

MEATLESS MONDAY

A Weekly Start for a Healthier America

www.MeatlessMonday.com

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE CAMPAIGN

Meatless Monday is a national public health campaign in association with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The campaign is supported by 28 other schools of public health, including Columbia Mailman School of Public Health.

A STEP TOWARDS A HEALTHIER DIET

As dietary recommendations evolve over time, two recommendations remain the same: eat less saturated fat and more fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Meatless Monday is a national campaign encouraging Americans to move the meat off their plate ONE DAY A WEEK to make room for healthier alternatives.

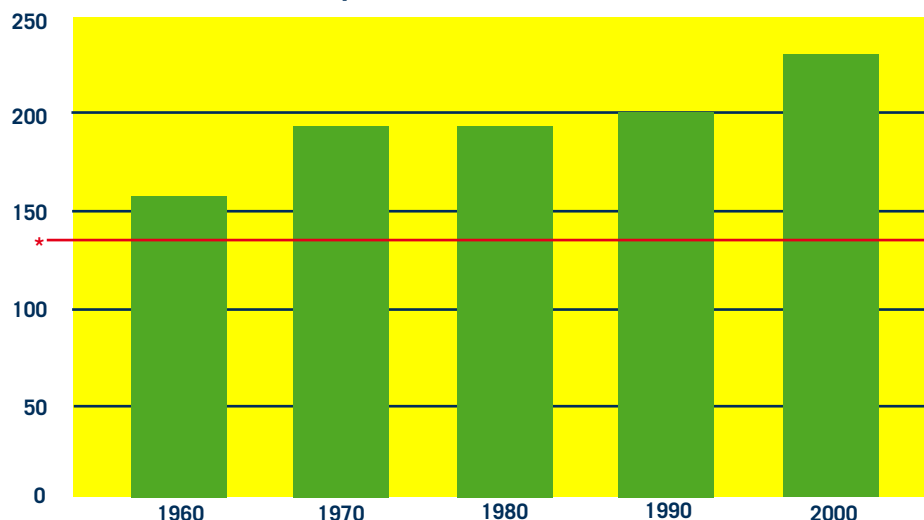
Many Americans eat a diet high in meat and low in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. This dietary pattern increases our risk for heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes - four of the leading causes of death in the U.S. The annual costs attributed to poor diets for these four diseases alone are over \$33 BILLION.¹

MORE AND MORE MEAT

In 2003, per capita consumption of meat in the U.S. hit a record high of 222 pounds, providing almost twice the recommended amount of protein – along with a large serving of unhealthy saturated fat.² Dietary saturated fat, found mainly in meat and high-fat dairy products, has no known health benefit.³

JUST ONE DAY A WEEK – CUT OUT MEAT!

Meat Consumption in the U.S. (pounds per person per year)



*The American Heart Association recommends no more than 138 pounds of lean meat per person per year.

TOO FEW FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND WHOLE GRAINS

Only about 22% of Americans eat the recommended 5 to 9 daily servings of fruits and vegetables.⁴ Most Americans eat only half the recommended number of servings. Although brightly colored vegetables and whole grains should be the base of our diet, starchy potatoes and refined carbohydrates are the overwhelming favorite.

THE LINKS BETWEEN MEAT, SATURATED FAT AND CHRONIC DISEASE

Good nutrition plays an important role in chronic disease prevention. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans and legumes are the foundation of healthy eating.

CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE (HEART DISEASE AND STROKE)

The link between saturated fat, cholesterol and cardiovascular disease is strong, clear and convincing. Heart disease for many people is largely preventable through lifestyle modification, including smoking cessation, good nutrition and physical activity. More than half of all Americans have high blood cholesterol, a precursor for heart disease.⁵

CANCER

Approximately one-third of all cancers could be prevented through better nutrition.⁶ High-meat diets have been linked to an increased risk of cancer, with the strongest link to cancers of the digestive tract. This may be due in part to the chemicals that are produced when meat is cooked at high temperatures or because of the low fruit, vegetable and whole grain intake often accompanying high-meat diets. Many plant-based foods are thought to be protective against certain cancers.

DIABETES

The increasing rates of overweight and obesity are also stimulating an increase in diabetes rates. Being overweight, a poor diet and lack of physical activity contribute to diabetes risk. The Diabetes Prevention Program recently found that dietary improvements and moderate physical activity provided much better protection against the development of diabetes among those at-risk compared to the best pharmaceuticals that were available.⁷ Because diabetes increases the risk for heart disease, diabetics must reduce their saturated fat intake and eat plenty of heart-healthy, low-saturated fat foods.

References:

- ¹ Frazao E. High Costs of Poor Eating Patterns in the United States. In: Frazao E, editor. America's eating habits: changes and consequences. Agriculture Information Bulletin; 1999. p. 5-32.
- ² Economic Research Service, US Department of Agriculture. Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry Outlook [online], November and December 2004. Available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/1dp/>. Accessed 27 April 2005.
- ³ National Research Council. Dietary reference intakes for energy, carbohydrates, fiber, fat, protein, and amino acids (macronutrients). Washington, D.C.; Oxford: National Academies; Oxford Publicity Partnership; 2003.
- ⁴ Produce for Better Health Foundation. State of the Plate Research Report 2002. Wilmington, DE: Produce for Better Health Foundation, 2002.
- ⁵ [AHA] American Heart Association. High Blood Cholesterol and other Lipids – Statistics. Available from www.americanheart.org/downloadable/heart/.
- ⁶ [ACS] American Cancer Society. Diet, Physical Activity and Cancer...What's the Connection? Available from www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_3_1x_Link_Between_Lifestyle_and_CancerMarch03.asp
- ⁷ [NIIDDK] US National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases of the National Institutes of Health. Diet and Exercise Dramatically Delay Type 2 Diabetes: Diabetes Medication Metformin Also Effective. Available from www.niddk.nih.gov/welcome/releases/8_8_01.htm

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