

Tubby from the Telly?

The Link Between Television and Being Overweight

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In identifying the factors most closely linked to being overweight, the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) 2007 report on diet, physical activity and cancer prevention advises the public to be physically active. The report also specifically recommends limiting sedentary habits such as watching television. Now, more recent studies add to emerging evidence that TV's impact on weight may be substantial.

A negative impact from television time is seen in children as young as 2 to 5 years old. In a large national survey, higher weight was 34 percent more common among those children who watched more than two hours of television daily. In adolescence, the association remains strong for girls, while the link between TV and overweight becomes less consistent for adolescent boys.

By adulthood, the link is again consistent for both genders. In a study of 26 to 36-year-olds, those watching more than three hours of TV daily were more likely to have excess waist fat than those watching an hour or less. Elsewhere, **middle-aged adults who watched more than four hours of TV daily showed waists averaging over an inch larger than those watching less than two hours daily;** their percent body fat and body mass index were also higher.

It's easy to assume that the television-overweight link occurs when TV replaces physical activity. For many people, this does hold true. But even when TV doesn't displace physical activity, **research shows that we move around less and burn fewer calories when watching TV than when participating in other sedentary activities like playing board games, writing, reading or sewing.**

Indeed, studies repeatedly find that the amount of time people are physically active and the amount of time they spend watching TV affect body weight independently of each other. In one study of Australian adults, spending a lot of time in sedentary behaviors increased the odds

of being overweight or obese by more than 50 percent, even among participants who got the recommended amounts of physical activity. Lots of sedentary time and too little time being physically active more than doubled the odds.

Television also seems to impact weight by affecting our eating habits. Dinner in front of the TV is less likely to include vegetables and fruits according to some studies. **In a study of four- to seven-year-olds, when television and computer time was cut in half, calorie consumption decreased significantly.** Among college students, not only was greater TV viewing linked with more frequent snacking while watching TV, it was also associated with greater consumption of high-calorie snacks compared to students with little TV time. These students also displayed increased advertising awareness, which was the strongest tie to greater consumption of those high-calorie snacks.

Even commercial-free TV is likely to increase calorie consumption, according to experts. **When we eat while we are distracted by other activities, we are more likely to continue eating without noticing subtle body signals that we are no longer hungry.** ■



Get Moving!

Moderate-intensity aerobic activity means you're working hard enough to raise your heart rate and break a sweat. One way to tell is that you'll be able to talk, but not sing the words to your favorite song. Here are some examples of activities that require moderate effort:

- Walking fast
- Doing water aerobics
- Riding a bike on level ground or with few hills
- Playing doubles tennis
- Pushing a lawn mower

Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity means you're breathing hard and fast, and your heart rate has gone up quite a bit. If you're working at this level, you won't be able to say more than a few words without pausing for a breath. Here are some examples of activities that require vigorous effort:

- Jogging or running
- Swimming laps
- Riding a bike fast or on hills
- Playing singles tennis
- Playing basketball

There are many ways you can strengthen your muscles, whether it's at home or the gym. You may want to try the following:

- Lifting weights
- Working with resistance bands
- Doing exercises that use your body weight for resistance (i.e., push ups, sit ups)
- Heavy gardening (i.e., digging, shoveling)
- Yoga

<http://cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.html>



February is National

W i s e C o n s u m e r M o n t hfrom the **American Institute for Preventive Medicine**

Be an active member in your healthcare. Give the doctor information about you. Do this even if you feel embarrassed. Listen to your doctor, too. Get information in clear terms so you know what to do.

Before a Doctor/Provider Visit or Call Checklist

Tell and ask your doctor these things:

- Your signs and symptoms. Give them in the order they occurred. State what makes them better or worse.
- Results of home testing, such as your temperature.
- Medicines you take.
- Allergies to medicines, food, etc.
- Family and personal medical history facts.
- Your eating, drinking and sleeping habits. How much exercise you get. Your sexual functioning, etc.
- Concerns you have about your health. What you think caused the problem.
- What you would like the doctor to do for you.
- Your pharmacist's phone number and fax number.
- If you have recently had lab tests, X-rays, etc. from other healthcare providers. If you can, take the results with you. Or, if time permits, have these sent to your doctor before you see him or her.
- Write down questions you want to ask the doctor. List the most important ones first. You might want to ask someone to go with you to help you ask questions and remember answers. Find out if you can bring a tape recorder.

During the Doctor/Provider Visit or Call Checklist

- Ask questions. Write down the answers. If you don't, the doctor may think you understand everything that was said. Examples of questions to ask:
 - What do you think the problem or diagnosis is?
 - What, if any, tests are needed to rule out or confirm this?
 - What do I need to do to treat the problem?
 - Do I need to take medicine?
 - How can I prevent the problem in the future?
 - Can you write down what you want me to do?
 - Where can I get more information?
 - How are costs handled for this visit and for tests?
- Let your doctor know if you need more time. If the doctor can't comply, ask if a physician assistant, nurse, etc. can talk to you then or later that day.
- Find out when you need to see or call your doctor next.

After the Doctor/Provider Visit or Call Checklist

- Follow your doctor's advice.
- Call the doctor's office if you have questions.
- Tell your doctor if you feel worse, have other problems or side effects from the medicines, etc.
- Schedule tests and/or appointments as advised by your doctor.
- If you had tests and did not get the results, call your doctor.
- Keep return visit appointments. ■

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**Southwest Turkey Soup****Ingredients:**

- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 scallions, chopped, divided
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper (or crushed red pepper flakes)
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1 1/2 cups cooked, shredded turkey
- 1 (28-oz.) can whole peeled tomatoes, drained
- 2 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 4 cups low fat, reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 (4-oz.) can chopped green chile peppers
- 1 tsp. lime juice
- 1 avocado, pitted, peeled and diced
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped, divided
- 3/4 cup shredded, low fat Monterey Jack cheese
- 2 handfuls baked corn tortilla chips, roughly crushed

Instructions:

Heat oil in large pot over medium heat. Sauté onion, garlic, half of the scallions and spices for about 5 minutes. Add turkey, canned tomatoes, fresh tomatoes, broth, chile peppers and lime juice. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 18 to 20 minutes.

Stir in avocado and cilantro and simmer 15 to 20 minutes until slightly thickened.

Spoon into bowls, top with shredded cheese, remaining scallions and cilantro. Add crushed tortilla chips just before serving. Makes 8 servings.

Per serving: 200 calories, 8 g total fat (2.5 g saturated fat), 12 g carbohydrate, 19 g protein, 3 g dietary fiber, 420 mg sodium.

The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) is the cancer charity that fosters research on the relationship of nutrition, physical activity and weight management to cancer risk, interprets the scientific literature and educates the public about the results. It has contributed more than \$87 million for innovative research conducted at universities, hospitals and research centers across the country. AICR has published two landmark reports that interpret the accumulated research in the field and is committed to a process of continuous review. AICR also provides a wide range of educational programs to help millions of Americans learn to make dietary changes for lower cancer risk. Its award-winning New American Plate program is presented in brochures, seminars and on its Web site, www.aicr.org. AICR is a member of the World Cancer Research Fund International.

The information contained in this newsletter is meant to raise health awareness and is not intended to replace the advice of your healthcare provider.