UNHEALTHY DIETS KILL MORE PEOPLE THAN CIGARETTES DO.  
  
Most people are aware that smoking and tobacco use can kill you.  
However, according to a major study published in an important medical  
journal in April 2019, unhealthy diets are actually responsible for 11  
million preventable deaths per year world-wide.  This is more than the  
7 to 10 million deaths attributed to tobacco use.  
  
An unhealthy diet is defined as one short on fresh vegetables, fruits  
, whole grains, seeds and nuts and heavy on salt, red meats (beef,  
pork and lamb), processed foods ( such as bacon, corned beef and salty  
snacks), sugary beverages (soda and sweetened drinks) and unhealthy  
fats.  An unhealthy diet leads to increased weight, high blood  
pressure and high levels of fat in the blood that contribute to  
developing chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, heart attacks and  
strokes, and some cancers.  The problem is not only the amount of junk  
food that people are eating, but what we are not eating.  In looking  
at the causes of deaths in 195 countries around the world, scientists  
found that those countries with diets rich in vegetables, fruits,  
legumes (beans and lentils), whole grains and olive oil had a lower  
percentage of preventable deaths. The United States ranked 43rd.  
  
What's the bottom line?   Like Mama said:  "Eat your veggies!"  A  
Mediterranean style diet with its abundance of fruits, whole grains,  
seasonal vegetables, flavored with garlic, herbs and olive oil (not  
loaded with salt), and  often served with a  glass of good wine,  is  
known to lower bad cholesterol and high blood pressure,  thereby  
lowering the risk of heart disease and what's more, possibly lowering  
the risk of dementia and early death.  The conclusion of this study is  
that people all over the world can benefit from avoiding too much salt  
and eating more healthy, plant-based foods.

Lauren Badawy RD