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Scientists Say Fast Food Heightens Risk of Diabetes

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A new study has found that people who eat fast food are much more likely to develop insulin resistance than those who don't.

A study published in the international journal the *Lancet* found that people whose diet consists primarily of fatty food - such as hamburgers, french fries and pizza - weigh more and have an increased risk of insulin resistance compared to people who limit their consumption of foods high in fat.

Insulin resistance is a condition in which peoples' insulin does not process food effectively and abnormal amounts of sugar circulate in the blood stream. The result is high blood sugar levels that can make such individuals more prone to high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.

Investigators followed more than three thousand people who reported their fast food eating habits. After 15 years, the U.S. researchers found that those who ate at least two meals per week at a fast food restaurant were four-point-five kilograms heavier, and they had more than a 100 percent risk of insulin resistance compared to those who limited their intake of fast food to one meal or less per week.

Dr. Alan Rubin has written a number of books on diabetes-related topics. He said the connection between insulin resistance and diets rich in fat has long been suspected. "They wanted to have a study, which very clearly showed that there was something going on in the fast food that pointed to insulin resistance, and I think this study does a very good job of doing that," he said.

Dr. Rubin said the findings have worldwide implications. "You go to India and China and you find that the occurrence of diabetes is growing so rapidly there

that with their huge populations of over a billion people in each of those countries, they are going to suffer from tremendous amounts of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and so forth," he said.

In another health-related development, international health officials say they worry survivors of the tsunami who have otherwise manageable diseases, like diabetes and high blood pressure, will begin to suffer because they can't receive care at south Asia's decimated health care facilities.

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A University of Pittsburgh study indicates genetic variants may be more prevalent in African-Americans, which may explain why they may be more likely than whites to develop certain potentially life-threatening illnesses. African-Americans are more likely than whites to suffer from kidney disease, stroke, and premature birth labor. Inflammation is common to these and other autoimmune disorders. In attempting to find out why blacks are stricken more often...

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Journal: Obesity Linked to Irregular Heartbeat

Obesity is a well-established cause of several health problems. Now a new study is the first to tie it to an irregular heartbeat, which can cause stroke and heart failure. John Nagle, 57, no longer a slender man, went to a hospital emergency room a few years ago fearing he was about to have a heart attack, but the reason for his visit was not chest pain. "When I first came to the hospital, there was shortness of breath, but no pain. That's when they found out..."

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Study Shows Overweight People May Have Inactivity Gene

Scientists report that people who are overweight may be genetically predisposed to inactivity, compared to lean individuals who always seem to squirm or tap their feet. It is no secret that thinner people tend to exercise more. But researchers at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota also believe that thinner people, unlike overweight individuals, tend to be much more active on a smaller scale. They fidget, tap their foot, pace the floor. To find out whether the...

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US Government Asks Americans to Eat Less, Exercise More

The U.S. government is asking Americans to eat less and exercise more in an effort to stem the country's increasing epidemic of obesity. It has issued revised dietary recommendations that emphasize proper nutrition, more physical activity, and personal initiative in maintaining a healthy weight. U.S. law requires the government to revise its dietary guidelines every five years to keep up with the latest scientific research. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman, whose...