

JOEL FUHRMAN, MD

Poor diet is major cause of premature death

An international team of researchers have released new data about the risk factors associated with preventable deaths and loss of quality life years.

The Global Burden of Disease study is a huge, ongoing project collecting data on 79 modifiable risk factors in 188 countries; the team of researchers evaluates studies on each risk factor, grading the evidence that links each one to early death and adding more risk factors to the list when new evidence arises.

In 1990 and even in 2000,

child and maternal malnutrition, unsafe water and sanitation, and lack of handwashing were the primary risk factors.

However, between 2000 and 2013 dietary risks overtook child and maternal malnutrition as the factor responsible for the greatest number of premature deaths.

A poor diet (a collection of 14 risk factors including high red meat intake, low vegetable intake and low nut/seed intake) accounted for 11.3 million deaths.

Following a poor diet, the

major risk factors were high blood pressure, child and maternal malnutrition, tobacco, air pollution and a high BMI.

In recent decades, the American diet has undergone a transformation that has put disease-causing refined carbohydrates, oils, and animal foods at the center of every meal, with natural plant foods playing only a minor role.

This dietary shift is apparent in the data. As new parts of the world continue to adopt these eating habits, diet is becoming a larger burden on health and

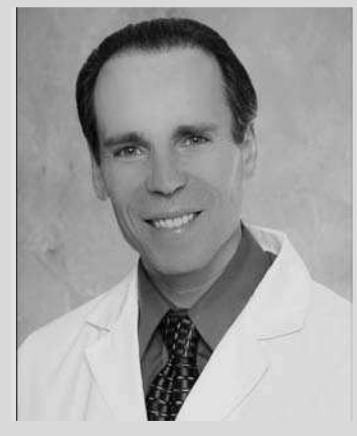
lifespan all over the world.

When the researchers looked at some of the dietary risks individually, between 2000 and 2013 there was a global increase in the numbers of deaths associated with low fruit, high sodium, low fiber, low nuts and seeds, and high red and processed meat intake.

The number of deaths associated with high blood pressure, high BMI and high fasting blood glucose also increased over this time. There is some good news though—deaths due to trans fat intake and second-hand smoke have declined.

The authors state “each of the risk factors included in this analysis is modifiable, pointing to the huge potential of prevention to improve human health.”

These trends are reversible, and the deaths associated with a poor diet are avoidable. It took many years, but today everyone knows that smoking causes lung cancer.



Everyone is taught this from a young age, before the opportunity to start smoking.

Tobacco use is declining, and as a result, so are the health impacts of tobacco. The data suggests that this is beginning to happen with trans fat too.

We're not there yet, but we are moving toward a time when processed meats, commercial baked goods and sugar-sweetened beverages will be viewed by everyone as dangerous.

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

Soup's On to discuss pros, cons of patriotism

On Monday, Nov. 9, at 6:30 p.m., everyone is invited to join a group with diverse spiritual paths who enjoy discussing a variety of spiritual topics. This week's topic will be “patriotism.”

The evening will begin with bowls of Chinese chicken vegetable soup, warm homemade bread and vegetables followed

by the evening's topic until 8:30 p.m.

The gathering will end with prayers for the requests left in the Prayer Pole in the garden of the Florence Playhouse and those shared by the group.

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