

RESEARCH & RESOURCES

DRINK IN THIS IDEA

Stop the Pop!

A RECENT STUDY indicates that middle-aged people who down a soft drink daily are increasing their risk of developing metabolic syndrome—a combination of factors including excessive waist circumference (35 inches for women, 40 inches for men), high blood pressure, low



levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL “good” cholesterol) and more that can lead to increased risk of cardiovascular ailments and diabetes. “I would consider this a wake-up call,” says Richard Stein, MD, of New York University and a spokesperson for the American Heart Association. “If you have metabolic syndrome, your risk of having a heart attack over the next ten years goes up almost fourfold.”

The study revealed that the risk appears the same for drinkers of both regular and diet soda. But it’s

important to note that the study does not conclude that drinking soda causes the problems. Instead, drinking too much soda may actually be a signal that people should take a closer look at the way they live; excess soda consumption may just be a sign that one has a diet high in calories and fat and low in fiber, according to the American Heart Association, which notes that such people may also be less physically active. “Heart disease is not a single-cause disease; clearly it’s a lifestyle disease,” says Dr. Stein. “The answer is to look at all diet factors and if you are getting enough exercise.”

PLANNING AHEAD

Finding Alzheimer’s Aid

IN WHAT IS BOTH National Family Caregiver Month and National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month, the Alzheimer’s Association and others will make life easier for Alzheimer’s caregivers because of their combined efforts. The national dementia resource center, the Senior Housing Finder, is a simple: provide an easy way to find housing or outside-the-home care. “Many people don’t know where to find the information they need,” says

HandiRecords was featured in the November/December 2007 issue of “Caring Today, Practical Advice For The Family Caregiver”.

Reed, senior director of programs with the Alzheimer’s Association. “The process can be both very stressful and time-consuming.”

Without leaving the comfort of home, this free web-based tool allows you to search for nursing homes, assisted-living facilities, residential care homes and other senior-housing options for people with dementia. “Our hope is that this tool

will give families impacted by Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia the ability to more effectively plan for the future and anticipate what they may need,” Reed says.

Once specific details—medical conditions, individual preferences regarding care services, security, diet, transportation, activities, location and more—are entered on the website, the database can help guide people toward the best care facility to suit a patient’s particular needs. For those less web savvy, Reed notes, the Alzheimer’s Association Helpline is available 24/7 by calling toll free (800) 272-3900. Workers there will help walk you through the web process or, with your responding to their questions, enter the data for you and mail you a printout of the customized results.

The Senior Housing Finder can screen facilities by the level of care provided, which is based on care for the seven stages of Alzheimer’s disease progression as outlined by the Alzheimer’s Association. “It’s never too early to start planning,” Reed adds. “Doing so early, when the patient can contribute to the decision-making process, can take much of the burden off everyone.” ■

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Handy Helper

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