Adventist Health Studies

Better health for everyone!
What are Adventist Health Studies?

- Long-term studies
- Exploring links between diet, lifestyle and disease
Why Study Adventists?

- Adventists are ideal to study because:
  - Most don’t smoke
  - Most don’t drink
  - Range of dietary habits
Adventists: Famous for Longevity

- Adventists were shown to live longer than the general population

- Five behaviors were shown to increase life span by up to 10 years:
  - Not smoking
  - Eating a plant-based diet
  - Eating nuts several times per week
  - Regular exercise
  - Maintaining a normal body weight
Adventist Mortality Study: 1958-1966

- Compared to other Californians, Adventists experienced lower rates of death for all cancers, including:
  - Lung cancer – 21%
  - Colorectal cancer – 62%
  - Breast cancer – 85%
  - Coronary heart disease – 66% for men, 98% for women
Adventist Health Study-1: 1974-1988

Probable Beneficial Foods

- Nuts
- Whole grain bread
- Tomatoes
- Soy milk
- Fruits
- Legumes
Adventist Health Study-1: 1974-1988
Findings on Red Meat

- Red meat was associated with an increased risk of:
  - Colon cancer – 50%
  - Heart attack – 70-80%
  - Diabetes – 75%
Adventist Health Study-2: 2002-Present
Profile of Study Members

- 96,000 Adventists ages 30+
- 1,500+ over the age of 90
- 26.9% are Black/African American
- Mean age: 60.2
# Dietary Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BEEF</th>
<th>POULTRY &amp; FISH</th>
<th>DAIRY &amp; EGGS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VEGAN</td>
<td>NONE</td>
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<td>LACTO-OVO</td>
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<td>PESCO-VEGE</td>
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<td>SEMI-VEGE</td>
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<td>NON-VEGE</td>
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Adventist Health Study-2
Profile of Non-Black Study Members
Adventist Health Study-2
Profile of Black Study Members
Dietary Status: Weight Differences in Non-Blacks*

*Age 60
Dietary Status: Weight Differences in Blacks*

*Age 54
Body Mass Index (BMI)

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight in kilograms}}{\text{height in meters}^2}$$

- **Normal weight** = 18.5-24.9
- **Overweight** = 25-29.5
- **Obese** = 30+
BMI – Non-Black Females
BMI – Non-Black Males

- Normal
- Over
- Obese
BMI – Black Females
BMI – Black Males
Dietary Status and Disease

- The closer participants were to being vegetarian or vegan, the lower the risk of:
  - Diabetes
  - High cholesterol
  - High blood pressure
  - Metabolic Syndrome
High Cholesterol – All Participants

*significant relationship
Hypertension – Non-Black Participants

*significant relationship
Hypertension – Black Participants

*significant relationship
Characteristics of Vegetarians/Vegans

- Slept more
- Watched less TV
- Consumed less saturated fat
- Ate more fruits and vegetables
- Ate foods with a low glycemic index
  - Beans
  - Legumes
  - Nuts
Physical and Mental Quality of Life

- Adventists report better quality of life than the U.S. norm

- Trend is particularly pronounced for mental health in older age groups
Perceived **Physical** Health - Females

Percentile

Age
Perceived Physical Health - Males
Perceived **Mental** Health - Females

Percentile

Age
Perceived Mental Health - Males

Percentile

Age
In Summary…

- The **health advantages** experienced by the more conforming Adventists over many years is remarkable.

- Vegans and lacto-ovo vegetarians have less **obesity**, lower **blood pressure/high cholesterol**, and fewer **lifestyle diseases**.

- The causes are not all understood, but dietary factors are clearly important.

- The vegetarian dietary habit is broadly protective. This is due **both** to the absence of meat and also the extra fruit, vegetables and nuts.

- The results of “acting” Adventist are open to all.
What You Can Do…

- Reduce the amount of meat in your diet gradually and add more fruits, vegetables, beans and nuts.

- Avoid replacing animal foods with refined, sweet, fatty commercial products, even if from plant sources.

- Partake in regular moderate physical activity.

- Tell your neighbors!
For more information, visit

adventisthealthstudy.org