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# FITNESS

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# AF Q & A

BY MATT BRZYCKI

## Is there an association between indoor tanning and skin cancer?

The most common form of cancer is non-melanoma skin cancer. It's estimated that 3.5 million new cases are diagnosed in the United States every year.

Major risk factors for non-melanoma skin cancer include age, fair skin and family history. Another risk factor is exposure to ultraviolet radiation which can occur from sunlight and indoor tanning.

Researchers conducted a meta-analysis that included 12 studies with 80,661 subjects and 9,328 cases of non-melanoma skin cancer. From these data, the researchers calculated that each year 170,652 cases of skin cancer were attributable to indoor tanning in the United States. They also found that the risk is higher with the use of indoor tanning before the age of 25.

In short, the meta-analysis showed that there's an association between exposure to indoor tanning and skin cancer, especially when used early in life.

## How much more difficult is it to run while pushing a jogging stroller?

Jogging strollers were introduced so that men and women could walk, jog or run while pushing children. This certainly makes walking, jogging and running harder to do. And besides the extra load, a jogging stroller affects stride rate and arm swing. But how much more effort does a jogging stroller require?

A two-part study was conducted in which subjects ran one mile during six different conditions: at a predetermined pace (six miles per hour) and self-selected pace with no jogging stroller, a jogging

stroller loaded with 25 pounds and a jogging stroller loaded with 50 pounds. In the first part of the study, 15 subjects ran on a 400-meter indoor track; in the second part, 12 subjects ran on a paved, outdoor greenway.

The researchers found that running at a self-selected pace with a jogging stroller loaded with 50 pounds on an outdoor greenway increased oxygen intake by about 9.4% and caloric expenditure by about 10.5% in comparison to running at a self-selected pace without a stroller. The rating of perceived exertion was also significantly higher, but there were no significant differences in exercising heart rate.

## Do almonds help with weight loss or confer any health benefits?

Nuts, in general, are thought to provide a number of health benefits. However, nuts are dense with calories so an increase in the consumption of this food might be problematic for those who are looking to lose weight.

In a recent study, 128 overweight and obese individuals were randomly assigned to consume either an almond-enriched diet or a nut-free diet. Both diets were low in calories (1,200 to 1,500 for women and 1,500 to 1,800 for men). All individuals were encouraged to walk on a regular basis and instructed in behavior modification.

The goal of those on the almond-enriched diet was to consume 56 grams of almonds per day—about two ounces—in a variety of forms. This amounts to roughly 323 calories of which 249 are from fat.

After 18 months, there was no significant difference between the groups in weight loss (although those on the almond-enriched diet lost 8.14 pounds while those on the nut-free diet lost 12.98 pounds). And after 18 months, there were no significant differences between the groups in blood pressure, triglycerides or cholesterol.

A drawback of the study is that dietary adherence was self-reported. Also of note is that the lead author is a consultant to the Almond Board of California and had primary responsibility for the final content.

**Bottom line:** Go nuts on almonds but be wary of the high caloric density.

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