

HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

Iranian Red Crescent Society sends aid to Somalia

TEHRANTIMES Health Desk

TEHRAN — Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) sent a 40-ton aid cargo to Somalia on Thursday morning.

The cargo sent to Mogadishu, Somali capital, by airplane. The cargo contained 20 tons of rice, 10 tons of cereal, 5 tons of canned food, and 5 tons of sugar, the IRCS said in a press release.

Besides sending food and drug, the IRCS has announced two bank accounts: 99999 and 019999999003 at Bank Meli to gather cash aid for famine-stricken Somali people.

The IRCS is also ready to receive cash aid at IRCS centers, main squares of cities, and Friday prayer places.



Swap popcorn for fruit salad says film boss

A top film boss has called for cinema chains to swap popcorn for healthier snacks like fruit salad and yoghurt.

A tub of buttered popcorn can have up to 1,100 calories in it Michael Lynton, head of Sony Pictures, told cinema owners they should be offering healthier snacks to help fight obesity and give audiences a broader range of food choices.

He said: "I don't mean close the window for popcorn, soda and candy. Audiences love them and should always be able to buy them at your theatres."

"I can almost imagine the Romans eating popcorn and drinking Coke at the Coliseum 2,000 years ago."

The average cinema bucket of buttered popcorn has 76 grams (2.6oz) of fat - the equivalent of six McDonald's cheeseburgers - and 1,100 calories.

According to Mr. Lynton, healthier food selections suggested by cinemagoers included fruit salads, vegetables with dip, yoghurt, granola bars, baked chips and unbuttered, air-popped popcorn. However, Mr. Lynton admitted that old habits might die hard. He said: "I don't think giant tubs of spinach or broccoli is a good idea."

"And nobody wants to eat cauliflower while watching Spider-Man, or drink a 40oz cup of prune juice."

Last month Tim Smith, the chief executive of the Food Standards Agency, called for filmgoers to be told how many calories there are in the popcorn, ice cream and fizzy drinks and for them to be available in smaller portions.

Deirdre Flynn, spokesman for the Popcorn Board, a non-profit organization funded by US popcorn processors, said: "If you ask most consumers what they consider the number one movie snack, they will tell you it's popcorn. 'Popcorn and movies have gone hand in hand since the early 1900s.'"

(Source: news.sky)

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Diabetes rates can be reduced: Doctors, researchers

Leading medical specialists, public health researchers and nutritionists warn that not enough is being done to prevent the rapidly increasing diabetes rates, largely caused by significant increases in obesity in adults and children in recent years.

Between 1989 and 1997 the average weight gain in adults was 3.2 kg, and the results of the latest Adult Nutrition Survey to be released in September are likely to show that trend is continuing.

The warning comes in an open letter to the New Zealand Medical Journal, which criticizes the cutting of healthy eating and obesity prevention programs by the Government.

It points to the axing of the National Healthy Eating Health Action Strategy, Mission On, and the requirement for schools to provide healthy food amongst others.

The 12 signatories say diabetes is now a huge health equity issue as it impacts disproportionately on Mori and Pacific and low-income New Zealanders.

It is also a major factor in the multi-



million dollar cost of kidney dialysis, with 40-48% of those on dialysis because of diabetes-related kidney failure.

"Obesity accounts for more than 80% of preventable diabetes in New Zealand and is not being vigorously addressed, in fact many preventive programs have been cut," says public health researcher Associate Professor Louise Signal from the University of Otago, Wellington.

"We have alarmingly high rates of diabetes, they're getting worse, and we compare very poorly with other OECD countries according to the June edition of the British journal

the Lancet.

Health professionals have been warning about this incipient health crisis for years."

They say that 63% of adults are now either overweight or obese with this trend continuing.

"The worrying thing is that even now 2%-7% of the health budget (\$12.6 billion) is linked to people being overweight or obese.

Obesity-related diabetes is costing us hundreds of millions a year and rising," says Signal.

The letter identifies nine urgent preventive actions that should be

taken:

■ 1. Implement a national nutrition and physical activity strategy as recommended by the World Health Organization.

■ 2. Reinstate the requirement for schools to sell only healthy food.

■ 3. Introduce a simple front-of-pack 'traffic light' nutritional labeling program which shows how healthy the product is as recommended in the Review of Food Labeling Law and Policy report (2011).

■ 4. Make sure people on low incomes have enough money for a healthy diet.

■ 5. Continue to promote physical activity and reduce sedentary behavior; e.g. reinstate the recently cut Push Play program.

■ 6. Extend the healthy nutrition marketing programs from the Health Sponsorship Council to include physical activity.

■ 7. Ban the marketing of junk food to children, including the self-regulatory and ineffective system governing junk food advertising.

■ 8. Increase regulation of the food and beverage industry to encourage healthy eating.

■ 9. Reduce health inequities, particularly in relation to child health. (Source: voxy.co.nz)

People with common heart defect also more likely to have brain aneurysms

A new study shows that people with a common heart defect may also be more likely to have brain aneurysms.

The study was published in the May 4, 2010, print issue of Neurology, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology. Up to two percent of the population is born with the heart defect called a bicuspid aortic valve (BAV).

The aortic valve allows blood to flow from the heart to the aorta. It normally has three flaps that open and close to regulate blood flow.

In people with a bicuspid aortic valve, the valve does not develop fully during gestation and there are two flaps instead of three.

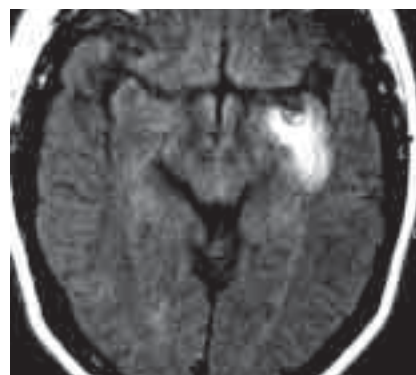
Some people with BAV never have any problems, but many develop narrowing

or leakage of the aortic valve, especially as adults. Recent research has shown that the artery problems with BAV may also occur in the brain, and that BAV may be a connective tissue disorder.

Brain aneurysms are a weakening in a brain artery that causes a bulge in the artery.

"Since brain aneurysms are a treatable problem that can lead to death and disability if they rupture, we wanted to find out how common they are in people with BAV," said study author Wouter Schievink, MD, Director of Microvascular Neurosurgery at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, Calif.

For the study, 61 people with BAV were screened for brain aneurysms, along with 291 people who did not



49-year-old woman with left middle cerebral artery (MCA) aneurysm.

have BAV but were undergoing scans for a suspected stroke or brain tumor during the same time period.

Six of the 61 people with BAV had brain aneurysms, or 9.8 percent, compared to three of the 291 people who did not have BAV, or 1.1 percent.

■ Conclusion

Studies have shown that 0.5 to two percent of the general adult population has brain aneurysms.

"While more research needs to be done to confirm these results, these findings show a significant increased risk of brain aneurysms in people with bicuspid aortic valves," Schievink said.

Schievink said the heart defect has been shown to cluster in families, and screening is generally recommended for close family members of people diagnosed with bicuspid aortic valves. (Source: sciencedaily)

Are cars the new tobacco? One of the elephants of public health



The counter-car actions such as travelling by foot are not immediately clear, but like tobacco, will require sustained advocacy.

■ Professor Adrian Bauman

This paper, are cars the new tobacco?, published in the Journal of Public Health by UK public health experts, is an interesting look at the "elephant in the room" with respect to physical activity promotion.

With tobacco control and public health, there was always "an enemy", the tobacco industry, whose clear actions led to and promoted an unhealthy product. The "enemy" of physical activity is less clear - many pervasive elements contribute to increasingly sedentary lifestyles and reduced opportunities to be active.

Cars lead to pollution, adverse air quality, noise, motor vehicle injuries and death, and to community fragmentation through car-led social isolation and urban sprawl. These are social and environmental issues, and are aligned not only with specific environmental threats to health, but also to the environmental agenda more broadly, and with other groups and issues such as New Urbanist planning principles.

With respect to physical activity, cars lead to "inactive travel" for adults, and reduced walking or cycling to school among children and youth.

This is a major contributor over past decades to inactive lifestyles, removing energy expended from daily life for many developed and develop-

ing country populations.

In fact this is one of the major reasons for decreasing energy expenditure, the other being the sedentary increases in time spent in information-entertainment pursuits, at work and at home.

What is interesting is the analogy with tobacco producers - here the producers are the car industry and its lobbyists, in concert with the petrol [gasoline] lobby, that work to influence public policy and politicians to retain large road building budgets and maintain other policies to support cars.

Further, like tobacco, the authors argue cars are addictive - and we are certainly culturally habituated to their perceived "convenience of use".

The consequence is that physical activity advocates need to think and act on a much larger scale. The challenge is that the counter-car actions are not immediately clear, but like tobacco, will require sustained advocacy, efforts to change urban design and transport systems, and evidence generation around active travel [by foot and bicycle and public transport], as a likely strategy to increase population physical activity levels. As an additional thought: physical activity practitioners need to form inter-agency partnerships, as there are many other relevant health and non-health issues and dimensions to the "car issue", as are well outlined in this paper. (Source: crikey.com.au)

Tips to stop childhood obesity



■ Derek J Smith

Childhood obesity has gone to record heights in the past 20 years due to an increase in unhealthy foods and decrease in physical activity among today's youth.

Many long term physical and emotional issues go hand in hand with childhood obesity.

It is very important for parents to work with their children on developing healthy habits to help stop obesity. Below are 5 important tips to stop childhood obesity.

■ 1- **Breakfast:** Breakfast is essential for the body as it awakens the body from its low metabolism sleep state. Children need breakfast to not only have a healthy body, but also a healthy mind.

Having a healthy nutritious breakfast is the key to preventing obesity as kids will often snack on sugary foods if they don't eat breakfast.

A well rounded meal of skim milk, oatmeal and a piece of fruit will start your child off to a healthy day.

■ 2- **Fiber:** Another essential way to prevent weight problems would be to incorporate fiber to their diet.

Fiber is required to make sure the digestive tract functions correctly. You will find a multitude of both fruits and veggies that provide a great resource of fiber that the child will eat. Items like beans in ad-

dition to whole grain products are wonderful sources of fiber. Fiber stabilizes the sugar in the blood and also helps the body get rid of waste.

■ 3- **Complex Carbohydrates:** Do not try a low or no carbohydrate diet with your child. Growing bodies need carbohydrates, but they must be complex carbohydrates.

Whole grain breads, oatmeal and pastas should be a staple in the diet. Avoid any type of white bread or rice as this is a major source of sugar which promotes fat.

■ 4- **Fruits and Vegetables:** You need to make sure that your child will get a minimum of 5 portions of fruits in addition to veggies within their diet. You need to provide a couple of different kinds so they aren't getting fed up with eating exactly the same food.

Make certain you will find some which are always chopped and able to eat. Making fruits available as snacks, instead of sugary products, will help the whole family eat better.

■ 5- **Fluids :** Among the greatest mistakes that some parents make would be to give the youngster soda.

Soda is yet another reason of weight problems. Soda provides nothing but problems for children trying to lose weight, because it tastes great and is horrible for the child. Keep soda out of the house or switch to no sugar soda. (Source: ezinearticles)