



Frequent Restaurant Eating is Strongly Associated with Metabolic Syndrome Cook for Healthy Blood Sugar Today

(4 February 2007, Hong Kong) As our eating habits change, the prevalence of diabetes and obesity increases. According to statistics provided by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), in 2025, the estimated prevalence of diabetes and impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) in Hong Kong population is 12.8% and 14.6% respectively, both ranking the ninth among all countries in the world. The statistics sound an alarm to people in Hong Kong to take heed of the importance of caring for and preventing diabetes.

In a metropolitan city like Hong Kong, many people choose to dine in restaurants. Metabolic syndrome (MetS) is the main focus in the prevention of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. A study of the relationship between restaurant eating habits and incidence of metabolic syndrome in a group of Hong Kong Chinese adults is conducted during April and May of 2005.

In the study, restaurant eating habits are assessed via a questionnaire among Hong Kong adults between 30 and 79 year-old. The following is a summary of the key findings,

- Males

In males, frequent restaurant eating habit for dinner (over 4 meals a week) was associated with a significantly higher body weight ($p=0.0001$); higher body mass index ($p<0.011$) and higher body fat percentage ($p<0.016$). More importantly, these frequent dinner restaurant eaters are twice more likely to develop MetS compared to other subjects in the study. [$p=0.039$, OR=2.454, 95% CI (1.048-5.476)], after adjustment of age, smoking and alcohol intake.

- Female

In females, frequent restaurant eating habit for dinner (over 4 meals a week) was associated with increased risk for high blood triglyceride, which was more than 7 folds, [$p=0.017$, OR=7.100, 95% CI (1.460-34.523)], after adjustment of age, smoking and alcohol intake.



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“Eating out is very common in Hong Kong, the study shows that frequent restaurant dinners were associated with increasing risk of metabolic syndrome and other adverse health outcomes,” said Professor Rosie Young, Specialist in Endocrinology, Diabetes & Metabolism, Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital. “This study added more evidence in the relationship between restaurant eating and MetS risk. Since increased restaurant eating frequency may increase the risk for MetS, it is suggested that food policy makers should encourage more healthy options in restaurant dining”, Professor Young added.

In order to raise public awareness and understanding of preventing and controlling metabolic syndrome and diabetes, The Diabetes Club of the Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital has organized today the “Cook Your Way to Healthy Blood Sugar” Cooking Contest. A total of 12 groups of contestants are divided into two teams, namely, Caring Diabetes Team and Healthy Cooking Team. While 6 groups of Caring Diabetes Team design and prepare a meal that help regulate diabetes, 6 groups of Healthy Cooking Team prepare a meal that help regulate body weight.

“We are happy to see such good response from the public. Not only the finalists have good skills in cooking, but also they are paying particular attention to the nutritional values that contribute to healthy diet and good health. We look forward to organizing similar cooking contests in the future,” said Dr. Kwong Kwok Hay, Deputy Medical Superintendent, Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital.

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