

**CSFP**  
**Monthly Nutrition Notes**  
**October, 2009**

This month, instead of the usual nutrition article on one topic, there will be some “health and nutrition pearls”...pearls of wisdom and knowledge from the latest food and nutrition research and scientific journals. We may offer this from time to time and hope you find it worth reading. Enjoy these autumn days!

Some scientists estimate that up to 80 percent of all infections are transmitted by hands, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CDC considers **handwashing** the single important thing you can do to help prevent the spread of infection and to stay healthy and well.

**Regular exercise** is the best bet for extending your life and keeping you healthy. Two recent reports from the New England Journal of Medicine and the British Medical Journal both report that increasing your physical activity even after mid-life increase longevity and decrease risk of heart attack, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and stroke by significant amounts.

A larger role for **vitamin D**: Evidence continues to mount that vitamin D is as important for the heart and arteries as for the bones. A recent study showed that a low level of vitamin D doubled the chances of having a heart attack. The American Institute for Cancer Research reports that vitamin D may play an important role in prostate cancer prevention as well. A growing number of experts recommend aiming for at least 1000 IU of vitamin D every day.

Walnuts are very high in omega 3s- the “good fat” that may help reduce the risk of heart disease. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition recently reported that eating 1.5 ounces of walnuts per day reduced total and LDL (bad) cholesterol and increased the HDL (good) cholesterol. Replace chips and cookies with a handful of nuts for a nutritious and heart healthy snack!

A large waist- greater than 40 inches- may raise the risk of diverticulitis- an inflammation of out pouches in the large intestine, as reported in a recent issue of Gastroenterology. Try to lose a few inches off your waist by eating a little less and moving a little more.

Too much sodium may raise blood pressure, but a recent study shows it may also stiffen blood vessels, which is linked to a higher risk of heart disease. The typical sodium intake of Americans is ~3,500 milligrams a day. Try to keep sodium to less than 2300 milligrams a day. Cutting back on fast food, rinsing canned vegetables, and using less processed foods can really help lower the sodium in your diet.

Want to lose weight? Drop the soda and the diet soda and replace these drinks with water. This simple change will shrink your waist and help you lose a few more pounds.

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