

# 'Business diet' a bad deal for the heart

19 August 2016, by Alan Mozes, Healthday Reporter



"It hits the arteries hard, and strongly contributes to [cardiovascular disease risk](#), the world's number one killer."

According to the American Heart Association, atherosclerosis results from the buildup of plaque in the arteries, which raises the risk for blood clots, heart disease, heart attack and stroke. Cardiovascular disease causes more than 17 million deaths worldwide each year.

To lower risk, the heart association recommends minimizing intake of red meat and sweets and emphasizing consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, skinless chicken and fish, and nuts.

For this study, Fuster's team looked at the heart impact of three eating plans: the so-called Mediterranean diet, the contemporary Western diet and the social-business diet. The Mediterranean style of eating is rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts. Western diets are high in red and processed meats, butter, high-fat dairy products and refined grains.

To see how each of these diets stacked up against arterial clogging risk, investigators assessed the nutritional habits of more than 4,000 Spaniards, aged 40 to 54. All appeared to be healthy with no outward signs of [heart disease](#).

Dietary analyses revealed that roughly 40 percent followed a Mediterranean diet, while another 40 percent followed a Western diet. About 20 percent consumed the social-business diet.

Imaging and ultra-sound tests were conducted to look for early signs of arterial clogging. The tests revealed that those who followed a social-business diet had a "significantly worse cardiovascular risk profile" and a notably higher risk for atherosclerosis.

This was true even after accounting for age, exercise habits, smoking history and other

(HealthDay)—The typical "social business diet"—heavy on red meats, sweet drinks, processed snacks and booze—takes a toll on the heart, a new study finds.

In the go-go world of business meetings and nonstop travel, healthy home-cooked meals often give way to unhealthy fare consumed on the road. This ups the risk for atherosclerosis, a slow but steady clogging of the arteries, the researchers say.

"We found that more than other diets, the 'social business eating pattern' specifically raises the risk for developing atherosclerosis disease," said study author Dr. Valentin Fuster. He's a professor of cardiology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City.

With its emphasis on eating out, snacking on the run and excessive alcohol consumption, this style of eating is even worse than the so-called Western diet, the researchers found.

"This business diet is really very bad," he added.

influential factors, the researchers said.

The results were published online Aug. 15 in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

The finding "underscores the importance of developing healthful dietary habits for people with a busy and fast-paced life," said Dr. Frank Hu, co-author of an accompanying journal editorial. Hu is a professor of nutrition and epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston.

His advice? "Pay attention to the quality of foods when eating out," he said. Avoid fast foods; drink water instead of sugary drinks; carry a bag of nuts as snacks; and limit alcohol, he suggested.

"Try to plan healthy meals or foods ahead of time," Hu said, "and fit healthy habits—eating, sleep and exercise—into a busy life."

Nutrition expert Lona Sandon said the findings point to a need for "a cultural shift."

"Business does not have to be done around a 12 oz. steak and booze," said Sandon, an assistant professor of clinical nutrition at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

"High-powered lunches and dinners have long been associated with unhealthy eating patterns," she noted. But "there are plenty of healthy options for those on the move these days."

**More information:** There's more about diet and heart disease risk at [American Heart Association](#).

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