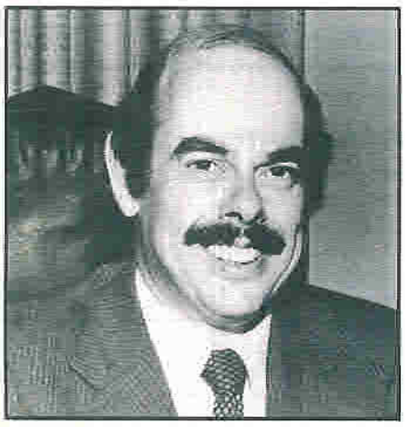

Congressman Henry A. Waxman's *Washington Reporter*

Cancer & Heart Disease Bulletin

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
HENRY A. WAXMAN

Dear Friend:

Cancer and heart disease are the two most common causes of pain, suffering and premature death in America. To lower your risk of contracting these diseases you should **STOP SMOKING.** You can also protect yourself from these diseases by changing your **DIET** to reflect the information on the enclosed charts.

YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD! A lifetime of eating greasy or salty foods does not permanently ruin your body. You can still benefit by practicing sound nutrition from now on!

YOU ARE NEVER TOO YOUNG! Unhealthy eating habits are developed in childhood. Many children consume too much sugar and salt. Children who eat nutritionally sound diets are more likely to have healthier lives.

CHECK YOUR FAMILY HISTORY! Heart disease and cancer seem to "run in families." People with family histories of these diseases **must** be careful about smoking, alcohol, and diet.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, I have fought for federal funding of research on the **causes** of heart disease and cancer. The enclosed charts reflect many of the findings of federal research programs.

Please study the enclosed charts. If you are on a medical diet (e.g., for diabetes), make **no** changes without consulting your doctor. Pregnant women should avoid alcohol and smoking and review their diets with their doctors. Your physician can diagnose and treat heart disease, cancer and other illnesses at an early stage.

Wishing you and your family "bon appetit" and good health,

Henry A. Waxman

HENRY A. WAXMAN, Chairman
Subcommittee on Health and the Environment

EATING FOR A HEALTHY HEART

Choosing the right food can help lower the risk of heart disease and heart attacks. Below are some guidelines for preventive nutrition.

HELPFUL FOODS

SOURCES	EFFECTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES Fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods like cereals, rice, some breads and pastas, corn and potatoes.	Foods high in complex carbohydrates are generally low in fats and calories and rich in nutrients and fiber, thus contributing to heart health by weight control and replacing harmful saturated fat in diet.	Increase total carbohydrate intake to at least 55 percent of daily calories; most of it should be in complex form. Eat at least 4 servings of breads and cereals, preferably whole-grain, and 4 servings of fruits and vegetables.
POLYUNSATURATED FATS Vegetable oils (safflower, sunflower, soybean and corn), nuts, and seeds.	In most people, lowers levels of cholesterol in the blood, which may reduce risk of heart disease; when included in diet, often replaces harmful saturated fat.	Increase intake moderately to no more than 10 percent of daily calories, without raising total fat consumption beyond 30 percent. Use vegetable oils for cooking, and margarine for spreading. Trim off fat from meat and poultry, and remove skin from poultry.
FIBER Whole grains, fruits, vegetables, dried beans, peas, and lentils.	Fiber-rich foods are low in fat and calories and are filling, thus helping to reduce overeating and overweight.	Increase fiber intake to 25 to 40 grams a day. Too much dried beans may cause bloating and gas; too much bran can interfere with absorption of minerals. Examples of 25 to 40 grams of fiber: 4 servings of whole grains and cereals; 4 or more servings of fruits and vegetables.

EFFECTS NOT YET KNOWN

SOURCES	EFFECTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
ALCOHOL Liquor, wine, beer, liqueurs.	There is inconclusive evidence that moderate amounts may reduce risk of heart attack by raising levels of beneficial cholesterol in blood, or by reducing stress. However, alcohol also raises blood pressure.	If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.
CAFFEINE Coffee, tea, colas, chocolate.	In some people, large amounts of caffeine may increase heart rate and contribute to arrhythmias, thus possibly raising risk of heart attack. The evidence, though, is weak; no link has been shown between moderate intake of caffeine and heart disease.	Keep intake of caffeine moderate.

HARMFUL FOODS

SOURCES	EFFECTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
SALT Table salts of all kinds, many processed foods including soups, canned vegetables, fast foods, salt-cured foods.	The sodium in salt may raise blood pressure to risk level in some individuals, leading to strokes or heart disease.	Try cutting salt intake to less than 1½ teaspoons a day by not using a salt shaker at table, by cooking with herbs and spices, and by avoiding high-salt foods. Read product labels for sodium content. Salt is 40 percent sodium.
CHOLESTEROL All animal products, particularly egg yolks and organ meats like liver and sweetbreads; fat meats and some shell fish and poultry; and rich desserts.	May raise levels of cholesterol in blood which some studies show increases risk of heart attack.	Limit intake to 300mg a day, preferably less. Eat only two egg yolks a week. The yolk of a single large egg contains 250-275mg cholesterol; but the white of an egg does not contain any cholesterol.
SATURATED FAT Fatty meats, butter, cream, whole milk, egg yolks, chocolate, pastry, coconut oil and palm oil.	Raises levels of harmful cholesterol in blood, which some studies show increases the risk of heart attack.	Reduce to less than 10 percent of total calorie intake. Eat only lean, trimmed meat, 6 ounces or less a day. Favor chicken, fish and veal over red meats. Substitute margarine for butter, low-fat cheeses and yogurt for hard cheeses, and skim milk for whole. Broil, roast, stew or steam, rather than fry.
EXCESS CALORIES High-fat, high-sugar foods eaten in quantities that maintain excess weight or increase it.	With excess body weight, workload of heart is increased; also, blood cholesterol and blood pressure levels usually rise.	Eat moderate amounts of nutritious, low-calorie foods. Maintain ideal weight.

IN APPRECIATION

My thanks to **Newsweek** for permission to revise and reprint these two charts. Copyright 1984, **Newsweek**, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission. My thanks also to University of California nutritionist Dr. Genevieve Ho for her advice.

CANCER: A CAUTIONARY PLAN

Certain foods and vitamins may play important roles in preventing cancer.

HELPFUL FOODS

SOURCES	EFFECTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
VITAMIN A (and beta carotene) Deep-green leafy and yellow-orange vegetables and fruits, such as carrots, spinach *(minimally cooked if at all)*, cantaloupe, and apricots.	Higher intakes appear to be protective against cancers of lung, esophagus, throat and bladder, perhaps because Vitamin A controls cell differentiation, a process that goes awry in cancer.	Eat two or three servings daily from food. (Large doses of supplements can be quite harmful). Examples of one serving: ½ cup of cooked spinach or carrots.
CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage, collards, kale, and kohlrabi.	May reduce risk of stomach and colon cancer, perhaps by blocking action of cancer causing chemicals in the body.	Eat at least one serving per day. Examples of one serving: ½ cup cooked or 1 cup uncooked broccoli.
VITAMIN C Cantaloupe, oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, broccoli, and green bell pepper.	May lower the risk of stomach and esophagus cancers by preventing the formation of cancer causing nitrosamines.	Consume at least 60 mg a day, particularly if you eat nitrite-cured foods like bacon or sausage. Examples of 60 mg: 1 orange, 1 cup strawberries, or ½ cup cooked broccoli.
FIBER Whole grains, dry beans, lentils, seeds, vegetables, fruits, and nuts.	May protect against colon cancer, but evidence is inconclusive; protective effect may be due to low levels of fat in fiber-rich diets.	Consume 30 to 40 grams a day. (The U.S. average is 20 grams a day.) Example of 30 to 40 gm: combine: 1 oz. whole-grain cereal, ½ cup cooked vegetable, 1 piece of fruit, and ¼ cup seeds. 1 slice whole-grain bread.
SELENIUM Meat, seafood, chicken, whole grains, and egg yolks.	Preliminary findings show selenium lowers rate of liver, colon and breast cancers in lab animals. Other preliminary findings show that cancer rates are high in areas of the world where selenium intake is low.	Try to get selenium from food. The average U.S. daily intake is considered adequate and safe. Large doses of supplements can be toxic. Examples of sources of the daily allowance: 5 to 6 oz. of meat, fish or poultry.

EFFECTS NOT YET KNOWN

SOURCES	EFFECTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
VITAMIN E Vegetable oils, salad dressings, soft margarine, whole-grain cereals, wheat germ, and green-leaf vegetables.	No solid evidence of any protective effect. An anti-oxidant, Vitamin E might in theory block cancer development by preventing the oxidation that certain chemicals must undergo in order to cause cancers.	Consume 10 mg a day. (There is no lack of Vitamin E in the average American diet.)
CAFFEINE Coffee, tea, colas, chocolate.	Currently there is no known link between caffeine and cancer incidence. Studies suggesting higher rates of bladder and pancreas cancers among coffee drinkers are unconfirmed.	Despite lack of evidence that caffeine causes cancer, intake should be moderate for other health reasons.

HARMFUL FOODS

SOURCES	EFFECTS	RECOMMENDATIONS
ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS Soft drinks, diet foods; also used by dieters and diabetics in coffee and tea.	Although saccharin in large doses has caused bladder cancer in lab animals, its effect on human beings is unknown. Aspartame (NutraSweet and Equal) has not been shown to be carcinogenic.	As a safeguard, eliminate saccharin during pregnancy and early childhood; otherwise, consume only moderate amounts. Use fruit juices as sweeteners.
HEAT-CHARRED FOOD Meat, chicken, fish.	Browned parts of meat or meat cooked at high temperatures by frying, grilling or broiling contain substances that may cause cancer (effect on human beings unknown).	Favor sauteed, stewed, steamed, baked or poached meats over those that are broiled, grilled or fried. In charcoal broiling, use low-fat cuts and cook them away from flames.
NITRITE-CURED or SMOKED FOODS Bacon, hot dogs, sausage, bologna, salami, ham, and smoked fish.	May increase risk of stomach and esophagus cancers.	Cut down on salted, cured and smoked foods. Vitamin C may block formation of nitrosamines.
EXCESS CALORIES High-fat, high-sugar foods such as candy, pastries, and sugar-sweetened sodas, and beverages high in alcoholic content.	Incidence of uterine, colon and breast cancer is higher in people who are obese (30 percent overweight); over-fed lab animals develop more tumors than those on calorie-restricted diets.	Eat moderate amounts of nutritious, low-calorie foods. Eat low-fat or non-fat milk products, fruits and vegetables, lean meats, fish, and poultry.
ALCOHOL Liquor, wine, beer.	Heavy drinkers are at higher risk of liver cancer and, if they also smoke, for cancers of the mouth, throat, larynx and esophagus.	If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation.
FAT	Fat increases risk of colon and probably breast and prostate cancers; poly-unsaturated as well as saturated fats are implicated.	Cut to less than 30 percent of total calorie intake. Eat lean meats, fish and poultry, low-fat or non-fat milk and milk products, whole grains, fruits and vegetables.