

EPIC-Oxford News 2007

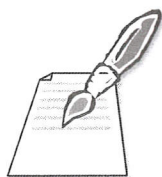
We need your help again!



"About ten years ago you kindly helped us by completing a questionnaire about your diet and lifestyle, and most of you also donated a blood sample. Research on these data is helping to answer important questions about the role of diet in health. Now we need your help again."

Professor Tim Key

How you can help...



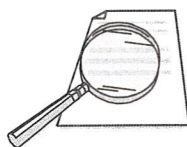
About five years ago, many of you returned a second questionnaire to help us keep track of your diet and health. We would now like to ask you to complete another questionnaire to help us understand how changes in your diet and other aspects of your lifestyle influence future health. Most of the questions will be familiar to you, but some questions are new. Even if you feel that you have given some of the information previously, please give it again so we can be sure that the data are as complete as possible. If you have the time, we would also like to ask you to complete a 7-day food diary, which will be sent separately during the next few months, as this will give us much more detailed information about your diet. We guarantee that all information provided will be treated with absolute confidentiality and used only for our research.

What is the EPIC study?



Over half a million people in ten European countries are involved in EPIC, making this the largest detailed study of nutrition and health in the world. Between 1993 and 1999, the EPIC centre in Oxford received 57,600 questionnaires from people living across the UK. Half of these participants are non meat eaters, making this study unique in being able to examine the effects of a vegetarian diet on long term health.

What has happened since the last questionnaire?



The information provided by you over the past 10 years is currently being analysed. So far, our research in EPIC-Oxford has focused on the possible effects of diet and in particular, soya consumption, on blood levels of hormones and cholesterol as these factors are associated with some common cancers and coronary heart disease. We are also looking at the effect of diet on obesity and how nutritional and lifestyle factors affect the risk of bone fractures. Some results have already been published in scientific journals; more details of these can be found on our website at: www.epic-oxford.org

Recent findings from EPIC-Oxford

- Mortality among participants in EPIC-Oxford is low in both vegetarians and meat-eaters
- A high soya intake is associated with low levels of blood cholesterol
- A low calcium intake is associated with an increased risk of having a fracture
- Vegans have relatively low blood levels of IGF-1, a hormone thought to be involved in cancer development

The bigger picture



In order to study cancer, the information provided by you is being analysed together with all the other information collected in the EPIC-Europe collaborative study. This detailed study of diet, nutrition and health has recruited over 500,000 people in ten European countries: Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden. Scientists involved in EPIC-Europe are conducting a large number of analyses on the association of dietary intake with cancer risk and the first results have now been published. More details can be found at the website: www.iarc.fr/epic

Current key projects are examining the associations between diet and cancers of the stomach, colorectum (large bowel), breast, uterus and prostate.

Recent findings from EPIC-Europe

- A high intake of red and processed meat is associated with an increased risk of developing bowel cancer
- A high intake of fibre is associated with a reduced risk of developing bowel cancer
- Fruit and vegetables are not associated with the risk of developing prostate cancer in men or breast cancer in women
- Women with high blood levels of the female hormone oestrogen have an increased risk of breast cancer
- People who are overweight or obese have an increased risk for several types of cancer, including colon, kidney and, in women, breast cancer.

These EPIC findings contribute to the bigger picture of cancer research, providing evidence for links, which if confirmed in future studies, may influence advice about lifestyle and diet in relation to cancer risk.

Where do we go from here?



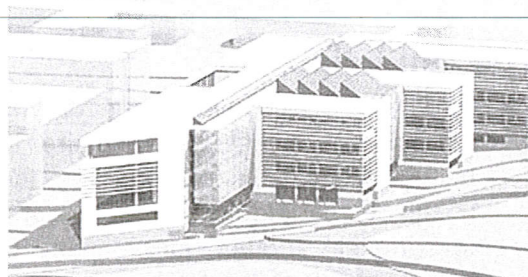
Over the next five years, the EPIC team will continue to examine the associations between diet and health in several key areas. Research will continue to focus on the associations of food and nutrients with the risk for developing cancer and other serious illnesses. We will also examine the associations between obesity, physical activity and cancer risk, and the role of blood levels of hormones in the development of cancer.

Why should you continue to take part?

The EPIC study becomes even more valuable for understanding the long-term effects of diet on health as time goes on and your continued support and participation in this important study is vital for its continuing success. We can't do it without you!

EPIC-Oxford on the move

In June 2005, EPIC-Oxford moved to a new purpose-built centre near the Churchill Hospital in Headington, Oxford. The building is named after Sir Richard Doll, the Oxford scientist who first showed that smoking causes cancer.



Our new address is:

EPIC Study
Epidemiology Unit
Richard Doll Building
Roosevelt Drive
Headington
OXFORD
OX3 7LF

If you have any questions you can telephone us on (01865) 289611
or email us at: queries@epic-oxford.org

Thank you for taking part