



October 2007

## Healthy Lung Month

Each day we take around 25,000 breaths. Our lungs work hard getting oxygen into the bloodstream so that it can be delivered to all the organs and tissues of the body.

Pollutants in the air at home, outside, and at work can irritate the lungs and cause discomfort. Repeated exposure to microscopic particles found in your everyday environment can cause illness or even death.

Follow these simple guidelines to protect yourself from harmful airborne materials in the environment.

- **Don't smoke.** If you smoke, quit.
- **Exercise.** Vigorous exercise builds your aerobic capacity and improves your cardiovascular health.
- **Maintain a clean environment.** Stay away from dangerous fumes and inhalants including:

- Car exhaust - motor vehicle exhaust contains chemicals that can cause cancer.
- Secondhand smoke - nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their heart disease risk by 25–30% and their lung cancer risk by 20–30%.
- Fiberglass – often found in insulation; may become airborne and damage the lungs.
- Pesticides, paints, and some cleaning products contain various toxins.
- Mold – exposure can cause allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory complaints.

Learn more about environmental safety from the Environmental Protection Agency at <http://www.epa.gov>.

## Inflammatory Breast Cancer:

### What you don't know can harm you!

Inflammatory breast cancer (IBC) is a rare but very aggressive type of breast cancer in which the cancer cells block the lymph vessels in the skin of the breast. This type of breast cancer is called “inflammatory” because the breast often becomes swollen and red, or “inflamed.”

IBC tends to be diagnosed more often in younger women compared to non-IBC breast cancer. Like other types of breast cancer, IBC can occur in men also, but usually at an older age than in women.

When IBC is diagnosed, it is usually classified as either stage IIIB or stage IV breast cancer. Cancer staging describes the extent or severity of an individual's cancer. Knowing a cancer's stage helps the doctor develop a treatment plan, estimate the likely course of disease progression, and the chance of recovery or recurrence. Stage IIIB breast cancers are locally advanced; stage IV breast cancer is cancer that has spread to other organs.

To learn more about IBC and other types of breast cancer, visit the National Cancer Institute's Breast Cancer Home Page at <http://www.cancer.gov/breast>

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## Run, walk, and lift for your health

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The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the American Heart Association (AHA) published its new recommendations for physical activity for healthy adults aged 18 to 65 in the July issue of *Circulation*.

And it couldn't have come at a better time because the evidence is mounting. Sedentary living is linked with cardiovascular disease, stroke, hypertension, type 2 Diabetes, and some cancers. Since about half of all Americans are sedentary, and are at risk of becoming chronically ill or disabled as they age, the US is up against a public health crisis.

But the solution is clear. To stay healthy, *exercise!*

### How much should you exercise?

The new ACSM/AHA guidelines clarify some issues about duration and intensity recommendations that were frequently misinterpreted in the original release in 1995.

This confusion led to a wide variety of practices. For example, some people insisted that only very vigorous exercise was essential to health. Not true. Others believed that short duration, low-intensity activities associated with daily living, such as walking to the parking lot, or taking out trash could be counted toward heart-healthy physical activity. According to the ACSM/AHA, these activities do NOT count toward total physical exercise requirements.

Below are some of the highlights of these new recommendations.

### Aerobic Recommendations

Select the exercise you prefer but adjust the frequency and duration based on intensity level:

- Moderate-intensity aerobic (endurance) activity: 5 days per week for 30 minutes or longer
- Vigorous-intensity aerobic activity: 3 days per week for 20 minutes or longer

### Gauging intensity: The 10-Point Scale

Just what is meant by moderate and vigorous aerobic activity? Using a 10-point rating scale where sitting = zero and maximal effort = 10:

- Moderate-intensity: 5 or 6/accompanied by an increase in pulse and breathing rates
- Vigorous-intensity: 7 or 8/accompanied by significant increases in pulse and breathing rates

### Strength Recommendations

In addition to aerobic activity requirements, the ACSM/AHA recommends engaging in strength training at least two days per week.

A separate set of recommendations are available for older adults and those with chronic medical conditions. As always, you should consult your physician before beginning a program of physical activity. Visit your FOH Wellness/Fitness Center for more tips and suggestions.

### Source

The original publication is available at: <http://circ.ahajournals.org>  
Haskell, W.L. and others. "Physical activity and public health. Updated recommendation for adults from the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association." *Circulation* 116 (2007): 1081-1093.

**Success is never final and failure never fatal. It's courage that counts."**

- George F. Tilton

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## "Health" Foods that aren't

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With the holiday season right around the corner, maintaining a healthy diet can be tricky. If you indulge in those delicious seasonal treats, it becomes even more important to ensure that your other meals are nutritionally dense.

If you overindulge, you might be tempted to try and make up for it by reaching for some "healthy" options. But be careful, some of those foods aren't quite so healthful.

To help you make the right decision, here is some food for thought.

### Low-carb products

Be careful with low-carb items now on the market -- including bagels, pasta, ice cream, tortilla chips, breakfast cereals, pasta sauces and salad dressings -- they may have fewer carbs, but they are not calorie-free.

In fact, many low-carb products contain the same or more calories than their regular-carb counterparts. Some are merely packaged in considerably smaller serving sizes. And even if a low-carb product contains comparatively fewer calories, it's still not calorie-free.

Be careful to read food labels and keep an eye on calories and serving sizes.

### Cottage cheese

Cottage cheese is a favorite among those trying to eat healthy. But you need 2 cups of cottage cheese (156 mg of calcium per cup) to get the amount of calcium in a cup of skim milk (290 mg of calcium per cup) or low-fat yogurt (452 mg of calcium per cup). Instead, you would even do well to choose one ounce

of part-skim mozzarella cheese with 207 mg of calcium.

### Granola

The fat and calorie content of a half-cup serving of granola rivals that of a McDonald's hamburger: 250 calories and 10 grams of fat. And at 4 grams of fiber per serving, it only offers a minimal amount of roughage. Substitute with a whole-grain cereal, such as raisin bran.

### Honey

Nutritionally, there is relatively little difference between honey and table sugar. Honey offers a negligible amount of nutrients, but actually contains 16 more calories per tablespoon than sugar.

### Rice cakes

Take a "pass" on the rice cakes. These are virtually a nutrient wasteland. One rice cake has 35 calories and nearly no nutrients. And because they are low in fiber, they are not even filling.

### Nature's best health foods

The best health foods you can choose are those that come fresh from nature, like fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and seeds. These options pack satisfying and delicious nutritional punch. Make these a part of your daily diet, and you'll definitely improve your health.

For more information about healthy eating, see the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Dietary Guidelines for Americans at <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines>

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## FOH, the Occupational Health Provider of Choice for the Federal Government

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