

alseha

Issue 07, February - April 2015

Putting a focus on health in Qatar

Seven amazing
health benefits
of running

Smoking—the facts

Breakfast
cereals

A healthy start to the day or
sugar-packed junk food?

Stroke

Know the symptoms
and act F.A.S.T.

Plus regular features:

- Local and international health news
- Ask the experts
- Health by numbers
- Food profile



مؤسسة حمد الطبية
Hamad Medical Corporation

HEALTH • EDUCATION • RESEARCH صحة • تعليم • بحوث



**Tired
all the time?
It could be diabetes.**

**Early detection of symptoms enables
early treatment of diabetes.**

At HMC we are committed to your health and well-being. The development of type 1 diabetes is usually sudden, while early symptoms of type 2 diabetes are often so mild that they go unnoticed. If during your daily routine you notice frequent washroom breaks, unquenchable thirst, extreme tiredness, unexplained weight loss or blurred vision, diabetes is something you should not rule out. Speak with your doctor about any changes in your health. Get your blood sugar checked today.

**A healthy approach to diabetes.
A healthy approach to life.**



diabetes.hamad.qa

alseha



Welcome to issue seven of *Al Seha* magazine!

I'm delighted to introduce this latest issue, filled as always with a wide range of articles on nutrition, exercise and general health. All of us at Hamad Medical Corporation are proud to play our part in promoting important health issues throughout Qatar, and *Al Seha* is a vital element of our efforts to raise health awareness.

In this issue we highlight some of the many benefits of running, review the advantages of making your own smoothies and examine the nutritional content of breakfast cereals.

As well as all of this, you can keep up-to-date with the usual round-up of health stories from Qatar and abroad.

As always, we welcome your feedback, so do let us know if there is a specific topic you would like us to feature. *Al Seha* is produced for everyone living and working in Qatar, and we are continually updating and expanding our distribution locations in order to get the magazine to as many people as possible. If you would like us to deliver copies of the magazine to a new location, maybe a busy office, sports club, school or hotel, please send us the details and we will arrange this.

You can send these details, along with any article suggestions and comments, to us at alseha@hmc.org.qa

On behalf of the editorial team I hope you enjoy this latest issue.

Ali Abdulla Al Khater
Executive Director
Corporate Communications

alseha

**Tell us what you think
about *Al Seha***

Telephone: 4439 5405
Email: alseha@hmc.org.qa
www.hamad.qa

Al Seha is produced and distributed by the Corporate Communications Department at Hamad Medical Corporation

Disclaimer: While great care is taken to ensure that all articles in *Al Seha* magazine are accurate as at the time of publication, readers should be aware that the content is not intended to be a substitute for informed medical advice or care. Readers should not use information contained in *Al Seha* to diagnose or treat a health issue. Always consult a qualified health professional.





08

10

14

28

32

Cover stories

- Seven amazing health benefits of running
- Breakfast cereals – A healthy start to the day or sugar-packed junk food?
- Blend your way to better health
- Smoking – the facts
- Stroke – Know the symptoms and act F.A.S.T.



12

16

22

26

Health

- Finding a diet that’s right for you
- Guide to muscle growth
- Cancer – Types, risk factors and treatment
- Water safety for you and your family



03

18

36

38

40

Regular features

- International health news
- Qatar focus
- Ask the experts
- Health by numbers
- Everything you ever wanted to know about bananas

Probiotics can ease colic in babies, Canadian study finds

Colic can cause babies to cry excessively and inconsolably. However, new Canadian research shows that giving them probiotics could help ease their discomfort. Infantile colic describes infants who are otherwise healthy but show bouts of irritability, fussiness or crying. An estimated 40 percent of infants experience colic, which usually starts around six weeks of age and ends around three or four months.

There are very few treatments proven to help this condition that is a major concern for parents. However, researchers at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto have shown that probiotics can significantly reduce colic in breastfed Canadian infants.

The study was a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, the gold standard for medical research. In it, 52 babies in Toronto were either randomly assigned to receive five drops of a



probiotic called L reuteri DSM 17938 or sunflower oil as a placebo for 21 days. The probiotic contains beneficial bacteria that are thought to promote the growth of healthy intestinal microbes to improve health.

At the start of the study, periods of crying and discomfort in the two groups were

similar at an average of 131 minutes per day for the probiotic group, and 122 minutes per day for the placebo group. By the end, the researchers said crying and fussing time in the probiotic group was significantly reduced to a median of 60 minutes and 102 minutes a day in the placebo group.

Ageing well must be a global priority



A major new series on health and ageing, published in “The Lancet”, warns that unless health systems find effective strategies to address the problems faced by an ageing world population, the growing burden of chronic disease will

greatly affect the quality of life of older people. As people across the world live longer, soaring levels of chronic illness and diminished wellbeing are poised to become a major global public health challenge.

Worldwide, life expectancy of older people continues to rise. By 2020, for the first time in history, the number of people aged 60 years and older will outnumber children younger than five years. By 2050, the world’s population aged 60 years and older is expected to total two billion, up from 841 million today. Eighty per cent of these older people will be living in low-income and middle-income countries.

The increase in longevity, especially in high-income countries, has been largely due to the decline in deaths

from cardiovascular disease (stroke and ischemic heart disease), due to simple, cost-effective strategies to reduce tobacco use and high blood pressure, and improved coverage and effectiveness of health interventions.

However, there are challenges, because although people are living longer, they are not necessarily healthier than before. Nearly a quarter of the overall global burden of death and illness is in people aged over 60, and much of this burden is attributable to long-term illness caused by diseases such as cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, heart disease and mental and neurological disorders. For example, the number of people with dementia is expected to rise from 44 million now, to 135 million by 2050.

Setting a fitness goal is the way to succeed



Having a fitness goal provides compelling motivation to stick to your program, says Andrew May, a performance coach who has spent the past 15 years working with elite sportspeople in Australia. May says the best advice he can give is to commit to a fitness goal (or two) throughout the year.

Most people, even elite athletes and highly disciplined people, struggle at times to stay motivated. You are much more likely to engage in regular fitness training if you have a goal or an event to aim for. Rather than just turning up to the gym and stumbling on the treadmill, you can try alternative options to invigorate your fitness schedule, such as working towards a fun run, triathlon or a half-marathon, charity cycle, ocean swim, paddle race, climbing a mountain or taking part in a charity walk with friends. Training with friends or in a group also means you're more likely to succeed.

In the book 'Psychological Foundations of Success', Stephen Kraus explores the three reasons why goal setting increases performance:

1. Direction: goals provide direction, and channel focus and effort. Goals are empowering tools and help you make the right decisions.

2. Motivation: goals can stretch and push you out of your comfort zone, resulting in increased effort and persistence. Identifying the gap between where you are now and where you want to be creates motivation and the desire to close the gap.
3. Strategy refinement: after setting a challenging goal, people think longer and more creatively about how to accomplish it and how to measure progress towards achieving it.

In between busy schedules and the demands from everyday life, fitting in training can be a challenge, but if you're participating with others, for a set event and a good cause, it is a great motivator. If you try adding in a fitness goal to add purpose to your training program, this will make you more disciplined and focused when you have a goal to train towards. The exhilaration and achievement you'll feel by accomplishing a fitness goal is particularly rewarding, especially if it's really challenging.

Body weight training projected to be the top fitness trend for 2015

Push-ups, planks, lunges and squats are the new fitness craze for the upcoming year. This type of training, which uses your own body weight for resistance, is projected to be the top fitness trend in the coming year, according to a report from the American College of Sports Medicine. Body weight training, which first made the top 20 list in fitness

trends two years ago, doesn't require equipment and can be done at home, making it accessible to the masses.

Based on survey responses of more than 3,400 personal trainers, fitness instructors, doctors and exercise experts around the world, these are the college's

ninth annual fitness trend rankings. Body weight training took the number one spot from the previous top rated exercise, high-intensity interval training, which involves short bursts of intensive cardio exercise followed by short periods of rest. Staying at third in the list is a preference for instruction from a certified fitness professional no matter what the fitness pursuit is.

Additionally, yoga, which has been on the top 20 list every year since the survey began in 2007, came in at seventh on the survey. Likewise, zumba, pilates, spinning and stability balls seem to be things of the past. None of these disciplines made the list this year, despite having coveted spots earlier in the decade.



Coca-Cola agrees to traffic-light labelling on drinks sold in UK



Coca-Cola has decided to adopt the color coded traffic light system on their cans, designed to help consumers identify healthy products. They, like other international brands, had long fought against the system largely because they did not want a red warning logo on cans and bottles.

The labelling uses a combination of red, orange and green colors as well as information on recommended intakes of fat, salt and sugar to denote how healthy or unhealthy a product is.

A Coca-Cola spokesperson said its adoption of the new labels was consistent with a commitment to provide consumers with transparent nutrition information on the front of its packs: "Our UK consumers have told us they want a single, consistent front-of-pack labelling scheme across all food and drink products to help them make the right choices for them and their families. We have therefore decided to put the new scheme on our packs here."

UK Public Health Minister Jane Ellison said: 'I am delighted that Coca-Cola Great Britain has adopted this Government's voluntary front-of-pack labelling scheme. It will help consumers make informed choices and lead a healthier lifestyle. We want all businesses to give people clear and consistent information about their food and drink.' The adoption of the new labels is in line with a voluntary regime called the Responsibility Deal.

In recent years Coca-Cola has boosted sales through its marketing campaign using personalized coke bottles and cans. Sales of Coke have risen significantly since the world's best-known drinks brand started printing people's names on its labels. Instagram was taken by storm with people posting photos of bottles carrying names from Alex to Zeena. The marketing idea was designed to get consumers to buy drinks for friends and family as well as themselves and appears to have paid off. It reversed a 10 year decline in consumption in the US, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Brain can be trained to prefer healthy food



Scientists from Tufts University recently put out a study that suggests the brain can be trained to prefer healthy food over unhealthy high-calorie foods, using a diet which does not leave people hungry. It's been noted that food addictions can be positively changed even if they are well established. The study involved a small group of male and female participants and was conducted by scanning the addiction center in their brains. The results showed increased cravings for healthy lower-calorie foods. "We don't start out in life loving French fries and hating, for example, whole wheat pasta," said senior study author and behavioral nutrition scientist Professor Susan Roberts at the Boston university. "This conditioning happens over time in response to eating- repeatedly what is out there in the toxic food environment". Scientists know that once people are hooked on unhealthy foods, it is usually very hard to change their eating habits and get them to lose weight.

However, another study looked at the part of the brain linked to reward and addiction in 13 overweight and obese men and women, each of whom were taking part in a specially designed weight-loss program that focused on changing food preferences by prescribing a diet high in fiber and protein, low in carbohydrates, but which did not allow participants to become hungry, because this is when food cravings take over and unhealthy food becomes attractive.

When participants' brains were scanned using MRI at the start and end of a six-month period, the results showed that those following the program displayed changes in the brain's reward center. When participants were shown pictures of different types of food, it was the healthy, low-calorie foods, which produced an increased reaction. The study said this indicated an increased reward and enjoyment of healthier food. Additionally, it was noted that the brain's reward center also showed decreased sensitivity to the unhealthy, higher-calorie foods.

UK Health leaders call for emergency taskforce on obesity



Health leaders are calling for an emergency taskforce to be set up to tackle childhood obesity in England. In an open letter to the chief medical officer for England, The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) and 11 other

organizations say 'an entire generation is being destroyed by a diet of junk food and sugary drinks.' Currently in the UK, around one in three children under 15 are overweight or obese.

Setting up a national Child Obesity Action Group made up of doctors, nurses, dieticians, dentists and schools to tackle the problem is requested in the letter urgently. In the letter, health leaders call for better co-ordination of obesity treatment services so that all children can be encouraged to eat healthily from a young age.

Dr. Nigel Mathers, a general practitioner and member of the RCGP, noted: "Many parents don't recognize their children are obese because many of them are obese themselves". The letter also stressed

the importance in realizing the nutritional patterns laid out in early years can define a child's health for life, and the stark fact is that overweight children are being set up for a lifetime of sickness and health problems.

A call for action is necessary because proper monitoring of children's weight from birth is required to contain the issue. Doctors say they are dealing with a generation of patients who may have a lower life expectancy than their parents. Dr. Helen Stokes-Lampard from the Royal College of GPs said: "These kids are going to turn into larger and larger adults, which means they are at much higher risk of serious heart disease, cancers and strokes as they get older."

Sitting at work is bad, but is standing any better?



Too much sitting has become the modern health equivalent of smoking and more people are spending longer periods sitting in front of their office and home computers, claims a new study. However, is the solution simply replacing sitting all day with standing all day?

The makers of standing desks have sold many consumers and companies on the notion that their product will reverse 'sitting disease' and the health issues caused by spending an average of nine of our 14 waking hours in an office chair or on the couch.

A study of nearly 17,000 Canadian adults found that those who reported the most time standing had a 33 percent lower risk of dying from any cause over 12 years compared to those who stood the least. But those who exercised at least two hours each week – even if they sat the rest of the time – enjoyed the same life-extending benefits as those who stood the most.

It has been noted that the calorie burn difference between standing and sitting is so small, it probably won't make much difference in terms of weight loss. However, some obesity experts argue that standing at a workstation encourages us to move around more and, hence, burn significantly more calories. However, one study showed that standing reported a mood boost, increased energy and reduced fatigue.

The next development was that people shouldn't think standing still for too long is a good idea; it's all about the movement

while standing. Levine decided to write his new book 'Get Up: Why your chair is killing you and what you can do about it' while strolling at 1.2 miles per hour on a treadmill desk he invented years ago. Although it may be good for your body, it may not always be practical for keyboard work. Some tasks take so much mental energy to write that it'll be difficult to do so with the distraction by the physical exertion.

So, what's best for your muscles and joints and your mind's productivity? Sit for no more than 20 minutes at a time, the study recommended, and stand in one position for no more than eight minutes. You should also take a two-minute moving break at least twice an hour to stretch or walk around.

Call to banish fruit juice from recommended five a day



As it stands, fruit juice currently counts as one portion of the recommended five portions per day of fruit and vegetables. However, campaigners in England have recommended that fruit juice should be removed, as it is confusing for parents. Action on Sugar found that many children's fruit juice contains at least six teaspoons of sugar (more than a cola) and come in cartons larger than recommended.

A smoothie containing all the edible-pulped fruit or vegetable may count as more than one five-a-day-portion, but this is dependent on the quantity of fruit or vegetables or juice used, as well as how the smoothie has been made.

Action on Sugar says the guidelines are confusing, but Public Health England says current advice is sound. Nutritionist Kawther Hashem explained that parents do not always understand the difference

between a juice drink and a fruit drink. Many parents are still buying juice drinks for their children thinking they are choosing healthy products. She said juice should be an occasional treat and not an everyday drink; children should be given as little juice as possible.

Government adviser and Oxford professor Susan Jebb echoed these views, saying she is concerned about parents using fruit juice as 'routine rehydration' for their children, when water is still the best way to get the fluid that we need in the diet.

Action on Sugar's recommendations follow recent advice from the World Health Organization suggesting a reduction in the amount of sugar we eat – from the current recommended limit of 10 percent of daily energy intake to just five percent.

Have the Danes cracked childhood obesity?

Childhood obesity has become a global epidemic and finding an effective solution has so far been difficult for many countries. However, Denmark has recently adopted a new scheme to help children lose excess weight by asking them and their families to make numerous lifestyle changes.

In the Danish town of Holbeak, 1,900 patients were treated through the scheme and 70 percent of them managed to maintain normal weight by adjusting around 20 elements of their lifestyles. The method tackles all aspects of the children's lives – and those of their families – setting it apart from traditional 'small steps' approaches to losing weight.

The scheme targets reducing the time children spend playing on computers or watching television, and requires them to set strict bed times to ensure they get more sleep.

Dr. Jens Christian Holm, who runs the Danish scheme, said: "In general, obese children are neglected. They are often

lonely and many of them don't participate in activities with their peers. They lack self-confidence. Obesity is an illness that is very difficult for children to fight on their own."

At the beginning of the program, children are admitted to hospital for 24 hours of extensive testing, including body scans and body fat measurements. They also answer a detailed questionnaire about their eating habits and behaviour patterns. The program requires wholesale changes

in lifestyle to defeat the body's natural resistance to losing fat, and each child has a personalized treatment plan which targets 15–20 daily habits. Research showed that by following the program, 70 percent of patients maintained their weight loss for four years. The success of the program has led to it being adopted in eight other Danish municipalities, and Dr. Holm believes other countries should establish similar treatment programs.



Seven amazing health benefits of running



There are many popular forms of exercise to choose from, such as cycling, swimming or group exercise classes, and while all of these activities offer a number of similar benefits, there is one form of exercise that stands out as the most natural exercise of all: running.

1. Burns excess calories

One of the most common reasons why people exercise is to lose weight and running is a great way to burn excess calories. Running burns a higher number of calories than many other forms of exercise. On average, you'll burn 80 to

100 calories for every kilometer you run. Running at a moderate pace will burn more calories than cycling or swimming at a similar intensity.

2. Reduces stress

Running stimulates the production of endorphins in the brain. These hormones, often known as 'happy hormones', are then released into the body, providing a sense of euphoria and a natural high. Running can also inhibit the production and release of 'stress hormones', such as cortisol, leaving you feeling calm and relaxed after your workout.

3. Builds confidence

As well as relieving stress, running can help to raise your self-esteem and boost confidence. By setting and reaching your training goals, you can feel a sense of pride by achieving new levels of health and fitness. Doctors treating patients for depression often advise them to take up some form of structured exercise. Running gives people a focus, and by achieving your fitness goals your confidence to take on other challenges in life will improve.

4. Improves brain function

A study from the University of Illinois looked at the mental ability and alertness of people before and after running. The study's participants performed a computer test when rested and then again immediately after running on a treadmill. The results showed a greater number of questions were answered correctly, and in less time, after participants had been running. The reason for this increased brain activity is that running improves blood flow, and therefore oxygen supply, to the brain, enabling optimum brain function.

5. Strengthens bones

Many people believe running can be damaging to your bones, yet as long as you do not have any existing bone-related health issues, this is not the case. The impact of running actually helps to maintain bone quality and prevent osteoporosis. Running stimulates the cells (called osteoblasts) that bring calcium into the bones to strengthen them.

6. Boosts the immune system

A fully functioning immune system is a vital tool in the battle against illness and disease. Running stimulates the body's immune system and boosts the circulatory system, resulting in an increased supply of oxygen and nutrients to the cells. This increased blood flow improves the process of eliminating toxins from the cells and increases the delivery of white blood cells – which fight disease – around the body.

7. The king of convenience

A good pair of running shoes is all you need to start running. You can run anytime, anywhere and with anyone. Unlike many other forms of exercise, running doesn't require you to join a gym or buy lots of expensive equipment. It doesn't even have to take long; a brisk 20 minute run, three or four times a week, is all that's needed to feel the benefits.



It's natural!

Running is the most natural exercise of all. Our ancestors used to run when hunting for their food and humans have been running ever since. Due to modern lifestyles, which seem to encourage inactivity, running may at first feel unnatural for many people. However, starting slowly and gradually increasing the distance and duration of your running will ensure that it feels as natural for you as it did for your ancestors.

Did you know?

- The record for the most marathons (a 26.2 mile run) in one year is held by Stefaan Engels, known as 'Marathon Man'. The Belgian runner completed one marathon every day for 365 consecutive days in 2011, running an incredible total of 9,569 miles
- When you run, 26 bones, 33 joints, 112 ligaments and a network of nerves, tendons and blood vessels work together in your feet
- The fastest person over 100 meters is currently Jamaican Usain Bolt. Bolt ran the distance in just 9.56 seconds, reaching a top speed of 44.72 kilometres per hour
- Over 1 billion pairs of running shoes are sold each year worldwide
- The Self-Transcendence race in New York is the world's longest official footrace. Runners have 52 days to complete the 4,989 kilometer distance

A healthy start to the day or sugar-packed junk food?

Breakfast has always been considered the most important meal of the day – it's the meal that sets up your body for the day's activity and kick starts your metabolism – but what constitutes a healthy breakfast?

Traditionally, breakfast cereals have been the staple food for what most people consider to be a balanced, healthy breakfast, yet over recent years cereals have been the subject of much debate and scrutiny. The reasons for this are very apparent when you look at the nutritional content of many popular brands. In the United States, breakfast cereals are among the leading sources of added sugar for children, ranking fifth behind sugary drinks, cookies, candy and ice cream for children under eight years of age.

Most breakfast cereals are made from a core set of ingredients: oats, rice or wheat, all of which are essentially healthy. The first problem comes in

the intense production techniques used on these ingredients – after being cooked, flattened, toasted and shredded, very little of the nutritional value remains. What's left is a product devoid of most of its natural nutritional content that can be used as a base on which to add the ingredients to make the finished breakfast cereal. Salt and sugar are often added to give the product flavour, while the lost natural nutrients are replaced with artificial vitamins and minerals. The marketing companies often highlight that the cereals contain added vitamins and minerals and promote this on the packaging, ignoring the fact that the overall



product may contain very high levels of sugar, salt and fat.

A recent study by the Environmental Working Group (EWG) in the United States reviewed more than 1,500 breakfast cereals and found high levels of sugar in many, with some containing more sugar than common brands of cookie. EWG concluded that 'most cereals pack in so much sugar that someone eating an average serving of a typical children's cereal would consume more than 10 pounds of sugar a year from that source alone.'

EWG also re-reviewed a smaller sample of 84 popular cereals marketed specifically to children. Here are some of the most alarming findings:

1. Of all cereals, those that have cartoon characters on the box indicating they are marketed directly to children are the most heavily loaded with added sugar.
2. On average, 34 percent of the calories in children's cereals come from sugar.
3. Every single cereal in the survey marketed to children contains added sugar.
4. On average, children's cereals have more than 40 percent more sugar than adult cereals.

Although the study found many breakfast cereals contain high levels of sugar, there are of course healthy cereal options available. EWG put together the following list of recommendations for policy makers,

manufacturers and parents in order to encourage healthier breakfast cereal production and consumption.

EWG's recommendations

For policy makers:

- FDA should finalize the addition of "added sugars" to the Nutrition Facts panel.
- FDA should only allow promotional labels that make nutritional claims or use the word "healthy" on products that are low in added sugars.
- FDA should update the cereal serving sizes cited on Nutrition Facts labels to accurately reflect the larger amounts that Americans actually eat.
- FDA should commission a new study by the Institute of Medicine of the harmful health effects of consuming high amounts of added sugar and seek further guidance on whether setting a Daily Value for sugar would be justified.

For manufacturers:

- Companies should lower the sugar content of their cereals.
- Companies should not make nutrient content claims or use the word "healthy" on products that are high in added sugars.
- The Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, the food industry's voluntary self-regulation program, should require participants to add no more than 6 grams of sugar

per serving in products advertised to children. This is the limit set by the government's supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children.

- Companies should not market high sugar cereals containing 6 grams of sugar or more per serving to children.

For parents:

- Reduce sugar consumption from all sources and seek out foods without added sugars.
- Read the Nutrition Facts labels carefully and choose cereals with the lowest sugar content.
- Look for cereals that are low-sugar – no more than four grams per serving – or moderately sweetened – less than 6 grams per serving.
- Prepare breakfast from scratch as often as possible; add fruit for fiber, potassium and other essential vitamins and minerals.
- Check out EWG's Healthy Breakfast Tips for great ideas on making healthy and sustaining breakfasts.
- Speak out. Use your buying dollars and your words to tell cereal manufacturers you want more low-sugar choices for you and your family.

To read more about the EWG's study, visit www.ewg.org



Brand	Percent sugar by weight	Grams of sugar per serving	Percent of recommended daily sugar intake – based on daily sugar intake of 10 percent of total calories
Kellogg's Honey Smacks	56%	15	50%
Malt-O-Meal Golden Puffs	56%	15	50%
Post Golden Crisp	52%	14	52%
Grace Instant Green Banana Porridge	51%	28	93%
Blanchard & Blanchard Granola	51%	29	97%

Finding a diet that's right for you

It sometimes seems that a new, better-than-anything-before diet gets discovered every month. With so many diet options to choose from it can be hard to find a weight-loss plan to suit you, but does it actually matter which diet you choose?

According to a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), any diet will work, as long as you stick to it. The researchers, from McMaster University in Ontario and the Hospital for Sick Children Research Institute in Toronto, say that most diets – from low carbohydrate to reduced calorie plans – have similar results and people should simply just pick the one they find easiest.

In an analysis of data from nearly 50 trials including more than 7,000 individuals, significant weight loss was observed with low-carbohydrate or low-fat diets. It showed that after 12 months people on low carbohydrate and low fat diets all lost an average of 7.3 kilograms, leading researchers to state that sticking to a diet was more important than the actual diet itself.

The report concluded that the findings should be reassuring to clinicians and the public and that there is no need for a one-size-fits-all approach to dieting because many different diets appear to offer considerable weight loss benefits. It's more important to find the right diet for you, rather than thinking one is actually significantly better than the others. Every diet has its own pro's and con's and ultimately it's more effective for people to try and match diets to their lifestyle and preferences.

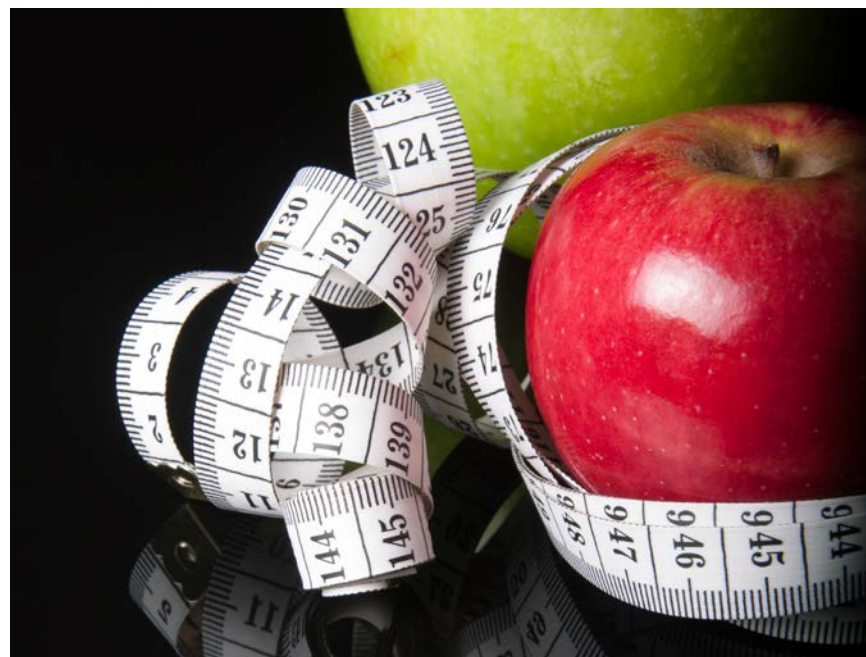
Commercial diets follow trends and go in and out of fashion on a regular basis, often influenced by high profile celebrities endorsing a particular diet. Yet, as the study highlights, it may just

be a case of finding the easiest way to reduce your total calorie intake over a prolonged period of time. Commercial diets, such as Atkins, South Beach and Dukan, all have something (money) to gain by promoting their plans as the ultimate weight-loss program. These plans encourage dieters to buy their books and diet products or to sign up to their websites to access meals plans and advice.

Professor Susan Jebb, from the United Kingdom's Oxford University and a government advisor on obesity, believes diets are often more similar than they may first appear, with most advocating cutting calories to around 1,500 a day, sticking to strict meal times and avoiding high calorie treats.

"The issue is about adherence and it's how closely and how long you can keep sticking to the plan over time that matters. That probably means finding the right diet for you, rather than one being particularly better than the others."

As many of the commercial diets significantly, or completely, eliminate certain food groups, they can result in a number of unwelcome side effects, including bad breath, raised cholesterol, constipation, lack of energy and headaches. It is important to be aware of these side effects and professional advice should be sought before embarking on any long-term diet plan.



**Because you
gave way,
we got there
faster**

When there is an emergency we are grateful for everything you do to help. From dialing 999 immediately, to explaining your location carefully, following instructions and giving way to ambulances on the road – it all helps us to save lives.

خدمات الاسعاف
Ambulance Service



To see how you can help us save a life, visit as.hamad.qa today.



Help us help you

Blend your way to better health



In recent years sales of household blenders and smoothie makers have soared as consumers seek to find an easy way to meet their recommended daily consumption of fruit and vegetables. Smoothies provide a simple and convenient way to boost your intake of vitamins and nutrients, and therefore antioxidants, through natural foods. While the benefits of smoothies cannot be denied, they should not completely replace your intake of whole foods, and be mindful of the sugar content of smoothies bought from juice bars, which can be very high. Making your own smoothies is the best way to know exactly what's inside and will give you the freshest product.

Here are just a few of the many benefits of making your own smoothies:

- Increase your daily intake of fruits and vegetables. Many people fail to consume sufficient quantities of fruit and vegetables each day. Smoothies provide a great way to pack several servings of fruit and vegetables into one drink.
- Quick and easy. Smoothies require no cooking and very little preparation. They can also be made in advance and drunk when needed.
- Children like smoothies. Getting your children to eat vegetables can be difficult. But it's easy to sneak a vegetable or two into a fruit-based smoothie without the children realizing.
- Boost your immune system. Fruit and vegetables are packed full of antioxidants – natural elements that help fight disease and ill health – so by increasing your consumption you'll boost your body's defenses.

Tips for making your own smoothie:

- Choose a good liquid base to your smoothie.
 - Water – a simple healthy choice that won't influence the flavor of your ingredients.
 - Milk – you can use plain cow's milk, or any other variety you wish, such as almond, soy, goats or coconut milk. If you're being careful about the calorie content, choose semi skimmed or low fat milk.
 - Fruit juice – opt for a natural juice without added sugar.
- Add some protein. Include nuts and seeds or peanut butter to increase the protein content of your smoothie – this should help balance the nutritional content of the smoothie and keep you feeling fuller for longer, as protein is broken down more slowly in the body than carbohydrates.

- Combine fruit with vegetables. Your five portions a day should come from both fruit and vegetables. It is easy to ignore vegetables when making smoothies, but spinach, kale and cucumber all make excellent smoothie ingredients.
- Add herbs and spices for flavor. Herbs such as parsley, basil and mint all add nutrients and flavor to smoothies, while spices including ginger, cinnamon and vanilla also add intensity to the taste.

Need some ideas to get started? Try these three great recipes.

Recipe 1

- 1 banana
- Half a cup of frozen mixed berries
- 250ml milk
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter

Health benefits

Bananas provide a rare combination of high energy, tissue-building elements, protein, vitamins and minerals.

Berries are a good source of vitamin C, which helps boost your immune system.

Milk and peanut butter contain protein to strengthen muscles, while the peanuts provide healthy fats.

Recipe 2

- Handful of strawberries
- Half an avocado
- 50 grams spinach
- 2 teaspoons of flax seeds
- Water to taste

Health benefits

Strawberries provide lots of vitamin C as well as other antioxidants.

Avocados are high in fiber, contain many vitamins and provide healthy monounsaturated fats.

Spinach is rich in iron, strengthening the function of red blood cells which help transport oxygen around the body.

Flax seeds are great sources of fiber, omega-3 fats, antioxidants and vitamin B.

Water keeps you hydrated and energized.



Recipe 3

- Handful of blueberries
- Handful of frozen raspberries
- Half a red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 100ml natural yogurt
- 300ml coconut milk
- Handful of kale

Health benefits

Blueberries and raspberries contain vitamin K and C, fiber and other antioxidants, boosting the immune system.

Chilli contains capsaicin, which increases metabolism and energy levels.

Natural yogurt is high in protein, which helps maintain muscle mass.

Coconut milk contains vitamins C, E and many B vitamins, as well as minerals including iron, selenium, sodium, calcium, magnesium and phosphorous. Unlike cow's milk, coconut milk is lactose free.

Kale is a good source of calcium, vitamins A, C and K and folate, a B vitamin that's key for brain development.

Guide to muscle growth

Many people frequently ignore the benefits of lifting weights when embarking on a new fitness regime, opting only for cardiovascular exercises such as running, swimming and cycling, yet resistance training is an essential part of a balanced fitness program.

Adding some lean muscle to your body through weight bearing exercises can offer a number of benefits: increasing bone density, burning excess fat and strengthening joints and connective tissues are just a few. In this article, *Al Seha* explains the basics about building muscle.

Vary your workouts

If you are new to weight training you will probably build some degree of muscle and strength quickly, no matter what type of training program you follow. The problem comes when your body gets used to one certain training program and you reach a plateau, with progress slowing or stopping completely. To avoid these plateaus you must regularly vary your training sessions. This can be done a number of ways: by changing the type of exercises you perform, the frequency of your workouts, or the intensity.

Drink lots of water

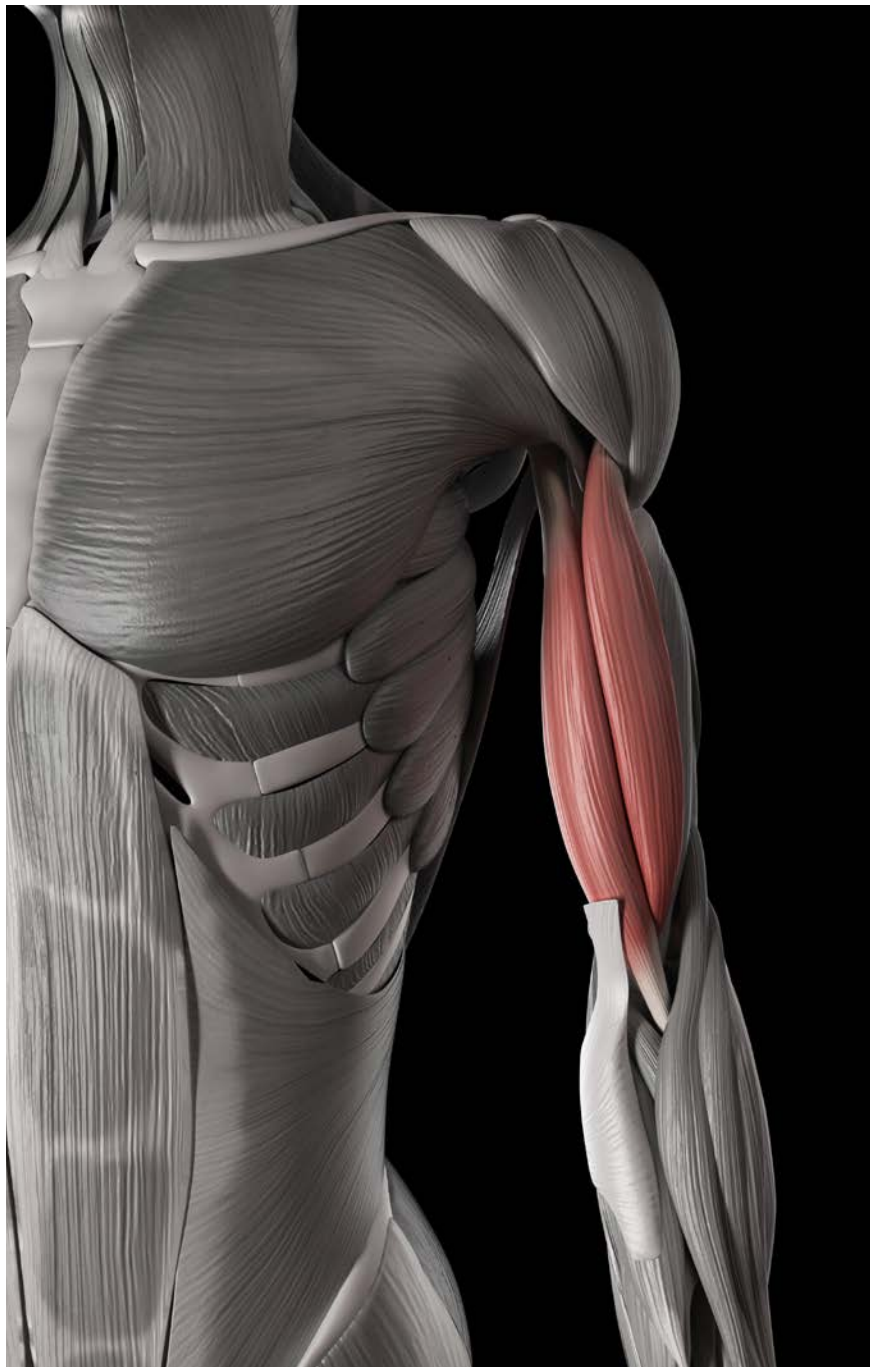
As with the entire human body, muscles consist predominantly of water. Therefore, it is vital to consume enough water on a daily basis. Even just a one percent reduction in dehydration can negatively impact muscle function.

Rest and sleep

Muscles do not grow when you are in the gym; they grow in the recovery and rest period following workouts. If you are not getting enough rest and sleep then you are not giving your muscles the opportunity to recover sufficiently and grow.

Eat big to build big

In order to allow your body to build muscle you must consume more calories than you are burning on a daily basis. These excess calories are used by the body to repair the muscle tissues after weight training. If the body feels there is a shortage of calories then it will not promote more muscle growth. Of course



that doesn't mean you can eat whatever you like, so it's important to eat the right type of calories – a healthy, well-balanced diet containing all the basic food groups.

Plan each session

Building muscle is not easy. You need a targeted approach to your sessions to ensure you meet your goals. It's no use just wandering around the gym doing whichever exercises you feel like on a given day. Use a log book to monitor and record your sessions, this way you'll be able to accurately see your progress, and assess whether your training methods are working for you.

Progressive resistance

To get bigger you need to continually increase the intensity of your training. When you lift a heavy weight and push the muscles to their limit, you put stress on your muscles, tearing the small fibers within. During the recovery stage the muscle fibers repair themselves and

become stronger. To build muscle mass you need to continuously repeat this process – increasing the weight you lift or the number of repetitions, so your muscle fibers are broken down during each training session, and repaired and strengthened during recovery.

Consume sufficient protein

Your muscles need protein to grow, however it is the exercise and subsequent recovery that actually lead to muscle growth, not simply eating protein. Though this is the subject of much debate, it is generally recommended that your daily intake should be around 1.3 – 1.5 grams of protein per pound of body weight. This can come directly from food, but if you feel your diet is lacking good sources of protein or you need a more convenient option, you can include protein shakes in your diet. But remember, simply consuming large amounts of protein does not build muscle by itself!

Use compound exercises

The best way to train for optimal muscle growth is to use basic compound exercises. This means using exercises that work large muscle masses rather than fine tuning the smaller muscles. Some of the best compound exercises to perform are bench presses, squats, dead lifts and pull ups. These exercises work a number of muscle groups at the same time. For example, the bench press primarily works the chest, but also trains the shoulders and triceps in the same movement.

Use free weights when possible

Free weights are generally the preferred option for building muscle. Using free weights requires the athlete to balance and control the movement much more than with fixed machines. This extra focus stimulates more muscle fibers during the movement. Machines can be incorporated into your workouts where appropriate but it is best to let free weights dominate your sessions.

Healthy eating initiative launched at Qatar Foundation



A new initiative has been launched at Qatar Foundation's (QF) schools to encourage healthy eating among their students. Children are being served the healthiest meals possible during their lunch breaks under Weill Cornell Medical

College Qatar's Sahtak Awalan – Your Health First campaign.

The aim of the campaign is to create healthy eating habits at a young age, potentially improving the health of an entire

generation and preventing obesity, diabetes and heart disease, among other issues. Adopting Sahtak Awalan branding and health messages, children are being encouraged to take responsibility for the food they consume and are learning about

benefits of certain foods. Information for senior students to calculate their body mass index is also provided.

Dr. Javaid Sheikh, Dean of Weill Cornell Medical College, said this initiative could have a huge impact on children's health: "If we encourage children and young people to change habits, we can create a healthy generation able to contribute to the goal of moving towards a knowledge-based economy".

To encourage children to eat healthily, the campaign has devised a reward system with children receiving stamps in a book whenever they choose a healthy option. Once they have collected enough stamps, they receive a badge.

Kulluna campaign raises awareness of water safety

The Kulluna health and safety awareness campaign, coordinated through Hamad International Training Center and supported by HMC and ConocoPhillips Qatar, recently attended the Qatar International Boat Show to raise awareness of water safety issues.

The word Kulluna means 'all of us' in Arabic, and it is being used for this campaign in the belief that all of us in Qatar can take action to improve health, wellbeing and safety for ourselves, our families and the community in general.

Kulluna needs the entire community to be aware and involved in promoting health and safety, and what better opportunity for focusing on water safety than at the Qatar International Boat Show? Water is an essential and common part of our daily lives, but few people realize how dangerous it

can be, which is why Kulluna took the time to remind people that simple safety precautions can avert potential tragedies, particularly for children.

Visitors to the event had the opportunity to learn how to keep children safe when in and around water. Many visitors were startled to discover how everyday objects in the home, such as buckets, toilets, baths and even fish tanks, could be so dangerous to unsuspecting children and how simple safety measures could prevent them from causing injury, disability or even death to their loved ones.

Health and safety experts on the Kulluna stand also advised people how to make their swimming pools as safe as possible and keep their children safe when playing in or around water. Simple measures like fencing off the pools and installing self-

locking gates, supervising children at play, nominating a responsible adult to act as lookout and teaching children to swim are all known to reduce accidental injuries and death.

For more information about Kulluna and its campaigns, visit www.kulluna.qa



Get on your bike with Cycling in Aspire

With the cooler and more pleasant climate now with us, the 'Cycle in Aspire' rent-a-bike scheme at Aspire Zone has started attracting both children and adults who want to enjoy a cycle ride around the five kilometer track on the grounds.

The popularity of cycling has increased in Qatar in recent years, yet cyclists have often pointed to a lack of cycle-friendly locations. Aspire's new scheme makes it easier for people to get active and enjoy the outdoors.

Cyclists can use their own bicycles or hire them from the rental outlet. The Cycle in Aspire initiative offers 120 bikes for

rent at a fee of just QR20 per hour and an additional QR5 for every extra hour. There is also a 'learn-to-ride' program for children between the ages of six to 12 years old aimed at teaching them safe cycling techniques. Instructors instill the importance of safety by making helmet usage mandatory when cycling around the well-lit Aspire Zone that also has a support team and bike medics on standby.

The purpose of the Aspire initiative is to encourage an active healthy lifestyle and promote physical activity in a welcoming atmosphere. Cycle hire is available Sunday



to Thursday from 4 to 8pm and Friday-Saturday from 12 to 8pm. A Qatari ID is required to hire a bicycle but those who have their own are also welcome to use the facilities.

The Cycle in Aspire stand is located at the end of the road between Villaggio and Hyatt Plaza, near the children's playground and outdoor football pitches.

Event held to remember victims of road traffic injuries



To mark World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (WDR), Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) held an event in November to remember the victims of road traffic injuries (RTIs) and raise awareness about prevention of RTIs and deaths on Qatar's roads.

"Speed kills – design out speeding" was the theme for WDR 2014, which was organized within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 and its lead agency, the World Health Organization.

WDR is marked globally on the third Sunday of November each year to remember the millions killed and injured on the world's roads. The day provides an opportunity for survivors of road traffic

injuries to share their messages of hope and support for fellow victims and their families.

Recognizing that RTIs are the leading cause of death in Qatar, Dr. Hassan Al Thani, Head of Trauma and Vascular Surgery at HMC said: "Beyond providing excellent care for victims of RTIs at HMC's Level 1 Trauma Center, our dedicated team of surgeons, nurses and allied healthcare professionals are prioritizing efforts to prevent these injuries and deaths on the road from happening in the first place. We are aligning efforts of the Hamad Injury Prevention Program (HIPP) – the community outreach arm of HMC's Trauma Surgery section – with those of the Ministry of Interior's National Traffic Safety Committee through the 'One Second Campaign', the national road safety program of Qatar."

Dr. Rafael Consunji, Director of the HIPP cited speeding as a consistent contributor to crashes that cause severe injury and death, as demonstrated by the fact that more than half of the road deaths in Qatar happen at the scene of the crash or before the victim arrives at the hospital.

"The impact of collisions due to vehicles moving at high speeds can cause severe and fatal injuries," said Dr. Consunji. "Requiring seatbelts for all vehicle passengers, child passenger restraint laws and reducing speed limits in urban areas are all proven methods for reducing injuries and deaths from high-speed crashes. Implementing and enforcing these measures can go a long way towards ensuring the safety of everyone on the roads."

A study on seatbelt compliance among patients with orthopedic injuries admitted to HGH showed that only 36 percent of all patients were using a seatbelt, and that most non-users were young males (with an average age of 32 years) from a Middle Eastern country, driving a four-wheel vehicle, and with a crash that occurred on a main road.

The study's principal investigator, Dr. Talal Ibrahim, Senior Consultant of Orthopedic Surgery at HGH, and his co-authors recommended a national seatbelt campaign to increase seatbelt use among this high-risk population of young drivers.



HMC launches public weight loss program

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) recently launched Smart Weight, a clinically led, fully supported weight loss program for members of the public. The aim of Smart Weight is to increase awareness of nutrition and bring about behavioral and lifestyle changes, with the purpose of reducing the prevalence of obesity and other associated chronic diseases in Qatar.



Dr. Yousuf Al Maslamani, Medical Director for Hamad General Hospital and the lead for Smart Weight, said: "We are delighted to launch Smart Weight. It is a program for people who want and need to lose weight but who need a little professional support and advice to do this. If you are carrying too much weight or are obese, you could be at risk of other serious health issues, such as diabetes or heart

problems. It is important to maintain a healthy diet and take regular exercise but this can seem daunting at first. This is why we have launched this program; to provide support to our participants every step of the way. The aim is that, with the right support and advice, they will be able to lose at least 10 percent of their weight over the six months."

Participants will be monitored regularly during the program to track their progress, as Ms. Reem Al Saadi, Director for Corporate Dietetics and Nutrition, explains: "We will be working very closely with the participants, with regular follow up and support. As such, we have limited the number of participants to 500 this time, in order to provide the right level of support to each person, but we hope to do another six month program in the future. We will be actively monitoring progress and measuring the overall outcomes and successes of the program and will be publishing a research paper based on the results."

For anyone looking to lose weight, HMC has set up a website that shares hints and tips to support weight loss: <http://smartweight.hamad.qa>

Conference held to highlight childhood diabetes issues

Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) recently hosted a first-of-its-kind conference to highlight and discuss the prevalence of childhood diabetes in Qatar, as well as the latest diagnostic and management techniques for the condition.

The conference, which featured scientific presentations and panel sessions, was attended by more than 300 healthcare professionals, including senior physicians, endocrinologists, nurses and other allied health professionals. The conference enabled attendees to enhance their knowledge and skills, helping them to deliver better patient care.

Dr. Ahmed El Awwa, Consultant Pediatric Endocrine and Diabetes at Hamad General Hospital (HGH) explained that

diabetes is the most common endocrine and metabolic disorder among children globally.

"The most prevalent type of diabetes in children is type 1, which is found in 90 percent of children affected with diabetes; these children require insulin treatment at all times," Dr. El Awwa said.

He explained that the causes of type 1 diabetes are still unknown, but many theories assert that it occurs due to autoimmune destruction that triggers a loss of pancreatic beta cells responsible for insulin production. The occurrence of type 1 diabetes has no link with consanguinity, positive family history, food habits, or medication, he pointed out.

Dr. El Awwa added that the number of children and young adults affected by type 2 diabetes is beginning to rise, particularly with the increase of obesity and improper diets. However, it can be prevented through diet control and weight reduction strategies.

During the symposium, healthcare professionals also had the opportunity to delve into other topics such as types and diagnosis of childhood diabetes, acute complications that may arise due to diabetes, insulin regimens and insulin pump therapy, monitoring of long term complications of the condition, the role of education and management devices, and the kind of diet children with diabetes should have.

Love Your Kids?

Strap them in Keep them safe



مؤسسة حمد الطبية
Hamad Medical Corporation

صحة • تعليم • بحوث HEALTH • EDUCATION • RESEARCH

Cancer – Types, risk factors and treatment

Cancer is a disease that can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, race or social standing. It is one of the leading causes of death in the world, particularly in developing countries. Yet much can be done to prevent cancer and to improve chances of recovery.

What is cancer?

The body is made up of many types of cells. These cells grow and divide in a controlled way to produce more cells to keep the body healthy. When cells become old or damaged, they die and are replaced with new cells. However, sometimes this orderly process goes wrong. The genetic material (DNA) of a cell can become damaged or altered, producing mutations that affect normal



“ It’s the spreading capability of the cancer that makes it so harmful, which is why detecting cancer early is important.”

cell growth and division. When this happens, cells do not die when they should and new cells form when the body does not need them. The extra cells may form a mass of tissue called a tumor. These tumors can be benign or malignant. The difference is that benign tumors are not cancerous; malignant tumors are.

Benign tumors:

- Usually grow fairly slowly
- Do not spread to other parts of the body
- Normally have a covering made up of normal cells

Benign tumors are made up of cells that are similar to normal cells. They will only cause a problem in certain circumstances:

- If they grow very large
- Become uncomfortable or unsightly

- Press on other body organs
- Take up space inside the skull (such as a brain tumor)
- Release hormones that affect how the body works

Malignant tumors are made up of cancer cells. They behave differently to benign tumors:

- Usually grow faster than benign tumors
 - Spread into and destroy surrounding tissues
 - Spread to other parts of the body
- Cancer cells spread by invading surrounding tissue and moving to other parts of the body or by travelling via the blood and lymph systems in the body. It’s the spreading capability of the cancer that makes it so harmful, which is why detecting cancer early is important.

“ The message is clear – if you notice anything unusual about your body, or have one of the warning signs or symptoms, it’s very important to talk to your doctor about it as soon as possible.”

Types of cancer

There are more than 100 types of cancer that affect all parts of the body, each classified by the type of cell that is initially affected. The place where the cancer first starts is known as a primary cancer. It is also usually the name given to the type of cancer, for example, if the origin is in the breast, this would be referred to as a breast cancer.

A secondary cancer is the term given to a cancer that develops in another location because some cancer cells have broken away from their place of origin and have been carried to another part of the body through the blood or lymph system. This is also known as metastasis.

Symptoms of cancer

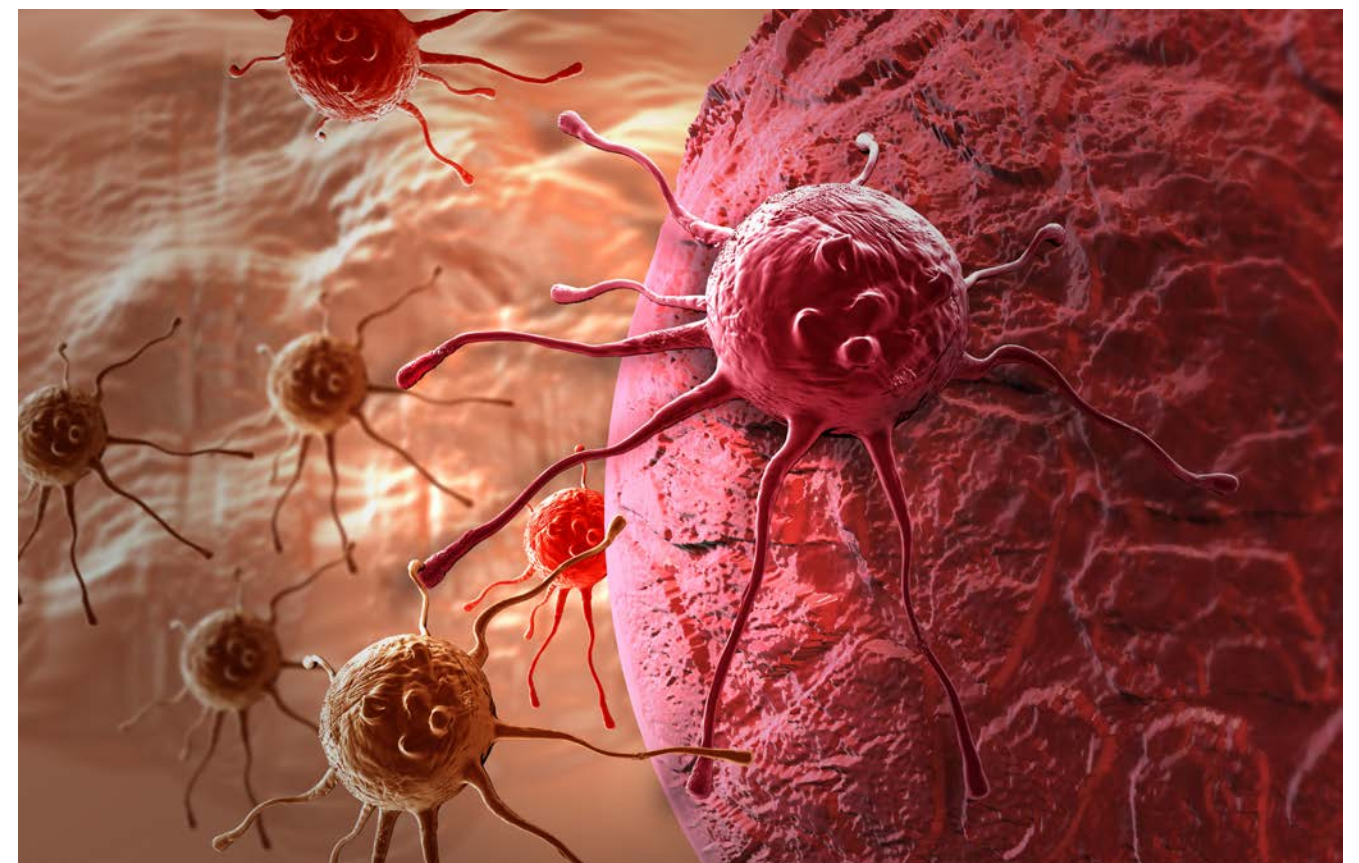
The symptoms of cancer can vary and are very much dependent upon the location of the cancer. It is important to be familiar with what is normal for

your body and if you recognize any significant changes, you should make an appointment with your doctor in the first instance.

Common signs of cancer include:

- An unusual lump or swelling anywhere on the body
- A change in the size, shape or color of a mole
- A sore that won’t heal for a long time
- A mouth or tongue ulcer that lasts longer than three weeks
- Persistent difficulty swallowing or indigestion
- Problems passing urine
- Blood in your urine or bowel movements
- A change to more frequent bowel motions that lasts more than one month
- Coughing up blood

The symptoms caused by cancer are also symptoms caused by other, much



more common illnesses and conditions. But regardless of the cause, seeking a formal diagnosis from your doctor is very important.

Early detection of cancer

Many deaths due to cancer can be avoided. It is important to note that thousands of people survive cancer every year. The chances of successful recovery from cancer are significantly increased when cancer is diagnosed at an early stage as treatment is likely to be more effective. Early detection of cancer can make a real difference.

Sometimes, people delay seeing their doctor because they're worried about what the doctor might find, or don't think it is anything significant. However, advances in the way cancer is diagnosed and treated have led to significant improvements in recent years. According to Cancer Research UK:

- The number of people who die from cancer has been falling overall.
- Half the people diagnosed with cancer today will still be alive in five years time. And more than 40 percent will still be alive in ten years time. The average ten-year survival rate for cancer has doubled over the past 30 years.
- For many types of cancer, including prostate cancer and melanoma skin cancer the number of people who survive has improved greatly.
- More than nine out of ten men with testicular cancer are now effectively cured.
- More than three quarters of children with cancer survive, compared with only a quarter in the 1960s.
- Even for those cancers where survival overall is poor, the chances of surviving are better the earlier the stage at which the cancer's diagnosed.

The message is clear – if you notice anything unusual about your body, or have one of the warning signs or symptoms, it's very important to talk to your doctor about it as soon as possible.

Risk factors

There is no one single cause of cancer; there are many factors that contribute to its development. These include:

- Age – the development of cancer becomes more common as people get older.
- Unhealthy lifestyle – smoking, being overweight, poor nutrition and lack of exercise. According to the WHO, tobacco use is the single largest preventable cause of cancer in the world, causing 22 percent of cancer deaths.
- Genetic predisposition – some people are born with cell mutations or faulty cells which statistically increase the likelihood of developing cancer.
- Immune system – some types of cancers develop easier in people with weaker immune systems, such as people who have HIV or AIDs.
- Day to day environment – sun exposure, asbestos etc.

Prevention

The WHO estimates that more than 30 percent of cancers could be prevented in the developed world by people following more healthy lifestyles: abstaining from tobacco, having a healthy diet, being physically active and moderating the use of alcohol.

Following a well-balanced, healthy lifestyle can significantly reduce the likelihood of developing some cancers as well as other serious illnesses and conditions. Avoiding tobacco, maintaining a nutritious diet and regularly taking part in physical activity all reduce the risk of cancer development. Reducing lengthened exposure to the sun can also help although complete absence can affect the body's vitamin D levels. Everything in moderation may be a suggested philosophy.

Treatment of cancer

There are many types of cancer treatments available, including surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, hormone therapy, biological therapies, bisphosphonates, bone marrow and stem cell transplants, complementary and alternative therapies. All are considered on an individual, case by case basis, depending on the status of disease, any co-morbidities and the individual's general performance status.

“ The chances of successful recovery from cancer are significantly increased when cancer is diagnosed at an early stage as treatment is likely to be more effective. ”

Keep up-to-date with Hamad Medical Corporation's latest health news



/hamadmedicalcorporation



@HMC_Qatar



@HMC_Qatar



مؤسسة حمد الطبية
Hamad Medical Corporation

صحة • تعليم • بحوث HEALTH • EDUCATION • RESEARCH

Water safety for you and your family

It only takes a very small quantity of water for there to be a risk of drowning; you can even drown in the desert. The words drowning and desert may seem like they wouldn't appear in the same sentence, but the probability of the event occurring is more likely than you may think. Despite Qatar's arid climate, Dr. Khalid A. Alsaadi Alyafei, Senior Consultant, Pediatric Emergency Medicine at HMC has seen unfortunate drowning and near-drowning outcomes in the buckets that are used to collect the dripping water from air conditioning units in desert camps. These and other similar events make it imperative that we review the basics of being safe in and around water in Qatar, especially for children.



Using local data from studies conducted by Dr. Khalid and data from the Qatar Statistics Authority, with published recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Safe Kids

Worldwide and the International Open Water Drowning Prevention Task Force, we have come up with the essential facts to keep you and your family safe in and around water.

Between 2008 and 2011 there were 87 deaths due to drowning in Qatar, an average of about 22 fatal drowning incidents every year.

The following data has been taken from the 25–30 near-drowning and drowning patients every year in Qatar that seek attention from the Pediatric Emergency Center of Hamad Medical Corporation.

- 90 percent involved children less than 10 years of age
- 80 percent happened while the children were without adult supervision
- 70 percent happened in the absence of proven safety precautions – such as lifeguards, life preservers or pool fencing
- 60 percent happened in or near the home (in compounds)
- 55 percent happened to children from one to four years of age
- 45 percent had CPR performed at the scene.
- 40 percent were female
- 20 percent happen in or near the sea
- 10 percent of the victims did not survive

As a preventative measure to avoid further unnecessary and unfortunate cases of drowning from happening, the following are essential facts for every parent, family and swimmer in Qatar to follow.

LOOK – contrary to popular belief and movies, when a child drowns, it is usually not a noisy event. Frequently, their head will simply slip under accidentally and the next thing people notice is a floating lifeless body. Nothing works better to keep a child safe in the water than close, constant and capable adult supervision. 'Close enough to touch' is the adage, especially with young children in the bath, where as little as five centimeters of water and immersion of just a few minutes can lead to death or irreversible brain injury. Any delay in rescue can have significant consequences. It is during lapses of supervision, i.e. during transferring from one pool or beach to another, making phone calls or during snack or meal times, that most incidents occur. The designated watcher must give their undivided attention to the task at hand. Providing supervision for a number

of children in a pool or any body of water requires a clear-thinking, undistracted and rescue-capable adult, they must know how to swim, perform a rescue, initiate CPR and call for help. This is what a lifeguard is supposed to provide. However, in Qatar unfortunately there is still no law in place that makes it a mandatory standard for pools and beaches. The presence, or more importantly absence, of appropriate supervision should guide families when choosing where to go for leisure activities in or near the water.

LOCK – every pool or body of water that is left unsupervised must be enclosed with a fence that is at least four feet tall with a locked gate or access point. The same principle must apply for bathtubs, jacuzzi whirlpools, spas, buckets of water and even toilets if there are very young children in the house. Regulating unsupervised access to potential risky bodies of water is a key element of water safety. The same goes for inflatable pools, if they are no longer going to be used for the day they must be emptied of all water, deflated and folded up or stored (they are suffocation hazards when deflated).

LIFE PRESERVERS – or lifejackets, also called personal flotation devices or PFDs, are essential for every boat trip or prolonged exposure at the water's edge, especially for younger children who cannot swim. Inflatable armbands are not recommended as they may spontaneously deflate and are designed to keep a child's arms, not their head, out of the water. All PFDs must be size and weight appropriate. These specifications will be clearly marked on those that are certified or approved for use by children. However, even the most expensive PFD is not a suitable substitute for constant adult supervision.

LEARN – learning how to swim and being familiar with water-safety survival skills saves lives for victims and allows individuals in the vicinity to be capable lifesavers in the event that something does occur. Learning CPR can make a significant difference to whether you are able to save the life of a drowning victim.

LAWS – legislation is needed to require pool fencing and lifeguards for all compound and community pools, PFDs for all passengers in boats and watercraft, inclusion of swimming and/or water-safety lessons in primary schools and mandatory licenses/training for operators of all forms of watercraft (especially jet skis).

Other tips include:

- Always swim with other people
- Always enter shallow or unfamiliar water feet first
- Never go in the water after drinking alcohol
- Obey all safety signs and warning flags
- Know the water and weather conditions before getting in the water
- Swim in areas with lifeguards

Online resources:

- American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement-Prevention of Drowning – <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2010/05/24/peds.2010-1264.full.pdf+html>
- SAFE KIDS Worldwide, Washington DC <http://www.safekids.org/watersafety>
- International Open Water Drowning Prevention Task Force <http://www.ilsf.org/content/international-open-water-drowning-prevention-guidelines>

Smoking – the facts

The World Health Organization describes the global tobacco epidemic as ‘one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced.’ Tobacco smoking damages many of the body’s organs and increases the risk of developing a number of health conditions, including cancer, coronary heart disease, stroke, bronchitis, emphysema and pneumonia.



The facts

There are about 1.1 billion smokers in the world today. If current trends continue, that number is expected to increase to 1.6 billion by the year 2025. About half of all smokers will eventually die from smoking-related diseases. If you are a long-term smoker your life expectancy is about 10 years less, on average, than a non-smoker. Globally, approximately 10 million cigarettes are purchased a minute, 15 billion are sold each day, and upwards of five trillion cigarettes are manufactured each year. One person will die in the world every six seconds due to tobacco use; about six million deaths annually.

What is in a cigarette?

Nicotine

Nicotine is a drug that stimulates the brain, making cigarettes addictive. Smokers develop nicotine cravings when they do not have a cigarette for a while. When smokers abstain for a period of time their blood levels of nicotine decline. This can lead to symptoms such as anxiety, restlessness, headaches, irritability, hunger, and concentration problems, which are considered to be withdrawal symptoms for people who quit.

Tar

Smoking causes tar deposits in the lungs, blood vessels and other parts of the body.

Chemicals

There are more than 4,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, of which at least 250 are known to be harmful and more than 50 are known to cause cancer.

Carbon monoxide

This chemical inhibits the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood. In pregnant women who smoke, carbon monoxide reduces oxygen supply to the growing baby, leading to possible problems with the baby’s development.

Cigarettes also contain:

- Arsenic – which is used in rat poison
- Benzene – an industrial solvent, refined from crude oil
- Cadmium – found in batteries and oil paints
- Acetone – main ingredient in nail polish remover
- Ammonia – a common household cleaning agent

Does shisha smoking carry the same health risks as cigarette smoking?

Many people incorrectly believe that smoking shisha is less harmful to your body than other tobacco products, such as cigarettes. Maybe this misconception

“ There are more than 4,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, of which at least 250 are known to be harmful and more than 50 are known to cause cancer. ”

“Shisha smoking can appear as a peaceful, relaxing habit, yet the truth is that shisha smoking is just as harmful as cigarette smoking, possibly even more harmful.”



comes due to the flavored tobacco and that way it passes through water in the pipe. Shisha smoking can appear as a peaceful, relaxing habit, yet the truth is that shisha smoking is just as harmful as cigarette smoking, possibly even more harmful. The carcinogens and nicotine present in shisha are the same as in cigarettes. Therefore, a regular shisha smoker risks the same health issues that cigarette smokers face, whether that's respiratory, heart disease or cancer.

The World Health Organization estimates that the volume of smoke inhaled in a one hour shisha session is equivalent to smoking more than 100 cigarettes. The WHO's research also states that a smoker may inhale more tobacco smoke in one breath from a shisha pipe that they would smoking an entire cigarette. Smokers typically spend far longer smoking a shisha pipe than a cigarette and they also inhale longer, deeper breaths, resulting in a greater amount of smoke and toxins being inhaled. For every shisha smoked, the smoker inhales about 800 milligrams of tar compared to 22.3 milligrams in a cigarette.

Another important fact is that it may not be only the tobacco and nicotine in

shisha that cause harm. The charcoal and aluminum foil used in burning the tobacco produce high levels of carbon monoxide and heavy metals that can also harm your body.

What happens when you quit smoking?

The good news is that much of the damage resulting from tobacco smoking is reversible.

The following timeline highlights the body's stages of recovery after quitting smoking.

After 20 minutes – Your blood pressure, pulse rate, and the temperature of your hands and feet will all return to normal.

After 12 hours – Your blood oxygen level will have increased to normal and carbon monoxide levels will have dropped to normal.

After 72 hours – Your entire body will be nicotine-free and over 90 percent of all nicotine metabolites will now have passed from your body via your urine. You can also expect the symptoms of chemical withdrawal to have peaked in intensity.

Your bronchial tubes are beginning to relax thus making it easier to breathe and your lung capacity has also started to increase.

After 2 to 8 weeks – Circulation improves, making walking and running a lot easier.

After 3 to 6 months – Coughing, wheezing and breathing problems are greatly reduced as the lungs have room for up to 10 percent more oxygen. Your risk of heart attack has started to drop and your lung function is beginning to improve.

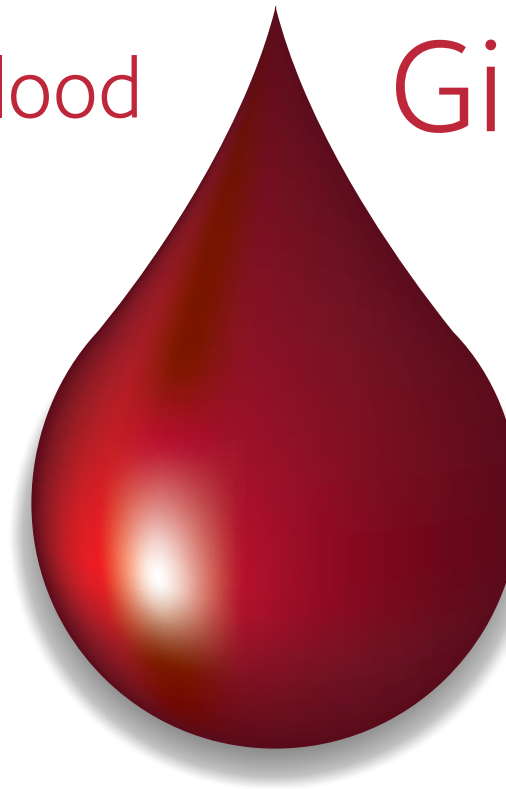
After 12 months – Your risk of coronary heart disease has dropped to less than half that of a smoker.

After 10 years – Your risk of death from lung cancer has declined by almost half, and your risk of cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus has also decreased.

After 15 years – Your risk of coronary heart disease is now that of a person who has never smoked.

Give Blood

Give Life



Hamad Medical Corporation needs more volunteer blood donors.
Give blood and make a difference.

HMC Blood Donor Center:
4439 1081/4439 1082



مؤسسة حمد الطبية
Hamad Medical Corporation

HEALTH • EDUCATION • RESEARCH
صحة • تعليم • بحوث

Know the symptoms and act F.A.S.T.

Stroke is one of the leading causes of mortality and the number one cause of chronic disability in the world. According to the World Health Organization, 6.2 million people die due to stroke each year, equating to one death every 10 seconds. Due to the high prevalence in Qatar's population of many risk factors for stroke – including diabetes, obesity, high cholesterol, hypertension and inactivity – the incidence of stroke is high.

What is a stroke?

For the brain to function it needs a constant supply of blood to deliver vital nutrients and oxygen to the brain cells. A stroke occurs when this supply is impaired or cut off.

There are two main causes of stroke. The most common happens when a blockage forms in a blood vessel (ischemic stroke). This can be due to a number of factors:

- A blood clot forms in a main artery to the brain (sometimes called a cerebral thrombosis)
- A blockage, usually a blood clot from the heart, is carried in the bloodstream to one of the arteries supplying the brain (called a cerebral embolism)
- A blockage forms in the tiny blood vessels deep within the brain (called a lacunar stroke)

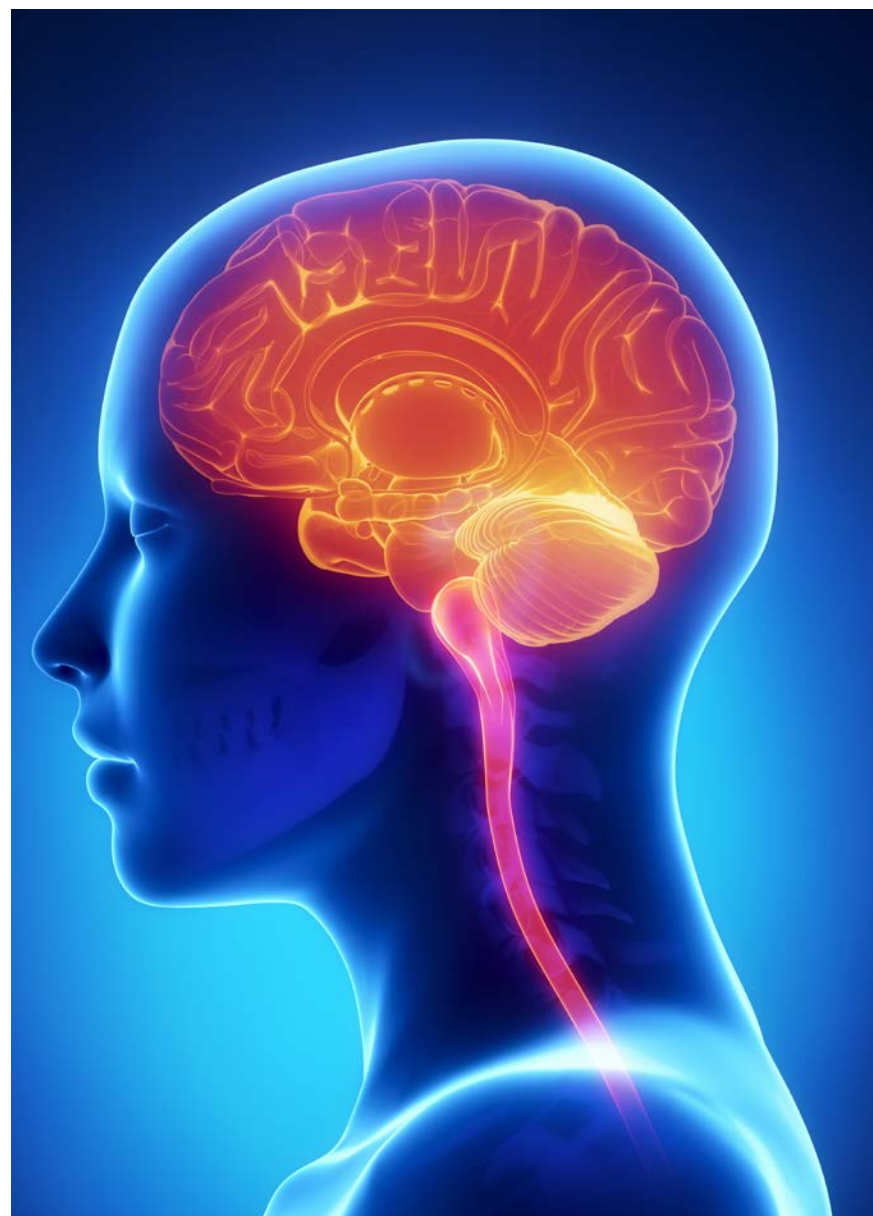
The other main type of stroke is caused by bleeding in or around the brain. This type of stroke is called a hemorrhagic stroke. There are two main causes of hemorrhagic stroke:

- A blood vessel bursts within the brain (an intracerebral hemorrhage)
- A blood vessel on the surface of the brain bursts, causing bleeding into the area between the brain and the skull (called a subarachnoid hemorrhage)

How does a stroke affect the body?

A stroke damages brain cells so they can no longer work properly. As a result, the areas of the body that the brain controls are also affected. The brain is like a computer, sending messages around the body to enable it to function. It is made up of two halves; the left and right hemisphere.

Each part of your brain has a specific job to do. In general, the right half of your brain controls the left side of your body and vice versa. For example, if you have a stroke and your right arm and leg are weak, then



“Strokes happen suddenly and cause an immediate effect on the body. A stroke may cause numbness, weakness or paralysis on one side of the body.”

the stroke will have damaged the motor area in the left side of your brain. Specific areas of your brain also control your ability to move, speak and write. Other areas control your memory, emotions and vision.

The effects of a stroke will generally depend on the following issues:

- Which part of your brain has been injured
- How big an area of the brain was damaged
- Your general health when the stroke happened

Symptoms

Strokes happen suddenly and cause an immediate effect on the body. A stroke may cause numbness, weakness or paralysis on one side of the body. It may cause slurring of speech and difficulty in finding words or understanding speech. Some people lose their sight or have blurred vision, and others become confused or unsteady. The symptoms of ischemic stroke are different depending on which blood vessels in the brain are affected.

Time is brain

The key to successful treatment following a stroke is speed, as Dr. Naveed Akhtar, Director of Hamad General Hospital's Stroke Ward explains: "Fast and specialized medical intervention is the key to successful treatment for stroke patients. The sooner treatment is given to the patient, the better the chance that brain cells can be protected. Thrombolysis is a very effective treatment that can greatly increase a stroke patient's chances of

making a full recovery, but this must be given within 4.5 hours of the onset of symptoms. For this reason, it is extremely important for people to be aware of the symptoms of stroke so they are able to quickly identify the problem and call 999 immediately."

Stroke awareness campaigns around the world have frequently used the F.A.S.T. message to convey the need to identify the symptoms quickly and seek medical help.

Suspect a Stroke? Act F.A.S.T.

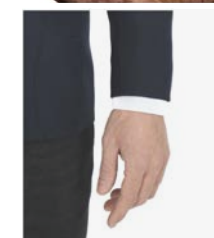
This simple test can help you recognize the signs of a stroke.



F

Facial weakness:

Can the person smile?
Is their mouth or an eye drooping?



A

Arm weakness:

Can the person raise both arms?



S

Speech problems:

Can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?



T

Time to call 999

DO NOT ignore symptoms, even if they go away quickly. It may be a warning sign.

Remember – Time is brain! The sooner you act from the onset of symptoms, the better the chance that medical intervention can protect your brain cells.

DO NOT DELAY.

Risk factors

Certain conditions and habits can raise your risk of having a stroke. The more risk factors you have, the more likely you are to have a stroke. You can treat or control some risk factors, such as high blood pressure and smoking. Other risk factors, such as age and gender, you can't control, but are still important to be aware of.

The major risk factors for stroke include:

- **High blood pressure** – this is the main risk factor for stroke. Blood pressure is considered high if it stays at or above 140/90 mmHg over time.
- **Smoking** damages blood vessels, raises blood pressure and increases the stickiness of the blood making it more likely to clot. Smoking also may reduce the amount of oxygen that reaches your body's tissues. Exposure to secondhand smoke also can damage the blood vessels.
- **Diabetes** – poorly or uncontrolled diabetes causes high levels of glucose in the blood which damage the arteries, making them harder and narrower. Diabetes can also lead to the build-up of fatty deposits in your arteries, increasing the risk of these vessels blocking. If you are diabetic and smoke it is only a matter of time before you have a heart attack or stroke.
- **Heart disease** – coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathy and atrial fibrillation can cause blood clots that can lead to a stroke.
- **High cholesterol** – we all need cholesterol, but when the body has too much, the excess is dumped into the blood stream which can block up the arteries.
- **Age and gender** – your risk of stroke increases as you get older. However, stroke is not a disease only affecting older people. Strokes also occur in younger people and the average age for people who have a stroke is 54 years in Qatar. At younger ages, men are more likely than women to have strokes. However, women are more likely to die from strokes.

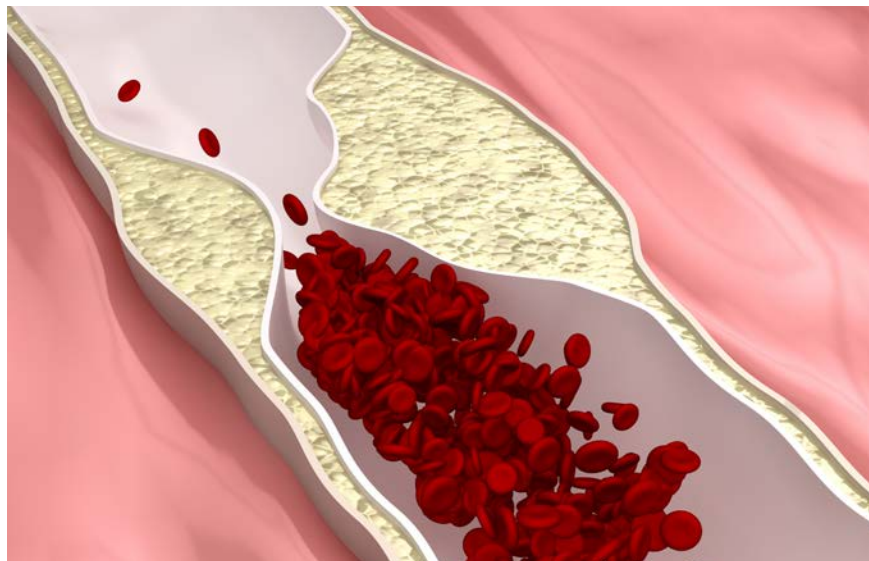
- **Personal or family history** of stroke at a young age. If you've had a stroke, you're at higher risk for another one. Your risk of having a repeat stroke is highest right after a stroke.

Other risk factors for stroke, many of which of you can control, include:

- Alcohol and illegal drug use, including cocaine, amphetamines and other drugs
- Lack of physical activity
- Unhealthy diet
- Obesity
- Stress and depression

People with a combination of risk factors may need to take medicines to lower their risk. If you are prescribed medication, it is essential to take the tablets as directed, many have to be taken for the rest of your life and stopping them will increase your risk of stroke.

"There are two messages that cannot be overstated. Firstly, the need for people to know the signs and symptoms of stroke, as without knowing what the signs are, it is impossible for you to know when someone has suffered a stroke. Secondly, if you suspect that you, or someone around you, have suffered a stroke, you must call 999 immediately so care teams can respond and treatment given as soon as possible. Do not ignore symptoms, even if they go away quickly. It may be a warning sign," stressed Dr. Naveed.



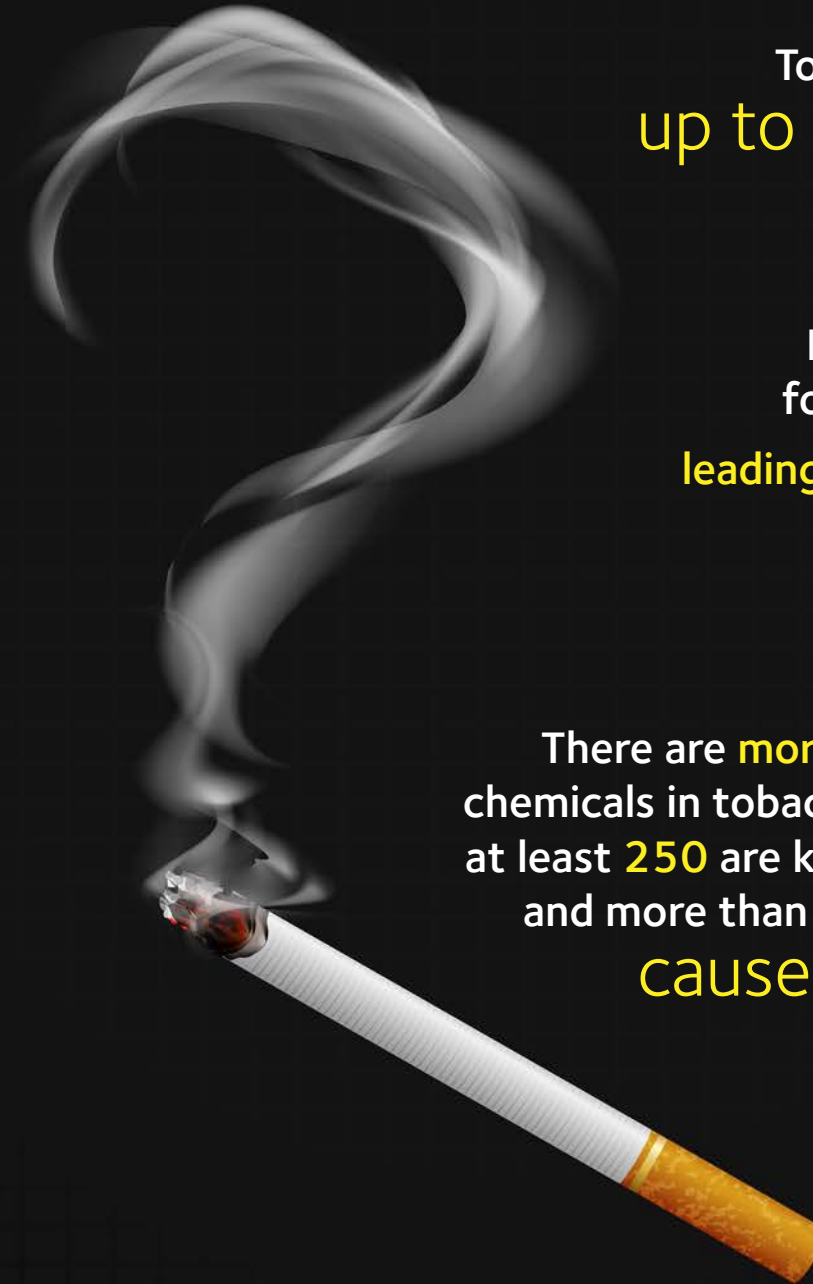
“ If you suspect that you, or someone around you, have suffered a stroke, you must call 999 immediately so care teams can respond and treatment given as soon as possible.”

Tobacco use **kills 5.4 million** people a year – an average of one person every six seconds – and accounts for one in 10 adult deaths worldwide

Tobacco kills **up to half** of all users

It is a risk factor for six of the eight **leading causes of death** in the world

There are **more than 4000** chemicals in tobacco smoke, of which at least **250** are known to be **harmful** and more than **50** are known to **cause cancer**



Contact the Smoking Cessation Clinic
at Hamad Medical Corporation
for advice on how to quit smoking
Tel: 4439 2778



مؤسسة حمد الطبية
Hamad Medical Corporation

صحة • تعليم • بحوث HEALTH • EDUCATION • RESEARCH

Do I need to be aware of any specific conditions that could impair my vision?



Looking after your eyes correctly and undergoing regular eye checkups is extremely important in order to avoid visual impairment. Improper eye care and negligence can lead to partial vision loss, which may in turn cause gradual blindness. However, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 80 percent of global blindness is avoidable through prevention and treatment.

An important step in prevention is to be aware of the kind of eye diseases that may lead to vision deterioration and loss of eyesight. Children, particularly preschoolers, can experience conditions such as amblyopia or lazy eye (a condition that

develops in infancy or early childhood resulting in decreased vision in one eye); strabismus (a condition in which both eyes cannot align in the same direction); and significant refractive error (a condition which occurs when the shape of the eye prevents it from focusing well).

For adults aged 40 and above, vision loss may be induced by conditions such as cataract (clouding of the lens in the eye causing blurred vision); glaucoma (a condition in which the eye's optic nerve is damaged and a pressure builds inside the eye); diabetic retinopathy (a condition that occurs due to diabetes in which blood vessels in the eye are damaged); and age-related macular degeneration (a condition in which damage occurs to macula – a small spot near the center of the retina, leading to poor or decreasing vision).

It is also important to be aware of your family health history as some eye diseases are hereditary and may require you to have more regular checkups. I recommend that you have a thorough eye test and checkup every two years, and if you have any concerns about your eyes, you should make an appointment with an ophthalmologist as soon as possible.

Dr. Dalal Al Mass, Consultant Ophthalmologist at HMC

I'm now in my mid-sixties and for the past few years my arthritis has been causing me greater discomfort. Are there any therapies to help relieve the symptoms?



Arthritis, a joint disorder that involves inflammation of one or more joints, is a major cause of disability among older people, especially elderly women. Osteoarthritis of the knees is the

most common form of arthritis and it commonly affects middle aged and older patients.

Contrary to perceptions that nothing can be done about arthritis, seeking therapy and other avenues of support can improve your quality of life. Treatment, which may include physical therapy and/or occupational therapy, can help overcome the limitations posed by arthritis on your ability to engage in vital activities of daily living, work, family gatherings and other social activities.

In addition to medicine and exercises, physical therapy provides movements designed to preserve the strength and use of the joints. Occupational therapy teaches patients how to reduce strain on their joints during daily activities, which helps relieve the pain and improves the ability to move around with less discomfort.

Healthy eating habits and regular physical exercise are an important part of arthritis prevention and treatment, as well as the following steps: 1) Drink plenty of water, as this makes up 70 percent of the cartilage that protects your joints. 2) Increase your calcium intake by consuming a diet rich in dairy products, or supplement your diet with non-dairy foods rich in calcium such as broccoli, salmon, spinach, black beans, peanuts, almonds, tofu, sardines and sesame seeds. 3) Also include in your diet foods rich in vitamins C and D, which support healthy joints. Vitamin D encourages the absorption of calcium from foods into the body and bones, and may prevent the onset of rheumatoid arthritis. 4) Exercise regularly, and encourage elderly loved ones to do so as well. Exercise helps prevent obesity, improves and maintains the health of your bones and joints, and improves your overall sense of well-being.

If you have specific questions about your arthritis, your doctor and therapist will be able to prescribe an individualized program.

Dr. Mohammed Hammoudeh, Senior Rheumatologist at HMC



I eat a fairly healthy and varied diet, but should I also be taking any nutritional supplements?



Dietary supplements include vitamins, minerals, and other less familiar substances such as herbs, botanicals, amino acids and enzymes. These come in many different forms, including tablets, capsules, soft gels and gel caps.

Unlike drugs, supplements are not intended to treat, diagnose, prevent, or cure diseases. That means supplement manufacturers should not make claims, such as 'reduces arthritic pain' or 'treats heart disease'.

Certain supplements – dietary fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins and minerals – can be taken to help ensure you get an adequate dietary intake of essential nutrients. However, supplements should not replace the variety of whole foods you consume that are an important part of a healthy diet.

So, even if you do take regular nutritional supplements, be sure to consume a variety of foods as well and follow a healthy diet. Eating a healthy, balanced diet, rich in fruit and vegetables, is an important part of maintaining good health, and will provide you with a sufficient intake of all nutrients, including vitamins and minerals, to help you feel your best. Unless you have a specific need, such as pregnancy or a medical condition, supplements will most likely not be needed.

Here are a few tips to help you when considering supplementation:

1. Watch out for false statements like:
 - A quick and effective 'cure-all'
 - Can 'treat or cure diseases'
 - 'Totally safe' or has 'no side effects'
2. Be aware that the term 'natural' doesn't always mean safe.
3. Always remember that supplements are not a replacement for natural foods.



Before making decisions about whether to take a supplement, consult a qualified dietitian. They can help you achieve a balance between natural foods and supplements to suit your individual needs.

Raghda Kamal Fayad, Dietitian at HMC

My 12 year old son has been gradually putting on weight over the past few years. What can I do to help him control his weight?

Firstly, it is good that you recognize the problem and are acting to resolve it. In addition to a heightened risk of developing type 2 diabetes, an obese child may be prone to chronic illnesses such as heart disease, hypertension, asthma or sleep apnea.

The fundamental cause of childhood obesity is associated with lifestyle; children have become accustomed to consuming too many calories from highly-processed foods and beverages and doing very little physical activity. The best approach to preventing childhood obesity is to adopt healthy eating habits at home and allow more opportunities for children to participate in activities that require physical movement. This is the responsibility of both parents and schools and can have a very positive and lasting impact on a child's health."

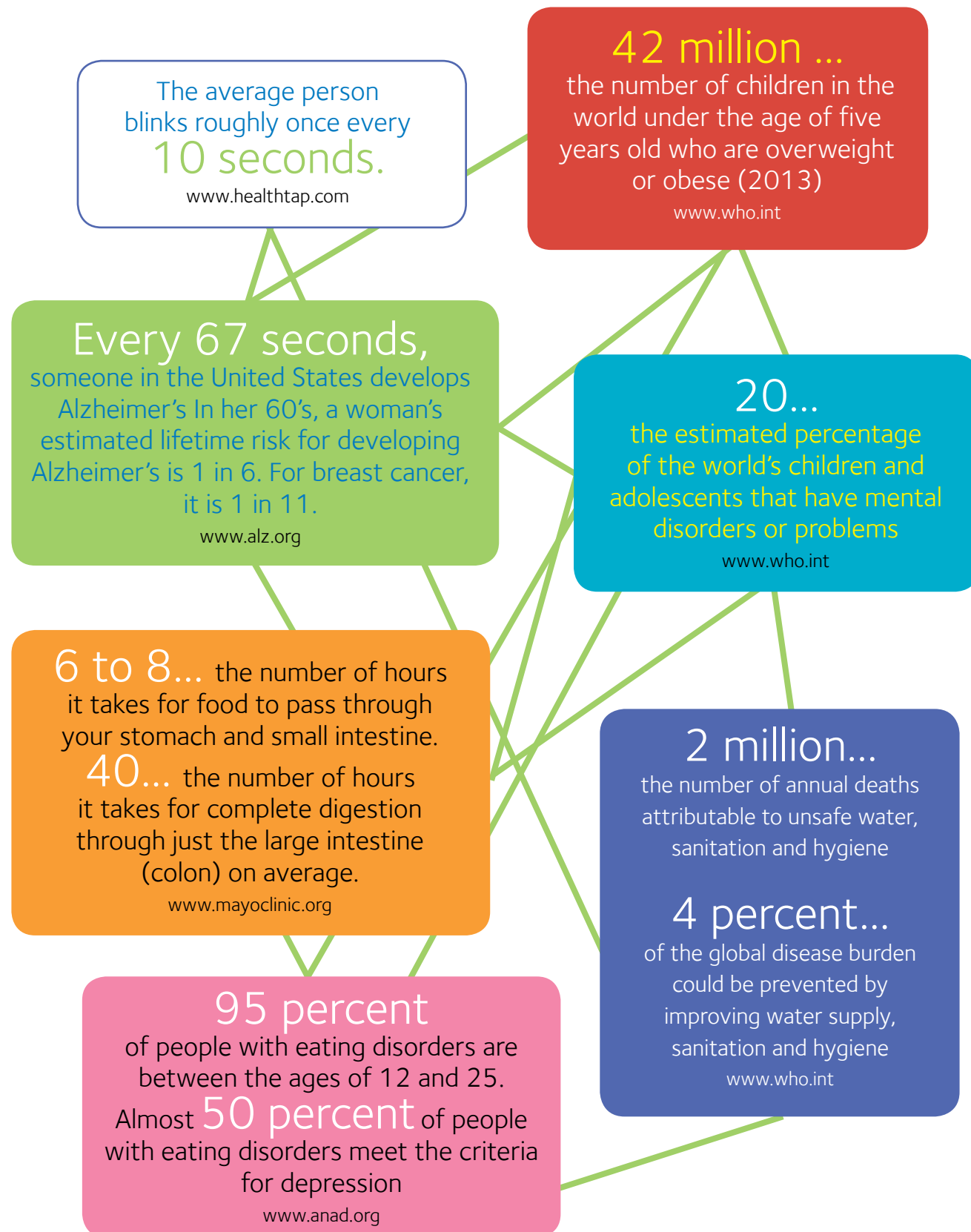
Your son will likely have a limited understanding of how calorie intake affects his health, so it must be the parents who take charge by becoming strong role models for him in terms of health. As parents, you are the ones who decide what to cook and where to buy food. If you opt for healthier meals that include legumes, whole grains, vegetables and fruits, your son will follow the same eating pattern. Consumption of fizzy drinks and artificial juices should be limited for children as

these drinks contain high levels of sugar and enable fat buildup, he said.

Other tips for curbing childhood obesity include: 1) Limiting the number of times the family eats out, especially at fast food restaurants where food items are often high in fat and calories. 2) Avoiding 'convenience foods' such as pre-packaged meals, cookies and chips. 3) Limiting the number of hours children spend watching television, playing video games and using electronic devices such as tablets and laptops, as these promote a sedentary lifestyle. 4) Being more active by participating in physical activities. 5) Respecting a child's feeling of satiety and not forcing them to eat when they are no longer hungry.

Professor Abdul-Badi Abou-Samra, Senior Consultant in Endocrinology and Chairman of Internal Medicine, HMC





“When my organ donor passed away, he saved my life. I wish I could thank him.”

Abdullah thought he was running out of time and options when he was on the waiting list for an organ donation. He survived when he received the organ he needed from a man who had wished to donate his organs at the end of his life.

By registering as an organ donor while he was alive, not only did he save Abdullah's life, but also brought tremendous happiness and joy to his family.

To give the gift of life, register as an organ donor at Qatar Organ Donation Center (Hiba) at Hamad Medical Corporation.

The gift that lasts a lifetime.



organdonation.hamad.qa
 +974 6618 9586



Everything you ever wanted to know about bananas



- There are approximately 1000 different types of banana plants in the world
- The type of banana you regularly see in the supermarket is called a Cavendish banana. The preferred variety was initially the Gros Michel, which essentially became extinct by 1960 due to a fungus called Panama disease
- The scientific name for banana is *Musa sapientum*, which means "fruit of the wise men"
- More than 100 billion bananas are eaten every year in the world, making them the fourth most popular agricultural product after wheat, rice and corn
- Bananas don't grow on trees. Rather, they grow from a root structure that produces an above ground stem. The plant is an herb and is in the same family as lilies, orchids and palms
- Eating a banana can cheer you up! Bananas contain amino acid, tryptophan plus vitamin B6, which together help the body produce serotonin
- Bananas are one of the healthier natural food sources in the world; they contain almost no fat, are very low in calories, high in vitamin B6, fiber and potassium
- Rich in pectin, bananas aid digestion and gently excrete toxins and heavy metals from the body
- Eating bananas will help protect the eyes against macular degenerations and builds strong bones by increasing calcium absorption
- Eating a banana can lower the body temperature and cool you during a fever or on a very hot day

Hear what the experts say

Bananas are of great nutritional value. They provide a rare combination of high energy, tissue-building elements, protein, vitamins and minerals. Bananas are a good source of calories since they are rich in solids and low in water content when compared to other fresh fruit. Therefore, they are a good source of quick energy and provide an excellent way to recover from fatigue. The use of bananas is very beneficial in the treatment of a number of medical conditions such as intestinal disorders, constipation, anemia, poor appetite and hypoglycemia.

This unique tropical fruit is extremely high in potassium and salt-free, making bananas very beneficial in managing blood pressure, as research has shown that a diet high in potassium and low in salt helps to keep blood pressure normal. The potassium found in bananas may also help to protect your bones, as potassium may counteract the increased urinary calcium loss caused by the high-salt diets, helping to prevent bones from thinning out at a fast rate.

A banana gives a sustained and substantial boost of energy – that's why they are a favorite choice for cyclists, footballers and other athletes looking for a quick source of carbohydrate. The riper a banana, the quicker it is digested and converted to muscle fuel.

Lena Ribhi Ibrahim Nassar
HMC Dietitian

