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JOEL FUHRMAN, MD

High salt intake linked to headaches

Headaches (including migraines) are a common health issue affecting approximately one-fifth of all Americans.

Several dietary factors are known to trigger headaches, including alcohol, caffeine, chocolate, cheese, nuts, citrus fruits, processed meats, artificial sweeteners and fatty foods. However, salt is rarely mentioned as a potential trigger, and there has been little or no research on sodium intake and headaches published until recently.

Salt intake in our modern food environment is unnaturally high; the average daily sodium intake worldwide is 3,950 mg (3,600 mg in the U.S.), far above the American Heart Association's guideline of 1,500 mg/day, and the World Health Organization guideline of 2,000 mg/day.

It has been estimated that 15 percent of all deaths from cardiovascular disease are due to excess salt intake. Processed foods, fast foods and restaurant foods are notoriously high in salt, and increasingly, these sources are where people's meals come from. In addition to cardiovascular disease, high-

salt diets are implicated in bone loss, stomach cancer, autoimmune disease and possibly headaches, too.

Researchers analyzed data on headaches from the DASH-Sodium trial (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), which tested the effects of two different dietary patterns, each with three levels of sodium, on blood pressure. The control diet was a typical American diet, and the experimental diet was the DASH diet.

The DASH diet limits fats, red meat and sweets, is focused on vegetables, fruits and low-fat dairy, and also includes whole grains, poultry, fish and nuts. Within each diet, there were three different levels of sodium: 1150 mg/day (low), 2300 mg/day (intermediate), 3450 mg/day (high).

Overall, the risk of headache in participants assigned to the DASH diet was not any lower than that of those on the control diet. However, when low, intermediate and high sodium intake within each diet were compared, low sodium intake was associated with a reduced risk of headaches. Compared to the control diet with high sodium,

the DASH diet with low sodium was associated with a 36 percent reduction in headaches.

Is it because a high-salt diet could elevate blood pressure? The researchers aren't sure. It is unclear whether elevated blood pressure provokes headaches; reports on the relationship between blood pressure and headaches are inconsistent. Regardless, this study suggests that reducing dietary salt is an important part of a dietary plan to fend off headaches and provides another reason to limit added salt in the diet.

Whether or not you have frequent headaches, sodium in excess is harmful. By primarily relying on the sodium present in natural foods and preparing most meals in the home, we can avoid most sources of added salt and take in adequate but not dangerously high levels of sodium. Increased levels of cellular toxins and heightened cellular inflammation are the chief causes of headache syndromes in general.

A diet rich in phytonutrients and antioxidants is the key to resolution. I have utilized an eating plan for headache suffer-

ers with remarkable success; described in my book Eat For Health. For people who have frequent headaches, the solution is almost always dietary.

This anti-headache diet starts with my basic nutitarian dietary principles and additionally eliminates some healthful, yet potential trigger foods, such as nuts and avocados, which may be added back in at a later time.

A huge nutritional improvement over the DASH diet, a nutitarian diet is naturally low in sodium, and rich in green vegetables and other plant foods that enhance the body's natural detoxification mechanisms and promote superior health.

It is not merely elimination of trigger foods that is effective, it is that the person becomes healthier and

improves their detoxification capabilities and remove cellular waste as they follow such a healthful diet.

If you have regular headaches, you can banish them forever and earn back great health that will also offer you protection against later life stroke, heart disease and cancer simultaneously.

Dr. Fuhrman is a New York Times best-selling author and board certified family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine.

Visit his website at DrFuhrman.com, or submit questions and comments to news questions@drfuhrman.com.



Toastmasters to host public speaking workshop

The public is invited to attend a public speaking workshop on Saturday, April 11, at the Florence Playhouse, 208 Laurel St., starting at 9 a.m.

The title of the workshop is "Public Speaking 101 — and Beyond." The program will be led by Eric Winger, champion of the Toastmasters District 7 2014 Evaluation Contest.

Doors open at 8:30 a.m. for the first session, which runs from 9 a.m. to noon. The afternoon session runs from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. The public can attend either or both sessions at no charge. Different topics will be covered at each session.

Winger is a 25-year veteran software engineer and an accomplished speaker.

Currently, he is a member of two Toastmaster clubs in the Portland area. He is president of one and a coach at the other club, which is student-run. He has held all club officer positions and has served as area governor. In addition to coaching people of all levels to speak better, this past year Winger delivered 20 evaluation workshops to clubs in District 7.

Winger speaks regularly to organizations, schools and service clubs on a variety of topics including computer science, engineering, humor, public speaking, evaluation and motivation.

Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network

of meeting locations.

To RSVP for this workshop or for more information about local Toastmasters contact,

Irma Geller at 541-999-0912 or Anne Machalek at 541-902-8008.



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