

Smoking is still a major cause of death says American Heart Assoc.

Smoking persists as a major risk factor for death from heart disease and cancer in adults who already have heart disease and receive good medical therapy, according to research reported in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

Researchers analyzed 12,152 men and women who participated in an international study based on their smoking status: current smokers, former smokers and nonsmokers.

Current smokers more than doubled their risk of death from heart disease, cancer and all causes in the three-year study period. Current smokers also were at increased risk of heart attack and stroke compared to former smokers and nonsmokers.

"The analysis provides further strong evidence that people with heart disease who continue to smoke take a very high risk of increasing their chances of death in the short term," said Deepak L. Bhatt, M.D., M.P.H., principal investigator of Clopidogrel for High Atherothrombotic Risk and Ischemic Stabilization, Management and Avoidance (the CHARISMA trial) and chief of cardiology at V.A. Boston Healthcare System in Massachusetts.

"The study provides impetus for a smoker to stop," he said. "The benefits of risk reduction accrue relatively quickly when someone stops smoking, although the lingering cancer risk is still there."

Of the study participants,

about 20 percent were current smokers; about 51 percent were former smokers; and about 29 percent never smoked. The average age ranged from 60 years in the smoking group to 66 years in the group of nonsmokers. All groups were predominantly Caucasian and included Americans and Europeans.

Researchers found no difference in risk between men and women by smoking status. Researchers also found no significant difference between former smokers and nonsmokers in risk of death from heart disease or from all causes. However, former smokers had a higher risk of death from cancer than those who never smoked.

Current smokers had a 2.58

times increased risk of death from all causes and a 2.26 times increased risk of death from heart disease compared with those who never smoked. They had a 4.16 times increased risk of cancer death.

"You're much better off being a former smoker than a current smoker," Bhatt said. "It's a good idea to stop now rather than taking your chances or considering stopping when you are older and sicker."

In another aspect of the study, researchers examined the impact of smoking on the treatment effect of the widely used medication clopidogrel, an anti-platelet agent.

The medication benefits smokers more than former smokers and nonsmokers, re-

searchers said. Clopidogrel significantly reduced death from all causes and death from heart disease in current smokers. The benefit was less in former smokers and nonsmokers. While clopidogrel therapy was more effective in current smokers they also had a greater risk of bleeding compared to those who did not smoke.

Co-authors are: Jeffrey S. Berger, M.D.; Steven Steinhubl, M.D.; Mingyuan Shao, M.D.; P. Gabriel Steg, M.D.; Gilles Montalescot, M.D.; Werner Hacke, M.D.; Keith A. Fox, M.B.Ch.B.; A. Michael Lincoff, M.D.; Eric J. Topol, M.D. and Peter B. Berger, M.D. Individual author disclosures are on the manuscript.

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Tips for New Year resolution dieting can help with your success

Many Americans will ring in the New Year with a resolution to go on a diet. Days of starvation and suffering will ensue, and the diet will very likely end in failure and discouragement. Studies show that even among those who successfully lose weight, only 5% will manage to keep the weight off. "Simply put, diets don't work," says Elizabeth Coppola MS, RD, CDE, CSSD; Supervisor of Nutrition and Diabetes-Wellness Services at PeaceHealth.

"Diets lead to more diets," says Coppola. "But once the weight is lost the diet is also lost, and the pounds come right back. Then the cycle starts again with a new diet. There's a better way! Rather than a tem-

porary diet approach to weight loss, we should think about living a healthier lifestyle. If we take good care of every aspect of our lives, including diet, activity, stress, and sleep, it will help us reach and maintain a healthy weight."

PeaceHealth has developed an employee wellness program called LifeQuest, which focuses on encouraging healthier lifestyles. "The program is designed to support and educate PeaceHealth employees as they begin to make healthy lifestyle changes," says Coppola. "These five lifestyle tips can work for anyone. The key is to get started!"

• Exercise is the "Magic Pill". Fitting in 4-7 workouts per

week for 35-60 minutes each will improve overall health while burning extra calories, which will lead to weight loss.

• Balance, Variety and Moderation. When thinking about food, think about what, how much, and how often we eat. There are no "bad" foods! We should focus on healthier options like whole grains, fruits, veggies, and low fat meats and dairy products as the center of our meal plan.

• Get Enough Sleep. The average adult needs 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Sleeping well will provide energy for everyday activities, and well-rested people are more likely to eat well and exercise!

• Take a Time Out. In our fast paced society we are getting less and less down time.

Schedule a day off with no plans, or at least take 5-minute breaks during your busy day. Use the down time to relax and do something you enjoy, either alone or with your family.

• Keep your eye on your goal. If you are working toward a specific lifestyle change, write down your goal and a plan for how you are going to achieve it. Take a moment every week to re-read what you have written.

Revise it as needed, and stay with your plan!

St. John Medical Center is a community-owned, not-for-profit, 193-bed acute care hospital and Level III trauma center located in Longview, Washington. PeaceHealth Medical Group is a Longview, Washington multi-specialty medical group made up of more than 100 general and specialty medical providers.

Resolve to be prepared in 2010

There's no telling what the future holds – and building bright futures here in the Pacific Northwest often means grappling with dark realities. Floods, winter storms, earthquakes – no matter what Mother Nature has in store, preparing ahead of time can reduce damage – and regrets. Need a catalyst to convert good intentions into effective emergency plans? Acting FEMA Regional Administrator Dennis Hunsinger suggests you build them into your 2010

New Year Resolutions.

"Natural disasters strike with little or no warning," said Hunsinger. "Every family and every community in the country should take action now to reduce the effects of future disasters."

New Year resolutions that could make for a safer and more secure 2010 might include:

• Install smoke detectors, freshen batteries and mark

See Be prepared, page 14



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bunny.girt.b71g@statefarm.com


