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HEALTH

Coffee May be Good for Aging Hearts

Drinking caffeinated beverages on a regular basis may provide significant protection against death from heart disease in the elderly who have normal levels of blood pressure, according to data from a large U.S. health and nutrition study.

Drinking caffeinated beverages may induce a "healthy" rise in blood pressure that counteracts the drop in blood pressure that occurs after a meal, a phenomenon that becomes more pronounced as people age, researchers note.

For subjects 65 years of age or older, the researchers found that greater daily consumption of caffeinated beverages was associated with a lower risk of death from heart disease.

This apparent protective effect of caffeinated coffee consumption was not seen in people with severe

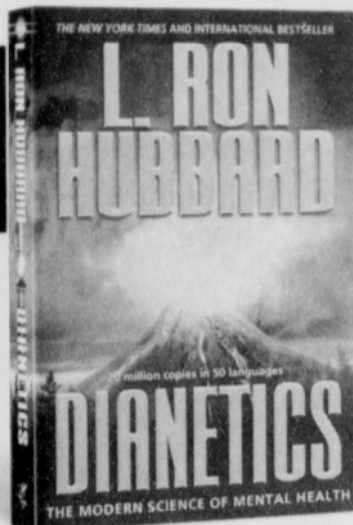


A cup of coffee may help lower blood pressure in the elderly.

high blood pressure or those who were younger than 65 years of age.

Studies on caffeine and heart disease have yielded conflicting

results, note principal investigator Dr. James A. Greenberg and colleagues from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York.



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This research is being conducted by the Oregon Center for Applied Science, Inc. with funding from the National Institutes of Health. There are no sales or marketing lists involved.

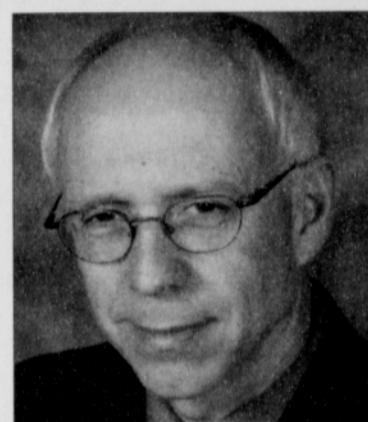
Quit Smoking Drug Benefits Come Late

Smokers urged not to get discouraged

Smokers and clinicians should not be discouraged or discontinue cessation medication when success is not immediate.

An Oregon Health & Science University researcher has found smokers taking cessation drugs who are unable to quit in the first few weeks of treatment can quit weeks later if they continue taking the medication.

"Our recent analysis shows smokers and clinicians should not be discouraged when total abstinence is not achieved in the first weeks of treatment with smoking cessation medications," said David Gonzales, Ph.D., lead author, direc-



David Gonzales

tor of the OHSU Smoking Cessation Center, and clinical investigator in medicine. "We found that quitting smoking was a dynamic process that was immediate for some, but delayed, taking several weeks, for others who took varenicline or bupropion."

Traditionally, clinicians and

smokers have expected fairly immediate positive results from smoking cessation medications, according to Gonzales.

"If smokers on medication don't quit in the first week or two following their target quit date, clinicians often will instruct their patients to discontinue their medication. Clinicians consider this a failed attempt," said Gonzales.

The study data suggest that quitting is a dynamic process and if smokers are encouraged and supported during treatment with varenicline or bupropion, they can quit over a period of weeks, not only quit on their target quit day, and clinicians should consider continuing to encourage their patients to stay on their medications beyond the first weeks of treatment even if they are unable to quit immediately.

BY KIMBERLY MATHEWS

Improving Your HEALTH

Black History Month is a time to honor the rich culture and history of the African American community. We pay tribute to the many influential leaders and everyday people who paved the way for equality and freedom. But it is also time to learn from this history and make a better today.

This community has overcome many struggles, yet there are still challenges. In Oregon, blacks have the poorest health profile of any racial/ethnic group. Understanding the role food plays is an essential component in improving the health and well being of the black community.

According the Michael Byrd and Linda Clayton, the authors of *An American Health Dilemma: A Medical History of African Americans and the Problems of Race—Beginnings to 1900*, "The [inadequate] health care and poor nutrition afforded to slaves set the paradigm of diminished societal expectation for black health."

Law professor Vernellia Randall argues that that the deplorable state of black peoples'

health can be directly traced to slavery. Due to the long and arduous working days, food was basic but filling, made from the poorest quality of available food. Foods such as gumbos, cornbread, and chitlins (chitterlings) became dietary staples; the high fat content and low nutritional value were countered by the demanding physically activity of the day. The problem is the foods listed above and many others are still an everyday part of the diet.

Traditional foods, soul food, should remain a part of the African American diet; it's a living part of history, however we now know that these traditional foods can be prepared in a healthier way.

"Fat, salt and sugar are the major threats in the way African Americans eat," says registered dietician Roniece Weaver. "Studies show that 49 percent of African-American women are overweight, as compared with 32 percent of white women, and 3 million African-Americans have diabetes, but half of them don't know it."

Roots of Black Nutrition: Soul Food

Are you ready to start making healthy changes? A healthy community starts with you. The African American Health Coalition Inc. has a number of programs to help turn your favorite traditions into healthy traditions. These resources are at no cost to the Blacks in the Portland metro area.

The AAHC offers a healthy cooking class focusing on adding healthy twists to classic soul food dishes. The AAHC also offers that series of classes aimed at improving overall health on various topics including weight loss, general nutrition, and seasonal eating. In addition, the AAHC periodically holds "Food Talks" that include cooking demonstrations and discussions focusing on improving health.

If you are interested in any of these programs, please contact Christie Taylor at 503-413-1850 or at christiet@aahc-portland.org.

Kimberly Mathews is an Americorps Vista program coordinator for the African American Health Coalition.

Herpes Drug May Curb HIV

Treating genital herpes can also help keep the AIDS virus under control in women with both infections, and might reduce the spread of HIV, too, the first major study to test this strategy suggests.

Many people with HIV are also

infected with the herpes type 2 virus, and scientists have long known that herpes sores on the genitals can make it easier to become infected with the AIDS virus and could increase the risk of transmitting HIV to others.

In the latest study, conducted in Africa and published in Thursday's *New England Journal of Medicine*, women who took the herpes drug valacyclovir had less HIV in their blood and in their genital secretions.

Best Method for Weight Loss

A new study debunks the widely held belief that diet plus exercise is the most effective way to lose weight. Researchers report that dieting alone is just as effective as dieting plus exercise.

"For weight loss to occur, an

individual needs to maintain a difference between the number of calories they consume everyday and the number of calories they burn through metabolism and physical activity," Dr. Leanne Redman of the Pennington Biomedical Re-

search Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, explains in a press release.

"What we found was that it did not matter whether a reduction in calories was achieved through diet or burned everyday through exercise."



Are you the mother of a child with ADHD?

OHSU is currently enrolling families in **PACT**, a research study geared toward learning the best ways to support families who are living with ADHD.

Who is eligible to participate?

- Families with at least one child (age 4-21) with a diagnosis of ADHD
- Families who live in the Portland metropolitan area

If you are eligible, you will be randomly assigned to one of two groups:

1. **A home-based approach** where a nurse visits your home at regular intervals to provide services and support that are unique to you and your family.
2. **An information-based approach** where families will be provided with literature about ADHD.

There is no cost for participating in the study. Mothers will receive a \$50 gift card every six months for 18 months for participating in the study, no matter to which group they are assigned. Additional family members will receive \$10 gift cards each time they complete a short survey.

For more information, please call 503 418-3603 or email pact@ohsu.edu



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