

DC Online

Brian Sutton, DC

Cereal Dieting

Researchers from Michigan State University report a bowl of cereal for breakfast may be helpful in keeping your weight under control, at least if you're a woman. This study of over 4,000 women found that subjects who most often ate cereal for breakfast were 30 percent less likely to be overweight than those who consumed other types of breakfasts or even no breakfast at all. The results applied even after allowing for exercise, total caloric intake and other factors. In men, however, no significant relationship between breakfast (or lack thereof) and weight was seen.¹

1. Journal of the American Dietetic Association, September 2005.
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Caesarian Cavities

A small study from the New York University College of Dentistry suggests babies born by Caesarian section will be more susceptible to dental cavities later in life. The researchers found these infants showed earlier colonization of a type of bacterium (*Streptococcus mutans*) implicated in dental decay. They suspect the relatively sterile delivery mechanism prevents normal bacteria colonization from the mother's birth canal, which would ordinarily make it difficult for *S. mutans* to gain a foothold.²

1. *Journal of Dental Research*, September 2005.
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Apnea and Arteries

A Brazilian study from the University of Sao Paulo reports a correlation between obstructive sleep apnea and cardiovascular disease. This small study of 42 patients directly correlates thickening and stiffness of arterial walls with varying degrees of apnea.³ A randomized study is underway to determine if treating the apnea will have any effect on the artery-hardening effect.⁴

1. *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, Sept. 1, 2005.
 2. Reuters, Sept. 2, 2005.
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Ibuprofen-Induced Asthma

Public health officials are becoming concerned about the possibility of ibuprofen triggering asthma attacks in susceptible children.⁵ A study published in *Pediatrics*⁶ finds that among 100 mild-to-moderately-asthmatic children, 4 percent showed a significant decrease in lung function after exposure to ibuprofen. This translates to about 100,000 children across the U.S. who may react unfavorably if conditions are right. In addition, the researchers suspect children with more severe

forms of asthma may react more severely or with greater frequency.

1. *Reuters*, Sept. 2, 2005.
 2. *Pediatrics* 2005.
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Bipolar Treatment

A new therapy developed at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine is showing promise in the treatment of bipolar disorder. The therapy basically boils down to teaching the patients how to maintain a very regular daily routine, along with some training in how to manage stress.⁷ The theory behind the therapy is that the disorder is aggravated by disturbances of the biological clock; thus, patients are instructed to take meals at regular times and maintain a consistent sleep schedule, among other things.

1. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, September 2005.
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Mistake-Prone Interns

A report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*⁸ has found that doctors-in-training who work a heavy schedule (about 90 hours per week) are impaired enough to make 50 percent more mistakes on general patients, and 22 percent more in critical care units. Researchers also gave such doctors a driving simulation test and found they performed worse than those who worked a more normal 44-hour week, but were nearly intoxicated (.05% blood-alcohol level). Resident doctors also were found to be three times more likely to have had a recent automobile accident.⁹

1. *JAMA*, Sept. 7, 2005.
 2. *Reuters*, Sept. 6, 2005.
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Memory Preservation

Researchers from the Institute of Neuroscience at Trinity College Dublin have surveyed aging populations and concluded that some of the best ways to maintain mental abilities as you age include staying physically fit, avoiding high stress levels, having a rich and varied social life, and getting mental stimulation. They also note that people who begin to think of themselves as old really do seem to age faster, at least mentally.¹⁰ Fish oil in the diet also appears to be beneficial in preserving brain function, possibly due to an anti-inflammatory effect that helps to protect brain cells.¹¹

1. *Reuters*, Sept. 7, 2005, reporting on the work of Professor Ian Robertson.
 2. This work was done by Professor Marina Lynch, also from the Institute of Neuroscience at Trinity College Dublin.
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Infant Dehydration

Researchers from Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh¹² report they have found an unexpectedly high number of breast-fed infants suffering from dehydration in a recent five-year study of hospital admissions. About 2 percent of the infants admitted during the study were diagnosed with

hypernatremic dehydration, a condition that results from too little milk getting into the infant from the mother. The situation apparently is not often recognized by the primary care physician before admittance. Weight loss is often most noticeable sign, but jaundice and some behavioral changes may be noticed. The problem seems to affect first-time mothers most often.

1. *Pediatrics*, September 2005.
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Alcohol and Arrhythmias

A rather large study published in the journal *Circulation*¹³ supports earlier works suggesting heavy alcohol use can influence the heart rhythm. This study found a 45 percent increase of atrial fibrillation among drinkers who consumed an average of 35 or more drinks each week. The work is an analysis of data from an ongoing study of more than 16,000 people that began in 1976.

1. *Circulation*, September 2005.
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Schizophrenia From Famine

Researchers looking into the effects of nutrition on schizophrenia report they have found a significant link between malnutrition and the disorder.¹⁴ Cases of schizophrenia doubled among children born in China during the famine years of 1959-61. The findings were similar to another study in the Netherlands relating to the "Dutch Hunger Winter" of 1944-45. Researchers are still trying to pinpoint any particular nutrient deficiencies that may be directly responsible.

1. *JAMA*, Aug. 3, 2005.
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Turmeric for Breast Cancer

Tests on mice at the University of Texas suggest that turmeric, or more specifically, a component of it called curcumin, discourages the spread of breast cancer cells. Curcumin cut the rate of metastasis in half - a dramatic amount, considering the fact that the cancer had spread in 95 percent of the control group. Follow-up research is being done on humans now. Since no pharmaceutical companies would be able to profit from a natural food additive, the research is being funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense.¹⁵

1. Reuters, June 9, 2005, reporting on the work of Bharat Aggarwal of the Department of Experimental Therapeutics at the University of Texas, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.
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Fish Oil and Defibrillators

A group of researchers who were trying to see how much fish oil (which has been shown to improve patients' resistance to a second heart attack) would complement the action of implanted defibrillators were taken by surprise by the results of their study. Instead of helping patients, fish oil seemed to cause patients to experience more arrhythmias, which often precede a heart attack. Those taking fish oil had twice as many episodes of tachycardia as those in the placebo group. The placebo in this study was olive oil, which some might consider a questionable choice.¹⁶

1. Reuters, June 14, 2005, reporting on the work of Merritt Raitt of the Portland, Oregon, Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

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