

Smoking And Salt Are Equally Dangerous

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Whether you smoke or not, by now you know just how harmful cigarettes are to your health. So any decision to start, stop or keep on smoking. You would not consider smoking, would you? is made with full knowledge of the

salt-labeled it; “our public enemy number one”.

We are making progress when it comes to reducing the numbers of people around the world who smoke. That has not happened in the area of salt reduction even though it is important to make this comparison because we are indeed making progress in smoking reduction but



damage you're doing to your body and the various types of cancers and other diseases you're courting.

Unfortunately, that same widespread awareness about dangers of salt does not exist, even though salt is just as harmful as smoking. There should be little doubt that smoking harms our body in many different ways. Then you also should not add salt to your diet for exactly the same reasons. Our salt habit damages so many organ systems and causes premature death and disabilities to such a vast extent that some scientists have actually called

not much in the area of salt reduction.

Consider these recent developments. The World Health Organization has noted that high blood pressure caused by our habitual salt intake is a “global crisis” affecting one billion people worldwide affected by high blood pressure.

According to published reports, 300 million Chinese and 300 million Indian nationals have developed high blood pressure because of their salt-laden diets. We pay the price of the salt habit by high blood pressure. We

have known for decades that high blood pressure affects the heart, brain and kidneys, the well-known “target organs”. Millions upon millions of people either die prematurely or live with far too many disabilities and dysfunctions from heart attacks, strokes and kidney failure.

If your strategy is to eat recklessly and when you develop high blood pressure you will take pill to control it, the data does not support such line of thinking. At the present time nearly half the people with high blood pressure even in developed countries are either not diagnosed or adequately controlled. Compliance to taking pills is another major issue. Likely hood of taking just one and only one pill a day on regular basis is only about sixty percent. Add a second pill, the compliance drops to 30 %. Once you are on the never ending trail of high blood pressure, the pills keeps on adding up, never stops with one. This strategy what many people follow is why high blood pressure has earned the title “the silent killer”.

We have much more bad news with just the high blood pressure aspect of our habitual salt intake. Have you ever heard Heard of “heart failure”? In America, it's . Now it is the number one reason for hospitalization of people over sixty five 65 years of age being hospitalized in America. When your heart has to work nonstop Heart working against the resistance of high blood pressure, it keeps getting bigger and bigger. As it enlarges, it changes The enlarged heart also changes from an oval shape to a round one. The A big round heart no longer has the lose its ability to relax sufficiently before it pumps. The heart also suffers from its chamber walls being stretched as the heart grows bigger and rounder. This ‘diastolic’ phase of the pumping cycle of the heart is compromised in so many elderly, that the diastolic dysfunction and heart failure affect millions of American filling our hospital intensive care units. Irregular heartbeats Stretch injuries to the , leaky heart valves are all consequences of the enlargement stretching of the walls of the chambers of the heart. The electric fibers travelling in the walls of the heart chambers cause irregular heartbeats gets stretch injuries. Meanwhile, t The support mechanism of the valves in the heart suffers the same fate, resulting in leaky valves. The net result—, perpetual heart failure that brings you and millions of others back over and over into the hospital over and over and over again. All because of uncontrolled high blood pressure, which is caused and aggravated by eating something as seemingly harmless as salt.

High blood pressure is also responsible for the The

next big health problem of epidemic proportions affecting us as we get older. also comes from high blood pressure. Alzheimer’s and other memory loss problems now affect so many of our senior citizens that . medical authorities warn it is now an emerging public health crisis. How does salt play into this? As you know, salt causes high blood pressure. Alzheimer’s society estimates that high blood pressure increases the risk of memory loss problems by a whopping 600%. By studying scans of the brain, we now have learned know that the gGray and white matter in the brain suffer micro injuries from the shearing forces of high blood pressure, causing loss of areas where the memory is stored or the loss of the communication fibers. In fact, the Alzheimer’s Society estimates that high blood pressure increases the risk of memory loss problems by a whopping 600 percent.

If you weren’t aware of the havoc that high blood pressure wrecks your body’s organ systems, now you know. Perhaps you figure that you can continue to

If your strategy is to eat recklessly and when you develop high blood pressure you will simply take a pill to control it. Unfortunately,, the data does not support such line of thinking this strategy. At the present time nearly half the people with high blood pressure is even in developed countries are either not diagnosed or adequately controlled in nearly half of all those it impacts, even when those people live in developed countries. Even those who know they have high blood pressure don’t manage to take their medication on a regular basis. The likelihood of . Compliance to taking pills is another major issue. Likely hood of taking just one —and only one —pill a day on regular basis is only about sixty 60 percent. Add a second pill, and the compliance drops to 30o percent %. Once you are on the never- ending trail of high blood pressure, the pills keeps on adding up. The treatment, never stops with just one. No wonder This strategy what many people follow is why high blood pressure has earned the title is called “the silent killer”. And still we continue to eat salt, the very thing that causes this medical disaster.

As if that’s not enough, Our our salt habit does not stop just hurhurting us with high blood pressure alone, as if that is not enough. Salt contributes to oOsteoporosis, which now affects nearly all the menopausal women. Fractures of hip bones and vertebral bodies cause death, disability and immense pain to millions of senior citizens. . Osteoporosis as it turns out, is largely a disease of calcium loss; more salt you consume, more calcium your kidney loses. Published reports indicate that the os-

teoporosis burden is far greater than the combined risk of breast cancer, cervical and ovarian cancers in women and greater than prostate cancer in men.

We have also learned also learning that our salt habit contributes to acute asthmatic attacks, stomach cancers and a variety of auto immune diseases affecting more millions more of people, of all ages and all over around the world. The dangers associated with eating salt are clear. So Question then is why are we not paying as much attention to salt intake as we are to smoking? Over the past many decades, we have known affirmed that people do not generally pay attention to heed preventive health advice. Even after suffering a devastating stroke or a heart attack, patients and their families do not pay much attention to prevention. As cardiac surgeon, I deal with the consequences of all the bad dietary habits day in day out. Yet I have difficulty convincing even my own family members to follow make health diet dhabitsecisions.

I am sure many healthcare providers in my shoes face the same frustrating reality.

But, prevention of cardiovascular disease is so rampant in my immediate and extended family and relatives that its prevention has become became my very own personal crusade. I need needed to find way to convince my relatives to understand and follow the health-related information I kept trying to impart.

I stumbled on the formula when I wrote and published my first book *Salt Kills* (Health Now Books, 2012). Its reception has convinced me Then I discovered that the issue is not so much the message itself but how that message is presented. Hardly anybody is Most people aren't going to follow listen you, if you simply tell them to "stop smoking" or "add less salt to their food" etc because they . People don't connect with themselves to the message. They don't see it the health challenge happening to them until it actually happens, and by; then it is generally too late. But if the message is presented in such a way that it resonates with you them, and they you

see yourself themselves in going through it, then they're much more likely that you will to follow the related advice.

In general, the resistance to cutting back salt comes from people who don't understand all the how many different ways this simple salt habit hurts you them. And there are others those who don't realize how easy it is to actually cut back on salt. Smoking is tough to quit It is difficult quit smoking because it is an addiction. Our salt habit is not.

The hHealth benefits from quitting both salt and smoking are immense. We are spending trillions of dollars and resourcesd to find new pills and procedures to patch up



the bodily systems that salt and smoking destroy. Far less time and money has been allocated to prevention. As a result, But the effort spent in prevention has not been as much. Ppeople are living longer but largely with only with disabilities and dysfunctions

that have resulted from these two deadly habits. Together, we can change all this. It is important to make this comparison because we are indeed making progress in smoking reduction but not much in the area of salt reduction.

Let us work on salt reduction with same vigor as stop we have dedicated to curbing smoking. So pWe invite you to lease take a look at our work and our mission. Our way of explaining medical information with simple language, creative illustrations and interesting analogies, is actually making a difference. Then jJoin the our mission to improve heart health around the globe.

After decades of practice and years of research, cardiac surgeon Dr. Surender R. Neravetla—Director of Cardiac Surgery at Ohio's Springfield Regional Medical Center who has been recognized as one of America's top surgeons—vowed to do what he could to help improve people's health. His Health Now Books series is designed to help all of us avoid the kinds of disease-related problems that compromise the health and limit the lives of millions of people around the world.