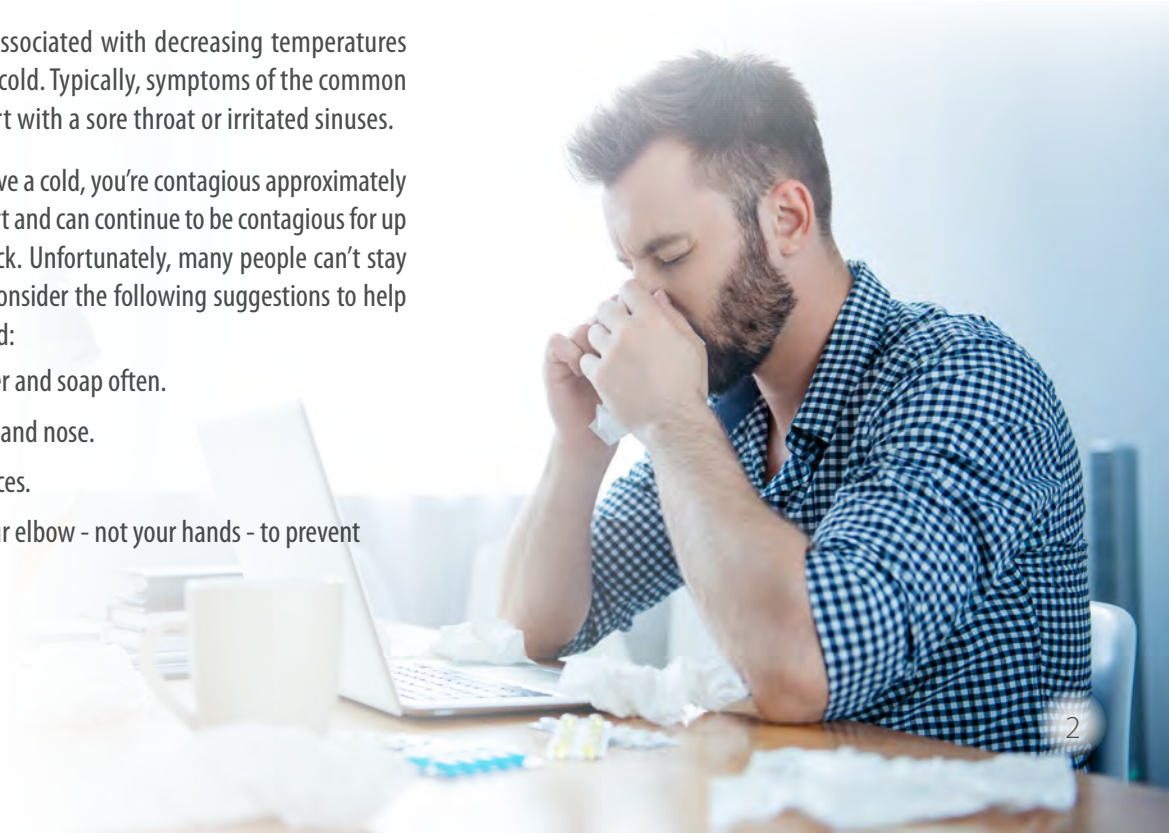
Brigham Young University. "Drinking 1% rather than 2% milk accounts for 4.5 years of less aging in adults: High-fat milk consumption is connected to significantly shorter telomeres." ScienceDaily. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/01/200115120634.htm (accessed January 16, 2020).

A Cold Is Contagious for Longer Than You'd Think

The winter months are commonly associated with decreasing temperatures and increasing cases of the common cold. Typically, symptoms of the common cold come on gradually and may start with a sore throat or irritated sinuses.

According to Healthline, when you have a cold, you're contagious approximately one to two days before symptoms start and can continue to be contagious for up to seven days after you've become sick. Unfortunately, many people can't stay home for that long to fully recover. Consider the following suggestions to help avoid becoming ill or passing on a cold:

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap often.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.
- Sanitize commonly touched surfaces.
- Always cough and sneeze into your elbow - not your hands - to prevent spreading germs



It's American Heart Month: What You Need to Know about Heart Disease

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both women and men in the United States, causing about 647,000 deaths annually, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Heart disease is also an extremely expensive disease–costing the United States about $207 billion annually in health care, medications, and lost productivity.

Heart disease is a term used to refer to several different types of heart conditions. Out of all the different conditions, coronary artery disease–caused by plaque buildup in the walls of the heart's arteries–is the most common.

Common signs and symptoms of heart disease include shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pain, heart palpitations, weakness, and fatigue.

In many cases, heart disease can be prevented by living a healthy lifestyle and properly managing health conditions. American Heart Month, organized by the American Heart Association (AHA), is designed to raise awareness about heart disease and how people can prevent it. Here are some tips that may help prevent heart disease:

- Refrain from smoking
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Limit your sodium intake
- Eat a well-balanced, healthy diet
- Exercise regularly
- Manage your stress
- Limit your alcohol intake

If you are concerned about your risk of developing heart disease or would like to find out more information about the condition, visit the AHA's website (www.heart.org) and contact your primary care physician.

Greek Chicken Rice Bowls

- 1 ½ lbs boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1-¼ C quick cooking brown rice, such as Uncle Ben's 10 min rice
- 2 C low sodium chicken broth
- 1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes
- 1 cucumber, peeled, seeded, and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 small orange bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 20 pitted Kalamata olives, sliced
- 4 tsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium lemon, quartered
- ¼ C crumbled feta cheese

Combine lemon juice, vinegar, olive oil, garlic, and oregano in a small bowl. Place the chicken breasts, 1 at a time, in a Ziploc bag. Pound with a mallet or rolling pin to an even thickness, about ½ inch thick, being careful not to puncture the bag. Add marinade to the bag. Allow to marinate for at least 30 minutes or up to overnight in the refrigerator.

Bring the rice and broth to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer, cover, and cook 10 to 12 minutes or until rice is tender and broth is absorbed.

Meanwhile preheat a grill, grill pan, or heavy skillet over medium heat. Spray with oil and add the chicken; discard the marinade. Cook 5 to 6 minutes per side or until chicken is cooked through.

Allow chicken to rest while you make the rest of the bowl. Slice the chicken breasts. Place ¾ cup rice in each bowl, top with chicken, ¼ of the tomatoes, cucumbers, pepper, and olives. Drizzle with 1 teaspoon oil, lemon juice from 1 wedge, 1 tablespoon feta cheese, and a sprinkle of parsley.

Serving: 1bowl, Calories: 418kcal, Carbohydrates: 23g, Protein: 44g, Fat: 17g, Saturated Fat: 3g, Cholesterol: 133mg, Sodium: 781.5mg, Fiber: 2.5g, Sugar: 2.5g

Gina. "Greek Chicken Meal Prep Rice Bowls." Skinnytaste, January 6, 2020. https://www.skinnytaste.com/greek-chicken-meal-prep-rice-bowls/.