

### **Nutrition and lifestyle: are young women putting themselves at risk?**

Young women in their 20s and 30s are putting their health at risk through poor diet and lack of exercise, according to a new report published by the Health Supplements Information Service (HSIS). In addition 'Nutrition and Lifestyle: A Study of Women in their 20s and 30s', launched today, reveals that a significant number are tired and stressed, and feel too busy to look after themselves.

The HSIS report is based on a survey carried out across England, Scotland and Wales. Women aged from 20 to 39 years old were interviewed about their exercise habits, what they eat, dieting and their smoking and alcohol consumption. They were also asked questions about stress and tiredness. The responses illustrate the poor nutrition and lifestyle of young women, and highlight the need for them to consider making significant changes to their habits and to enhance their diets with an appropriate vitamin and mineral supplement.

“Young women in the UK can’t fail to notice the messages about the benefits of a good diet and plenty of exercise, but they simply aren’t putting this into practice,” says Dr Walker, advisor to HSIS. “Many of the results in this report by HSIS are quite worrying. For example, very few of these women are eating the recommended amounts of wholegrains, fruit and vegetables, or the ideal amounts of dairy foods and oily fish to get the nutrients they need. Yet few make up for this with a dietary supplement, such as a multivitamin, even though this would help to compensate for the shortfall.”

Dr Walker continues: “It is also a concern that a significant minority have been feeling more tired than usual in the run-up to the survey, with some even displaying symptoms of chronic fatigue. We found statistically significant relationships between the fatigue levels of these women and poor diet, lack of exercise and high stress levels.”

Over half of women in their 20s and 30s (53.8%) feel tired for a quarter of the time, with a further quarter of them (26.3%) feeling tired at least half of the time. The results show links between tiredness and stress caused by work, concerns about health, being busy and sleep problems caused by worry.

The HSIS study also found that almost half (45.2%) of young women in their 20s and 30s exercise less than three times a week, despite governmental advice being to exercise for 30 minutes on five days a week or more, and only 15% manage to eat the recommended ‘five-a-day’ portions of fruit and vegetables. Just over a quarter smoke and over two-thirds drink alcohol, with more than two out of five of them admitting they could not give up drinking and become teetotal. Nevertheless, chocolate is actually the treat the greatest number of young women would find it most different to go without.

For copies of the report or to talk to an HSIS expert please call 020 7808 9801

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For more information and a copy of the HSIS report - 'Nutrition and Lifestyle: A Study of Women in their 20s and 30s' please contact:

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Notes to editors:

The research was carried out by Kember Associates on behalf of the Health Supplements Information Service (HSIS), using the validated Chalder Fatigue Score. A total of 80 face-to-face interviews were carried out during January 2008 with women aged 20 to 39 years old in 10 regions in England, Scotland and Wales.