

A newly published study has found that adult men who do not eat breakfast and those who regularly snack late at night have an increased risk of coronary heart disease.

Regularly skipping breakfast may increase risk of heart disease

Previous research has linked skipping breakfast to excess body weight, high blood pressure, insulin resistance, and elevated fasting cholesterol levels in adults. And the results of Nationwide Food Consumption Surveys indicate that skipping breakfast is a trend that has increased over the years with over one quarter of adults reporting that they habitually skip breakfast.

The objective of a new study, published in the journal *Circulation*, was to determine whether eating habits, including skipping breakfast, are related to an increased risk of coronary heart disease (CHD).

In 1992, the eating habits of 26,902 adult men were assessed as part of the Health Professionals Follow-up study. The men were 45 to 82 years of age and were initially free from cardiovascular disease and cancer. After 16 years of follow-up, 1,527 cases of coronary heart disease were diagnosed.

After adjusting for demographic, diet, and activity factors, men who skipped breakfast had a 27% greater risk of CHD compared with men who did not. In age-adjusted models, men who did not eat breakfast had a 33% increase in CHD risk compared to men who did. Compared to men who did not report eating late at night, men who frequently ate late at night had a 55% higher risk of CHD. Researchers observed no significant association between eating frequency (times per day) and CHD risk.

This study is among the first to show a modest, but significant, increased risk of CHD among men who skip breakfast and men who regularly eat late at night. Although it should be confirmed in future research with women and other ethno-cultural groups, this research provides evidence to support a recommendation of daily breakfast eating by health authorities to prevent CHD and improve public health.

Leah E. Cahill et al. Prospective Study of Breakfast Eating and Incident Coronary Heart Disease in a Cohort of Male US Health Professionals. *Circulation*. 2013;128:337-343.