



A Big “Thank you” to Our Highly Valued Study Participants!

The Adventist Health Study-2 (AHS-2) is entering an exciting phase, and we need you to continue to be a part of it.

We would not have made it this far without you. Our original major goals remain the same: to better understand the relationships between what we eat and certain diseases.

What is new for AHS-2 in 2013?

We are energized by additional resources and new researchers who will provide us with expanded opportunities to gain knowledge not previously uncovered.

Your importance in providing critical information remains as central to the success of AHS-2 research in 2013 as it did at the beginning of our study.

Live Longer Enjoying Good Health

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It is not just a long life that we desire. We also hope for an extended life span free of serious illness so we can enjoy those added years. An important part of enjoying a longer life is to know which of the ways we live our lives—our life styles—will help us avoid some of the diseases and disabilities that interfere with enjoying those extra years. An important part of a life style is what we eat, and that is where AHS-2 comes in.

Plant-based Diets and Health

AHS-2 studies have provided scientific evidence that various types of plant-based diets can reduce the incidence of heart disease and certain types of cancers. For example, on the back page of this newsletter, we highlighted the connection between frequent eating of small amounts of nuts, including almonds, on a daily basis and lower rates of heart attacks. Also, we should mention that AHS scientists have recently determined that Black vegetarians have significantly lower risk of high blood pressure, Type II diabetes, blood cholesterol, and obesity, than Black non-vegetarians.

Patti Herring, PhD, RN
School of Public Health
Loma Linda University



Again, we want to thank you for your continuing involvement in providing AHS-2 with invaluable information that only you and other participants can provide.



Black Centenarians Plus

We here wish to honor those 100 plus in age in the Regional Conferences and in Black congregations in the Pacific and North Pacific Union Conferences who are currently participating in the AHS-2 study. These Centenarians Plus (more than 100 years old) represent a special group that exemplify the hope that we all have for a long life.

Listed are the conferences and the number of Black centenarian study members residing in that conference:

South Central	6
Northeastern	4
South Atlantic	4
Southwest Regional	3
Lake Region	3
Pacific Union	3
North Pacific Union	2
Southeastern	2
Central States	1

We would like to include the names of these centenarians, but due to privacy considerations that is not possible.

▼ Health Tip

If your doctor says it is OK, take the stairs instead of the elevator. It will give you a mini cardio workout.



Think of it as climbing Jacob's ladder or wrestling for a blessing.

Some things you can't change

To have a long and healthy life, a number of things need to happen. On one hand, no matter who you are, there are some things you can't do anything about. For example, you have no choice as to who your parents were and therefore your inherited traits. Your eye color and how tall you are can't be changed. Your parents and their parents and many generations of your ancestors provided these things to you. Some diseases you inherit. They are present whether you like it or not.

Black Health: Removing four "Rocks" in the Road!

Some things you can change

On the other hand, there are a number of things you can do that will make a lot of difference in how healthy you will be. Your choices in some areas can often make a big difference in both the length and quality of your life. There are a number of big "rocks" that are in your path as you move through life. Four of these "rocks" can be moved with some thought about what you eat.

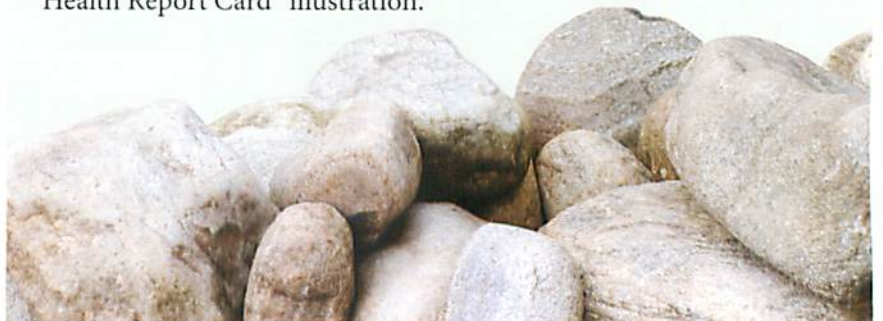
Four big "rocks"

Four health related "rocks" in the road: High Blood Pressure, Type II Diabetes, High Cholesterol, and Cancer

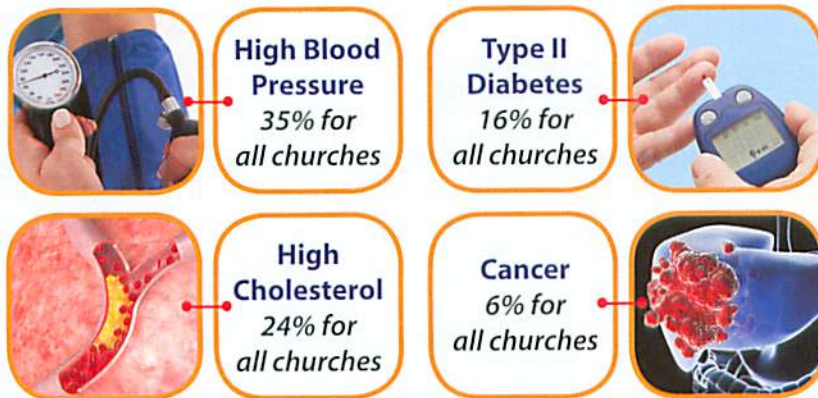
It turns out that the first two of these health issues—high blood pressure and type II diabetes—are of particular concern in Black populations in the United States. In the Adventist Health Study-2, it was determined that among Black Adventists in North America, all four of these "rocks" are present to various degrees.

Adventists have already chipped away big pieces of some rocks

Fortunately, Seventh-day Adventist Christians already have removed big chunks of several of these rocks because they do not use tobacco in any form. Also, they either do not drink alcohol at all or drink very small amounts on relatively rare occasions. However, the Adventist Health Study showed that among Black Adventists, there are still major health challenges. The percentages of Black Adventists in Regional Conferences and in the Pacific and North Pacific Union Conferences reporting high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high rates of type II diabetes and various cancers are provided in the "Health Report Card" illustration.



Regional, Pacific and North Pacific Union Conferences Report Card



The above graphic indicates the combined average percentage of individuals in Regional Churches and in the predominantly Black churches in the Pacific and North Pacific Union conferences who report the conditions listed. These figures indicate that there is a continuing need for education in healthy eating habits in our church family.

Obesity and Life Expectancy Among Long Lived Black Adults



Pramil N. Singh, DrPH, Director of the Center for Health Research, School of Public Health, Loma Linda University, has recently examined the question of whether obesity is a risk factor for mortality among older Black adults. Dr. Singh utilized information collected by the

Adventist Health Study-2 (AHS-2). AHS-2 is a large prospective cohort study of Seventh-day Adventist church members who are encouraged by faith-based principles to avoid tobacco, alcohol, and meat consumption.

He conducted an analysis of 22,884 US Blacks, half of whom had attained an age of 58 to 108 years. He used a measure of obesity called the Body Mass Index (BMI) to quantify the data. BMI uses the weight and height of individuals to produce BMI value for each individual. A BMI value over 30 is considered obese under US public health recommendations.

Among Black adults whose BMI was at or above the threshold for obesity, Dr. Singh and his collaborators found that women experienced a significant 61 percent increase in mortality risk. They also experienced a 6.2-year decrease in life expectancy. Men experienced a significant 87 percent increase in mortality risk and a 5.9-year decrease in life expectancy.

Elder Byron R. Spears: Living a Long and Meaningful Life Despite Major Disability

Elder Byron R. Spears recently passed to his rest at the age of 100 years and 6 months. He contracted polio as a child and was confined to a wheelchair. Despite this disability, he became a well-known minister and evangelist in the Black community. Up to the end of his life, he was in good spirits and praising the Lord for His goodness!



This photograph was taken on Elder Spears' 100th birthday. The gentleman on the left is Stephen D. Washington, who Elder Spears baptized in 1967.

▼ One-Minute Health Tips

We might not be able to go to the gym for an hour, but who can't find a minute to do something that will make you feel better? Here are 10, 1-minute suggestions:

1. Drink one full glass of water.
2. Take five slow, but deep, breaths.
3. Eat one apple.
4. Floss your teeth.
5. Read a good poem.
6. Pet your dog or cat or say "hello" to your bird.
7. Think of something that you are grateful for.
8. Wash your hands very carefully.
9. Eat a handful of almonds.
10. Send a check to a good cause, even if it is only \$5.00.



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The Almond: *The Underappreciated Nut*

Many studies have established a connection between the frequent eating of small amounts of nuts and lower rates of heart disease. Individuals in a group eating a handful of nuts on a daily basis will experience lower levels of blood cholesterol and probably a lower level of heart attacks. The relationship between nut eating and healthier hearts continues to be supported with the most recent research. Studies have examined the effects of a number of tree nuts, including walnuts, pecans, macadamias, pistachios, peanuts, *and almonds*.

Two Ounces of Almonds a Day Keeps "Bad Cholesterol" Away

LLU scientists recently published a study showing that eating almonds reduced both total cholesterol and low density cholesterol ("bad cholesterol") in serum lipids in the blood of a group of adult volunteers. The volunteers added to their diet, on average, about two ounces of almonds per day for 24 weeks. The amount



of cholesterol, and especially the amounts of "bad" cholesterol in one's blood, has a well-documented effect of lowering the chances of having a heart attack.

Twenty Percent Less Calories Absorbed with Almonds

Scientists at the Agricultural Research Service of the USDA have discovered that almonds provide about 20 percent fewer calories than previously thought. A new method of determining the number of calories that are actually absorbed during digestion accounts for the difference. This number turns out to be about 20 percent less than the total number of calories contained in the almonds.

Interestingly, this characteristic of almonds is not widely shared with other nuts. A similar study of pistachios determined that they contributed 5 percent more calories due to how they are absorbed than was previously thought. The reason for *this difference* is that the fat in almonds is incompletely absorbed during digestion because the natural cellular structure in almonds encapsulates the fat.