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PREVENTION

Prolonged TV watching ups risk of diabetes, CV disease, and death

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Boston, MA - Confirmation that sitting in front of the television for prolonged lengths of time has long-term adverse effects has come from a new review of studies showing a direct relation between the amount of television viewing and risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and all-cause mortality.

The review, published in the June 15, 2011 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, showed that for every two hours of television watched daily, the risk of diabetes increased by 20%, the risk of cardiovascular disease increased by 15%, and the risk of all-cause mortality increased by 13%.

Coauthor of the study, Dr Frank Hu (Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, MA), commented to heartwire: "TV watching is worse than other sedentary activities in that it is particularly passive. It has a lower energy expenditure compared with driving, reading, working at a computer, etc."

Associated with junk food

He also maintains that watching television is associated with unhealthy eating behavior. "People tend to eat when they are watching television, and they also tend to eat junk food and sugary beverages rather than healthier food. This might be related to the large amount of commercials for junk food, which increase the appetite, or it may just be due to boredom. Junk food is more readily available and therefore suitable for eating in front of the television. Perhaps if people were not watching television, they would be more inclined to make themselves a proper healthier meal."

Hu notes that the culture of television watching is a direct result of the technological revolution. "With the availability of satellite television, with hundreds of channels, we are watching more and

