



Sitting May Be Hazardous to Your Health

People sit while eating in the morning, and in their cars going to work. In general, they sit most of the day at work or school and sit while coming home in the car at night. Finally, they sit in the evening watching TV, playing computer games, or surfing the Internet.

Researchers have found that people who sit at least half the time during the day – at work, home, or school – have a significantly increased risk of dying from any cause. In the 12-year study, people who sat almost all the time had a 54% increased risk of dying compared to people who sat almost none of the time. This increased risk from long periods of sitting was independent of age, smoking, alcohol use, weight, and even exercise frequency, suggesting that sitting is hazardous to health and cannot be completely compensated for with a physical activity program.

How much do you sit during a typical day? It might take creative thinking and effort to sit less and be more active during the majority of your day – but it is recommended for best health. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ✓ Get up frequently at work to walk about when talking on the phone, thinking, discussing concepts with individuals, or taking a message to a colleague.
- ✓ Stand during meetings or when reading reports.
- ✓ Commute to work by walking, jogging, or riding your bike. Take public transportation and walk to and from the bus or train stop.
- ✓ Around home, work in the garden, go for a walk, and play active games (e.g., ping pong or jump rope).

For best health and longevity, maintain a normal body weight (being obese and sitting a lot had the highest mortality), get regular physical activity (30+ minutes, 5+ days each week), and limit the amount of time you sit every day.

Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise. May 2009.



Help Halt the Spread of Flu

The past month brought focus to influenza, particularly the H1N1 virus (also referred to as “swine flu”). This new virus was first detected in Mexico and quickly spread to countries around the world. Medical experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) expect the illness to continue for some time – perhaps lying dormant through the summer months only to re-emerge as a world influenza pandemic in the fall.

The symptoms of this novel H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza and include:

- ✓ Fever greater than 100°F (37.8°C)
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Stuffy or runny nose
- ✓ Chills
- ✓ Body aches and headache
- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Vomiting

If you get sick, you may be ill for a week or longer. You should stay home. If you get sick, you may be ill for a week or longer. You should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible, except to seek medical care, to keep from spreading your illness. If you leave the house to seek medical care, wear a mask or cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.

At the current time, CDC believes this virus has the same properties as seasonal flu viruses in terms of spreading. With seasonal flu, studies have shown that people may be contagious from 1 day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. May 2009.

6 Ways You Can Avoid Flu Viruses

- 1. Stay informed.** The CDC website is updated regularly as information becomes available: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm
- 2. Wash your hands** often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective.
- 3. Avoid touching your eyes,** nose, or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- 4. Stay home if you get sick.** CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- 5. Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- 6. Follow public health advice** regarding school closures, avoiding crowds, and other social distancing measures.

An Outgoing Personality

Scientists continue to look into the lifestyles, personalities, and genes of centenarians (people who live to their 100s) and their families to discover the secrets of longevity. It's known that the tendency to live a long, healthy life runs in families. So, researchers recently studied the children of people who lived to age 100 or more to see if they could find a common personality trait.

These offspring were well on their way to old age themselves – they were all around age 75. They had 60% reduced rates of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes than their contemporaries.

Both male and female offspring of centenarians were



Could Help You Live to Be 100

more extroverted than the societal norm and also knew how to manage stress well. The women also scored comparatively high in agreeableness – a personality trait lending itself to successful friendships. They were social and actively involved with life, and they had established and maintained supportive life-long friendships.

If you're naturally introverted, don't worry. The researchers noted that the key seems to be staying positive and remaining open to new experiences. Try smiling at others. It can open the door to a lasting friendship. Also be accepting of others as they are – and of yourself as you are – and be open to change and improvement when needed.

Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. Apr. 2009.

Men: Take Care of Your Family by Taking Care of Your Health

While the life-expectancy gap between men and women has decreased, men still need to pay attention to their health.

- 1 in 5 American men has heart disease.
- 1 in 3 American adults has high blood pressure.
- 3 in 4 American men are overweight.
- 9 in 10 lung cancer deaths are caused by cigarette smoking.

Several things work against men in terms of health. Men tend to smoke and drink more than women do. Some men define themselves by their work, which can add to stress. And, in general, men don't seek medical help as often as they should. Here are some tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help you stay healthy:

- ✓ Limit foods and drinks high in calories, sugar, salt, and fat
- ✓ Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains every day.
- ✓ Limit or avoid alcohol.
- ✓ Be active for at least 2½ hours a week. Include activities that raise your breathing and heart rates and that strengthen your muscles.

- ✓ For safety, wear a helmet, seat belt, sunscreen, and insect repellent when appropriate.
- ✓ Wash hands to stop the spread of germs.
- ✓ Avoid smoking and breathing other people's smoke.
- ✓ Balance work, home, and leisure activities.
- ✓ Stay positive.
- ✓ Take time to relax.
- ✓ Get 8-9 hours of sleep each night. A midday nap can also promote health.
- ✓ Build healthy, supportive relationships with family and friends.
- ✓ Get support from family and friends, and a counselor if needed (if you are feeling depressed or anxious, or are drinking too much).
- ✓ See your healthcare provider if you feel sick, have pain, notice changes, or have problems with any medications.
- ✓ Have regular preventive exams. And if you don't want to go in for an exam for yourself, do it for those you love.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. May 2009.



Test your knowledge of men's health:
<http://www2a.cdc.gov/od/menshealth/test.asp>

ASK THE *Wellness* DOCTOR

Q: My doctor said I have normal cholesterol levels but high triglycerides. Does that make sense?

A: Go to wellsourc.info/wn/ask-bloodfats.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

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