

# Diet & Health Study News

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## Dear Participant,

It is with great sadness that we share the news that Arthur Schatzkin, M.D., Dr. P.H., principal investigator of the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study, passed away on January 20, 2011 from cancer. Dr. Schatzkin was Chief of the Nutritional Epidemiology Branch of the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics (DCEG) at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and was an internationally renowned expert in the field of nutrition and cancer.

Dr. Schatzkin was committed to understanding the role of nutrition and its effects on cancers and cancer prevention. Early in his career, he was the first to describe the relation between moderate alcohol intake and breast cancer risk. He then turned his attention to the role of diet in preventing colorectal cancer. He led the landmark NCI Polyp Prevention Trial, a 4-year randomized trial which successfully achieved a low-fat, high-fiber diet and then showed that this intervention, contrary to the prevailing hypothesis, had no effect on adenoma recurrence.

Most notably, he conceived and launched the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study, in which you have been a participant since 1995-1996. Research from this long-term study of approximately 500,000 AARP members has produced over 150 original scientific papers regarding the effects of many lifestyle factors on risk of death as well as development of different types of cancers. Dr. Schatzkin also devoted his efforts to improving the accuracy of collection of questionnaire information on diet and physical activity and supported the development of new web-based methods to measure these factors.

Throughout his career, Dr. Schatzkin was an outstanding scientist, mentor, and leader in the field of nutritional epidemiology. He was a gifted public speaker and a man of personal and professional integrity who cared deeply about the impact of his work on public health. Even beyond his diagnosis, Dr. Schatzkin remained committed to his work and involved in research planning, mentoring, and senior scientific discussions. He will be deeply missed.

## Introducing the New NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study Team

To continue Dr. Schatzkin's important work in nutrition, lifestyle and cancer research within the NIH-AARP study, we have established a new leadership team to assume the responsibility and directions of our study. The study team includes Drs. Louise Brinton, Charles E. Matthews, Yikyung Park, and Rashmi Sinha. This team of experts is well-versed in various areas of etiologic research for multiple cancers.

Louise Brinton, Ph.D., M.P.H is Chief of the Hormonal and Reproductive Epidemiology Branch, DCEG, NCI. A major emphasis of her current research efforts is to understand the causes of cancers of the female breast and reproductive system through the assessment of various biomarkers, including genetic markers and hormones.

Charles E. Matthews, Ph.D., an investigator at the Nutritional Epidemiology Branch, DCEG, NCI has been particularly interested in understanding how type, intensity, and amount of physical activity relates to the development of different cancers. Recently, he began to test the research question that high levels of sedentary behavior or "too much sitting" may increase the risk of certain cancers.

Yikyung Park, Sc.D. who was a NIH-AARP fellow and is now a Staff Scientist at the Nutritional Epidemiology Branch, managed the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study under Dr. Schatzkin's direction since 2007. Her research primarily involves the investigation of how dietary and lifestyle factors affect the development of cancer, other important health conditions, and survival after cancer. She has also been interested in methodologic problems in dietary assessment.

Rashmi Sinha, Ph.D., Deputy Branch Chief of the Nutritional Epidemiology Branch, has focused her research on improving dietary exposure assessment, understanding the biological mechanisms of dietary exposures and cancer, and assessing the role of protective and cancer causing agents in foods such as coffee and processed meats or meats cooked at high temperatures. She also examines the wide variety of diet, lifestyle and environmental exposures in different ethnic groups.

**An Important Recent Finding from the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study: *Higher Intake of Fiber is Associated with Reduced Risk of Death***

Dietary fiber is defined as ingestible parts of a plant and can be found in foods such as grains, fruits and vegetables. Research has shown dietary fiber lowers the risk of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) and diabetes and even some cancers but the benefits of fiber do not stop here. Results from the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study have shown that men and women consuming the most dietary fiber were 22% less likely to die from any cause compared to those consuming the least dietary fiber. Also, people with higher dietary fiber intake were less likely to die of CVD and infectious or respiratory diseases.

The USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends consuming 14g/1000 calories of dietary fiber per day and encourages people to eat more fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, and other foods with naturally occurring fiber to meet the recommendation. For more information, please visit: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/guidelines/index.html>.

*Park Y, Subar AF, Hollenbeck A, Schatzkin A. Dietary Fiber Intake and Mortality in the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study. Arch Intern Med. 2011.*

*Thank you for your continued time and participation in the NIH-AARP Diet and Health Study!*

**Check Our Website**

You can get up-to-date information about the study at our website:  
<http://dietandhealth.cancer.gov>

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