



December 2008 Issue #07

healthy eating

NEW FINDINGS

drinking when pregnant

SURPRISING NEWS

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large waistline, shorter lifeline

A large waistline can almost double your risk of premature death, even if your weight is in the 'normal' range, British researchers warned last month.

The study of more than 350,000 people is strong evidence that storing extra waistline fat is a significant health risk, even in people not considered to be obese.

Professor Elio Riboli from Imperial College London said the risk of premature death was about double for people with a larger waist (more than 120cm for men and more than 100 cm for women) compared to those with a smaller waist.



Each five cm increase in waist circumference increased risk of death by 17 per cent in men and 13 per cent in women, the New England Journal of Medicine study has found.

The higher risk may be related to storing fat around the waistline because fatty tissue in this area secretes cytokines, hormones and metabolically active compounds that can contribute to the development of chronic diseases, particular heart disease and cancer.

N Engl J Med 2008;359:2105-20

slim down britain campaign launched

A nationwide campaign to boost healthy eating and reduce obesity was launched in November by the British government amidst a host of newly disturbing facts and figures.

According to a government-commissioned survey, just 38 per cent of adults know that obesity can cause heart disease and only 11.5 per cent of parents with overweight children are aware of the problem.

Health ministers hope the public will now spot the slogan Change4Life in supermarkets when they go shopping - and start switching to healthy food. Major retailers including Asda and Tesco have been recruited to the campaign.

The department of health said a total of 12,400 organisations are to take part in the campaign, including the British Heart Foundation, the Association of Convenience Stores and soft drink retailer PepsiCo.

Health secretary Alan Johnson warned that 90 per cent of today's children could grow up to be overweight adults by 2050. He said: "Obesity is the biggest public health challenge the country faces. If we don't take action now we will condemn our children to reduced life expectancy.

"That's why we are aiming to create a lifestyle revolution that will help families to eat well, move more and live longer.

"We can't start a revolution on our own - we need everyone from grassroots community clubs to multinational companies to join us. Ten million people visit their corner shops every day and 36 million shop at Asda and Tesco each week - the fact that grocers and supermarkets are on board means we can really influence what goes into our shopping trolleys."



HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SHAKING LIKE A BOWL FULL OF JELLY WHEN YOU LAUGH?



pregnancy drinking conundrum

Women who take a little alcohol during pregnancy may not be doing their children any harm, according to a major British study.

A study involving more than 12,000 children found that those born to mothers who drank "lightly" during pregnancy appeared brighter and more stable than those born to mothers who followed official advice and made sure they did not drink.



Although the differences reported by the researchers are striking, they may be explained by the nature of those women who continue to take alcohol during pregnancy.

The researchers, from University College London, said they had not managed to account for social differences that might mean the mothers were wealthier than others.

The children were studied at the age of three. The study found that girl children born to light drinkers were 30 per cent less likely to show emotional problems and difficulties relating to their age group.

The boys born to the light drinkers had better speech and knowledge of colours, shapes, letters and numbers than others, according to the report in the International Journal of Epidemiology.

The study confirmed that heavy drinking is harmful to children.

Researcher Dr Yvonne Kelly said: "There is inconsistency in policy around this issue and studies such as this one are vital in light of the wider debate around drinking and pregnancy.

"Our study's findings do raise questions as to whether the current push for policy to recommend complete abstinence during pregnancy is merited and suggest that further research needs to be done."

She added: "The reasons behind these findings might in part be because light drinkers tend to be more socially advantaged than abstainers, rather than being due to the physical benefits of low level alcohol consumption seen, for example, in heart disease.

"However, it may also be that light-drinking mothers tend to be more relaxed themselves and this contributes to better behavioural and cognitive outcomes in their children."

Meanwhile a British agency is set to publish advice warning pregnant women to cut down caffeine, it was reported yesterday.

The advice will come from the Food Standards Agency and will recommend women not to drink more than two mugs of instant coffee a day, it was reported.



International Journal of Epidemiology doi:10.1093/ije/dyn230 October 2008



Instead of sending out Christmas cards this year we will make a donation to the Médecins Sans Frontières charity.



Roodlane Medical would like to wish all of our clients an enjoyable festive season and a prosperous New Year in 2009!

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