

The Surprising Health Benefits of Eating Brown Rice



Think twice before eating white rice. A large study reports that people who eat white rice are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes, but those who eat more brown rice have less risk.

To create white rice, naturally brown rice must be milled and polished. This process removes most of its vitamins and minerals. Milling also strips away most of its fiber – a compound that might deter diabetes by slowing the rush of sugar into the bloodstream.

When researchers looked at rice consumption and diabetes risk in 200,000 people, they found that people who frequently ate white rice had an increased risk of type 2

diabetes. People who ate at least 5 servings of white rice a week had a 17% higher risk than those who ate less than 1 serving a month. In contrast, those who ate at least 2 servings of brown rice a week had an 11% lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes than did those who ate less than 1 serving a month. The findings held even after scientists adjusted for factors that might influence the results, such as age, weight, and family history of diabetes. By replacing just one-third of a typical daily serving of white rice with the same amount of brown rice, you could reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes by 16%. And if you replace one-third of a serving of white rice daily with other whole grains, such as whole wheat or barley, you could reduce your risk by 36%.

National Institutes of Health. 2010.

Exercise – The Anti-Aging Weapon

Regular physical activity helps prevent or manage bone problems, heart disease, lung disease, cancer, diabetes, memory problems, and obesity. Any one of these conditions could significantly lower your quality of life and raise the risk that you won't be able to live independently later in life.

- **Successful Aging:** In a 15-year study, women who walked regularly had a 90% increase in their chances of aging successfully compared to those who didn't walk regularly. Those who walked "very briskly" were 2.7 times as likely to avoid disease, think more clearly, keep physically active, and stay busy with life.

- **Bone Fracture and Heart Risk:**

In another study, women who did a variety of exercises (i.e., aerobic, strength, flexibility) for 60 minutes 4 times a week had half as many bone fractures compared to women who only did



low-intensity exercises once a week. Interestingly, both groups saw a drop in their 10-year heart disease risk. Even a very moderate increase in activity was good for heart health.

- **Brain Function:** A 2-year study showed that regular exercise directly improved blood flow to the brain and even stimulated growth of new blood vessels in the brain, improving brain function.
- **Quality of Life:** Researchers found that regular exercise measurably improved the quality of life for people age 65 and older. Seniors who did T'ai chi for 30 minutes 4 times a week over a period of 6 months were better able to

walk and take care of themselves.

If you want to enjoy better health as you grow older, exercise regularly. You're never too old or too young to start!

Archives of Internal Medicine. 2010.

There Really Is a Healthy Fat

For many years, nutritionists have said, "Eat less saturated fat." But what food should you eat in its place?

To try to answer that question, 11 studies replaced saturated fat (e.g., butter, meats, cheeses) with carbohydrates (e.g., grains, vegetables, legumes).

When the researchers analyzed the results, they found no decrease in heart disease.

On the other hand, the large Nurses' Health Study found a significant decrease in heart and stroke risk when polyunsaturated fats – found in walnuts, corn and soy oil, flax meal, and fish – were used in place of saturated fats. When Harvard researchers analyzed 8 nutrition studies, they found that people who replaced saturated fats with polyunsaturated fats had the best decrease in heart attacks or in developing heart disease.

When you replace saturated fat with carbohydrates, your LDL (or "bad") cholesterol levels fall, but so do the protective HDL cholesterol levels. When saturated fat is replaced with polyunsaturated fat, LDL cholesterol levels fall even further and HDL cholesterol levels remain high. That's why heart disease risk drops.

Archives of Internal Medicine; American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. 2010.

Read more about polyunsaturated fats: <http://tinyurl.com/2a15bpc>

Come On, Get Happy!

Mental health is more than the mere absence of mental illness. According to the World Health Organization, it is a state of well-being in which you realize your own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can make a contribution to your community. You feel happy and satisfied with how you interact socially, how you cope emotionally, how you do your job, and how you help others.

Although most Americans believe that good emotional health is just as important as good physical health, an American Psychological Association survey found that many people don't know how to foster good mental health for themselves. Here are some things you can do to improve and maintain your own mental health:

- **Nurture good relationships.**



- **Expect the best.** Everyone has a bad day once in a while. Resist turning unfortunate events and inconveniences into catastrophes.

- **Eat healthfully and exercise regularly.**

What to Do When You Can't Sleep

The mere mention of the word insomnia conjures up an image of a sleepless person counting thousands of imaginary sheep. But insomnia is not defined simply as how long it takes you to fall asleep. Some people who have insomnia fall asleep easily but wake up too soon. Others wake up many times during the night – and struggle to return to blissful slumber. In the morning, an insomniac doesn't feel refreshed.

If you have insomnia, avoid substances that make sleeping difficult:

- **Caffeine, tobacco, and other stimulants** taken too close to bedtime. Their effects can last as long as 8 hours.
- **Certain over-the-counter and prescription medicines** that can disrupt sleep (for example, some cold and allergy medicines). Talk to your doctor about which medicines won't interrupt your sleep.



Read Tips to Get a Good Night's Sleep: www.wellsource.info/wn/sleep.pdf

- **Alcohol.** An alcoholic drink before bedtime may make it easier to fall asleep. However, alcohol-induced sleep tends to be lighter than normal. This makes it more likely that you will wake up during the night. If your bedtime finds you wide-eyed, try some of these ideas to help you sleep better:
- Adopt good bedtime habits that make it easy to fall asleep and stay asleep. Follow a routine that helps you wind down and relax before bed.
- Eat your evening meal before 7 p.m. – and keep it lighter.
- Make your bedroom sleep-friendly. Avoid bright lighting while winding down. Try to limit possible distractions, such as a TV, computers, or pets.

- **Work is important – and so is recreation.** Take the time to play, relax, and get enough rest. Find time to do things you enjoy.
- **Learn to cope with stress** and solve problems.
- **Do things that help you feel productive**, such as gardening or volunteering.
- **Set priorities.** Do the important things first, and realize that you can only do so much.
- **Get tasks done on time.** Procrastination causes stress and anxiety.
- **Share your feelings with others**, and listen to what they have to say.
- **Get professional help** when you know you need it.

Your emotional health is directly related to your behaviors, attitude, and the decisions you make every day. Be proactive. Do something positive. Value yourself and others.

American Psychological Association; World Health Organization. 2010.

Happiness is a warm puppy.



- Go to bed around the same time each night and wake up around the same time each morning, even on weekends. If you can, avoid night shifts, alternating schedules, or other things that may disrupt your sleep schedule.

National Institutes of Health. 2010.

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

Q: What causes cold sores and what is the best way to get rid of them?

A: Go to www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-cold-sores.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: paulaw@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

Health Challenge: "Protect Your Back and Joints Each Day" available at: www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-back.pdf.

Do your back or joints ache? To keep them healthy, quit smoking, maintain a normal weight, use proper lifting techniques, exercise at least 5 times a week, and do stretching exercises 2-3 times weekly.