

Too many UV Rays can harm eyes

With summer here, more people will be spending time outdoors and UV protection will be top of mind.

Unfortunately, most people think about the protection of their skin, when they should also be considering the safety of their eyes.

Only one-third of Americans said UV protection is the most important factor they consider when purchasing

sun-glasses. Whether it's cloudy or sunny, summer or winter, you should take measures to protect your eyes from the sun's UV rays in order to decrease the risk of eye diseases and disorders. Overexposure to UV rays is serious and can lead to cataracts, macular degeneration, or, in some cases, skin cancer around the eyelids.

Other disorders that can occur are abnormal growths on the eye's surface and even sunburn of the eyes. These conditions can cause blurred vision, irritation, redness, tearing, temporary vision loss and, in some instances, blindness.

Even more concerning is the lack of awareness surrounding the potential effects of overexposure to UV radiation. Thirty-five percent of adults are unaware of the eye health risks associated with spending too much time in the sun without the proper protection.

The following top five tips from the American Optometric Association may help prevent eye and vision damage from overexposure to UV radiation:

- Wear protective eyewear any time the eyes are exposed to UV rays, even on cloudy days and during the winter.
- Look for quality sun-glasses or contact lenses that offer good protection. Sun-glasses or protective contact lenses should block 99 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B radiation and screen out 75 to 90 percent of visible light.
- Check to make sure sun-glass lenses are perfectly matched in color and free of distortions or imperfections.
- Purchase gray-colored lenses because they are least likely to alter the color of objects to provide the most natural color vision. Brown or amber-colored lenses may be better for those who are visually impaired because they increase contrast as well as reducing light intensity.
- Don't forget protection for young children and teenagers, who typically spend more time in the sun than adults and are at a greater risk for damage.

Children need protection, too. Parts of children's eyes are more transparent than those of adults allowing more light to reach the back of their eyes and cause damage.

Because the effects of UV are cumulative, it's important to develop good protection habits early, such as purchasing proper sunglasses for young children and teenagers.

According to the American Optometric Association, parents should purchase sun-glasses for all children, including infants and make sure the lenses have proper UV protection.

A good way to monitor eye health, maintain good vision, and keep up to date on the latest in UV protection is by scheduling periodic comprehensive eye exams with an eye doctor. If you have any questions e-mail Becca@indianeyecare.net. Dr. Rebecca Wincek Bateson has a private practice located at 678 Philadelphia St. and practices optometry with Dr. Mike Yuhas.

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Study: 10 minutes of exercise, hour-long effects

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON — Ten minutes of brisk exercise triggers metabolic changes that last at least an hour.

The unfair news for panting newbies: The more fit you are, the more benefits you just might be getting.

We all know that exercise and a good diet are important for health, protecting against heart disease and diabetes, among other conditions.

But what exactly causes the health improvement from working up a sweat or from eating, say, more olive oil than saturated fat?

And are some people biologically predisposed to get more benefit than others are?

They're among questions that metabolic profiling, a new field called metabolomics, aims to answer in hopes of one day optimizing those benefits — or finding patterns that may signal risk for disease and new ways to treat it.

"We're only beginning to catalog the metabolic variability between people," says Dr. Robert Gerszten of Massachusetts General Hospital, whose team just took a step toward that goal.

The researchers measured biochemical changes in the blood of a variety of people: the healthy middle-aged, some who became short of breath with exertion, and marathon runners.

First, in 70 healthy people put on a treadmill, the team found more than 20 metabolites that change during exercise, naturally produced compounds involved in burning calories and fat and improving blood-sugar control.

Some weren't known until now to be involved with exercise.

Some revved up during exercise, like those involved in processing fat.

Others involved with cellular stress decreased with exercise.

Those are pretty wonky findings, a first step in a complex field.

But they back today's health advice that even brief bouts of activity are good.

"Ten minutes of exercise has at least an hour of effects on your body," says Gerszten, who found some of the metabolic changes that began after 10 minutes on the treadmill still were measurable 60 minutes after people cooled down.

Your heart rate rapidly drops back to normal when you quit moving, usually in 10 minutes or so.



Metro Creative Graphics

TEN MINUTES of brisk exercise triggers metabolic changes that last at least an hour and the more fit you are, the more benefits you might be getting.

So finding lingering biochemical changes offers what Gerszten calls " tantalizing evidence" of how exercise may be building up longer-term benefits.

Back to the blood.

Thinner people had greater increases in a metabolite named niacinamide, a nutrient byproduct that's involved in blood-sugar control, the team from Mass General and the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard reported last week in the journal Science Translational Medicine.

Checking a metabolite of fat breakdown, the team found people who were more fit — as measured by oxygen intake during exercise — appeared to be burning more fat than the less fit, or than people with shortness of breath, a possible symptom of heart disease.

The extremely fit — 25 Boston Marathon runners — had ten-fold increases in that metabolite after the race.

Still other differences in metabolites allowed the researchers to tell which runners had finished in under four hours and which weren't as speedy.

"We have a chemical snapshot of what the more fit person looks like.

"Now we have to see if making someone's metabo-

lism look like that snapshot, whether or not that's going to improve their performance," says Gerszten, whose ultimate goal is better cardiac care.

Don't expect a pill ever to substitute for a workout — the new work shows how complicated the body's response to exercise is, says metabolomics researcher Dr. Debbie Muoio of Duke University Medical Center.

But scientists are hunting nutritional compounds that might help tweak metabolic processes in specific ways.

For example, Muoio discovered the muscles of diabetic animals lack enough of a metabolite named carnitine, and that feeding them more improved their control of blood sugar.

Now, Muoio is beginning a pilot study in 25 older adults with pre-diabetes to see if carnitine supplements might work similarly in people who lack enough.

Next up: With University of Vermont researchers, she's testing how metabolic changes correlate with health measures in a study of people who alternate between a carefully controlled Mediterranean diet and higher-fat diets.

"The longterm hope is you could use this in making our way toward personalized medicine," Muoio says.

Knowing the signs of a stroke

By LYNDA SHRAGER
Albany Times Union

Strokes affect 800,000 Americans yearly; it is one area where fast action can hugely affect the victim's outcome.

The recent stroke suffered by Vice President Joe Biden's 41-year-old son has raised awareness that strokes do not only occur in the elderly. According to Jose Biller, author of "Stroke in Children and Young Adults," those younger than 45 account for 5 percent to 10 percent of all cases.

Conversely, blacks have almost twice the risk of first-ever strokes compared with Caucasians, and their death rate from stroke is higher.

According to Jennifer Yanoschak, associate professor of neurology at Albany Medical College, "recent studies are showing that younger women are having strokes more and more.

Evidence suggests that women in the perimenopausal age group (44-55) have a higher risk of stroke than age-matched men.

This is being attributed the many growing mid-sections, which increases the incidence of stroke risk factors, such as hypertension and diabetes, as well as a concomitant loss of estrogen.

"The problem is that doctors, in addition to patients,

are not aware of this fact, and they both tend to ignore stroke symptoms.

"Education on both ends is sorely needed."

A stroke occurs when blood flow and oxygen are cut off from the brain.

Recognizing the symptoms of a stroke is essential to surviving, because if the patient gets to the hospital within three hours of onset, he or she may be helped by TPA (tissue plasminogen activator), which is a clot-busting drug.

The common symptoms include sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body; confusion including trouble speaking or understanding; trouble seeing out of one or both eyes; double vision; trouble walking; loss of balance or dizziness; or severe headache with an unknown cause.

The Stroke Awareness campaign asks us all to think "FAST" to help detect a stroke:

FACE: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

ARM: Ask them to raise both arms. Does one drift downward?

SPEECH: Can they repeat a sentence? Is speech slurred or strange?

TIME: If any of these signs are present, call 911 imme-

diately or get him or her to the nearest hospital.

The national Stroke Association's prevention guidelines include keeping your blood pressure under control, managing atrial fibrillation, stopping smoking, drinking alcohol in moderation, lowering cholesterol and sodium intake, controlling diabetes, treating circulation problems and exercising daily.

Get organized during Stroke Awareness month by learning all you can to prevent and treat the third leading cause of death in the U.S.

After a stroke, consider using a comprehensive stroke rehabilitation program that offers medical specialists in rehabilitation including physiatrists, neu-

CLASSES

■ **ABC's of Baby-sitting** is a class offered at IRMC as a two-day program for boys and girls 12 and older. Students will learn how to prepare for an interview for a baby-sitting job, keep a journal, and how to feed, entertain and care for an infant, toddler, preschooler and school-age child. Students will also learn first aid for emergencies, how to activate emergency services, do CPR and care for a choking victim. Cost is \$50. The next classes are June 7 and 8 and 24 and 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call (724) 357-7075.

■ **Aqua Aerobics** helps tone muscles and strengthen the cardiovascular system. Classes are designed to allow participants to go at their own pace. Non-swimmers are welcome. For information, call (724) 463-9622.

■ **Big Brother/Big Sister Classes** use puppets Molly and Sam to provide information for children ages 3 to 7 whose family is expecting a new baby. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **Breastfeeding is Best** teaches about feeding baby and pumping and storing breast milk from 9 to noon Saturday at IRMC Outpatient Building. Registration is required. For information, call (724) 357-8088.

■ **Clear the Air** is a one-session program that can give you the tools you need to get prepared, take action, stay motivated and quit smoking for good. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **Diabetes Awareness Prevention** is a four-week program that provides the tools needed to lower the risk for diabetes, live well with diabetes, improve eating habits, increase physical activity, manage stress and live a healthier life. Cost is \$65, with no charge for Highmark members. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **Discover Relaxation Within** is a four-week lifestyle improvement program identifying everyday stressors and specific techniques to evoke relaxation. The program also includes ways to reduce and manage stress.

For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **Early Pregnancy** focuses on a healthy pregnancy, lifestyles and what to expect with physical and emotional changes, doctor visits and diagnostic testing.

The free class is at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at IRMC. For information, call (724) 357-8088.

■ **Family Services: Pro-**

viding Emergency Services teaches how to interview disaster victims and provide necessary emergency assistance. Participants must have attended Introduction to Disaster training prior to this class. For more information, call American Red Cross, Indiana Chapter, at (724) 465-5678.

■ **I Can Cope** is a free educational program that offers practical information, resources and strategies on self-care for those facing cancer and their family members, friends and caregivers. The program is sponsored by the American Cancer Society and the Herbert L. Hanna Center for Oncology Care. For more information, call (888) 227-5445, ext. 1077.

■ **Let's Talk Parents! (Infants and Toddlers)** is a class facilitated by Kathy Moore, executive director at the Center for Family Life. Learn how to tame temper tantrums, boost your child's self-esteem and discuss the developmental stages your baby or toddler is going through. Cost is \$5, and registration is required.

For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-7075.

■ **Logistics: Disaster Preparedness Training** is a study of providing support services for a disaster relief operation, including transportation, facilities and supplies through American Red Cross.

For more information, call the Indiana Chapter at (724) 465-5678.

■ **Personal Nutrition Coaching** is a personalized program designed by a registered dietitian to address the needs of an individual seeking nutrition counseling relating to weight management, heart health or diabetes. For more information or an appointment, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **Strong Women Strong Bones** is a 10-week strength-training course to help manage osteoporosis. The program includes a pre- and post-assessment and two days of strength training each week. For information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **Pregnancy Loss Support Group** provides support for families who are grieving the loss of their baby through miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth or newborn death. For more information, call Excelsa Health at (877) 771-1234.

■ **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Support** meets from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday at Riverfront Place, 810 River Ave., Suite 160, Pittsburgh. For more information, call (412) 322-5680 or (800) 721-7437.

Your HEALTH TIP

Vitamin D & The Brain

New research suggests that higher levels of vitamin D may help protect the brain against the effects of aging. The study of over 3,000 men, ages 40-79, found that high scores on memory and information-processing test were associated with high circulating vitamin D levels. Lower scores were linked to lower levels. The reasons for this are unclear, but researchers think vitamin D may increase certain hormonal activity or may protect neurons and chemical-signaling pathways. The association was strongest in men older than 60. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about your intake of vitamin D, especially as you age.

401 North 4th St., Indiana (Beside The Dairy Queen)
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Home Health Answers

VNA
Presented by
Linda Bettinazzi
President/CEO

OVERNIGHT CARE

Your loved ones may not always feel secure and comfortable living alone, particularly during nighttime hours. Home health aides can offer overnight stays, providing seniors with security, comfort, and peace of mind. Aides make sure the doors are locked and that elderly clients feel safe. Their duties may also include cooking evening and morning meals, cleanup, and assistance with grooming and other personal care. This provides your loved ones with the benefit of companionship, not just home care. Defusing the loneliness that can afflict older adults helps to keep them in their homes much longer. Family members may be available to assist their loved ones in the daytime hours, but they need to return home at night to spend time with their own families. Thus, having a home health aide stay overnight offers an invaluable service to everyone involved.

VNA Extended Home Care can place experienced and compassionate caregivers with seniors who require a wide spectrum of care, from occasional help with errands to full-time live-in care. Call 724-463-1102 today to set up an initial sit-down to discuss your needs, your parent's needs, and what you can do to help you both. We're available day or night.

VNA Visiting Nurse Association of INDIANA COUNTY
Compassionate Care Right At Home
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