

PART 6 INFORMATION SECTION

Diet and disease

Certain diseases, such as coronary heart disease, breast cancer and bowel cancer are more common in some countries than in others. It is thought that some of these diseases may be linked to diet. Below is some information about them.

Obesity

People who weigh 20% more than the ideal are overweight. They have a shorter life expectancy and are more likely to suffer from diseases that include heart disease, diabetes, gallstone, high blood pressure, arthritis and varicose veins.

Some people put on weight easily. The reasons are not understood. They do not necessarily eat more than other people, but they eat more than they need and lay down the excess as fat.

Tooth decay

Tooth decay (dental caries) has been linked to diets high in sugars. Your mouth contains bacteria that break down sugars to make acids. Acids attack tooth enamel, making it more porous. Tooth decay begins as the enamel wears away.

Heart disease

Death rates from coronary heart disease are often higher in countries where people eat diets high in 'saturated' fats such as butter, red meat, milk and cheese (see figure 2). A high fat diet can raise the level of cholesterol, a fat-like substance in the blood. Your body needs cholesterol, but when it collects on the inside of blood vessels you have a greater risk of heart attacks.

High blood pressure

High blood pressure is a condition that may lead to ill health. Doctors may advise patients to eat food without added salt, and avoid processed foods and ready meals which tend to be high in salt.

Cancer

People in different countries tend to suffer from different types of cancer. Scientists think that diet could be a major factor. It is difficult to be sure, because countries collect their statistics in different ways, so that the figures given here may not represent exactly the same thing. New studies should give more reliable statistics by the mid-1990s.

Breast cancer is increasing in many countries. Its cause is not known, but in figure 3 cancer rates are compared with how much fat people eat in different countries.

Some scientists suspect that many people could avoid getting stomach cancer if they ate fruit and vegetables every day. Cancer of the bowel may also be linked to a diet high in fat. Eating enough dietary fibre may help to reduce the risk of bowel cancer.

Alcoholic drinks may be linked to cancers of the mouth and gullet (oesophagus) as well as to cirrhosis of the liver and high blood pressure.

Figure 4 shows the death rates for cancer of the oesophagus in different parts of Europe.

Country	Deaths per 100,000 population	Country	Deaths per 100,000 population
H	621	GR	376
CZ	596	S	372
PL	580	DK	365
YU	553	N	351
M	490	B	*342
1RL	456	I	324
SF	433	IS	324
D	421	E	*323
A	413	NL	302
L	411	CH	296
UK	389	F	224
P	387		(*1984)

Figure 2: Deaths from heart and circulation diseases per 100,000 population (1988)

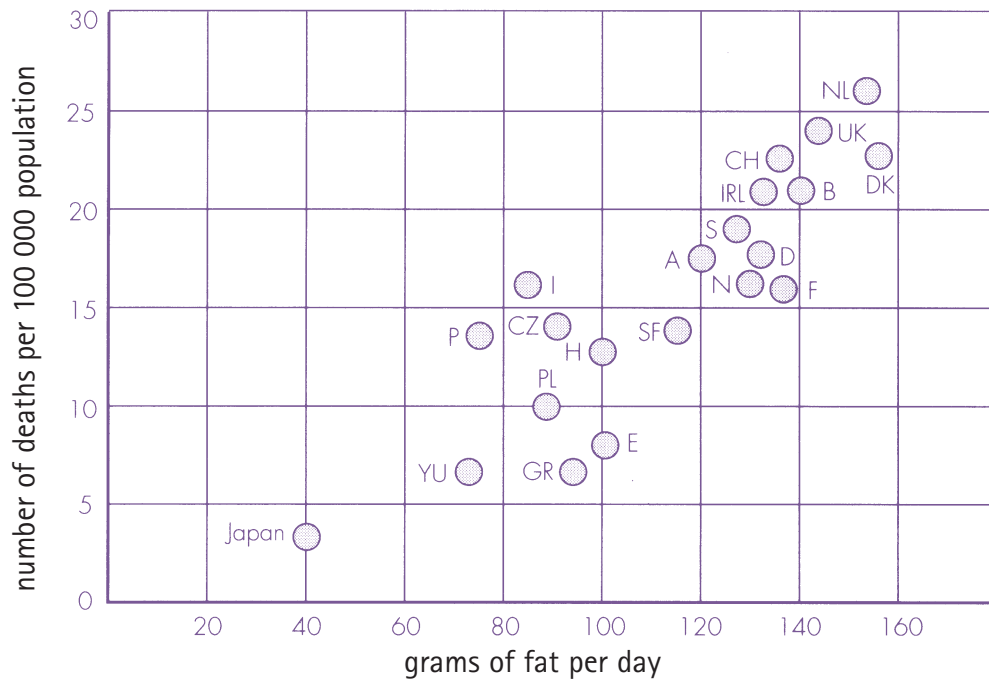


Figure 3: Deaths from breast cancer per 100,000 people plotted against fat in the diet (1980s)

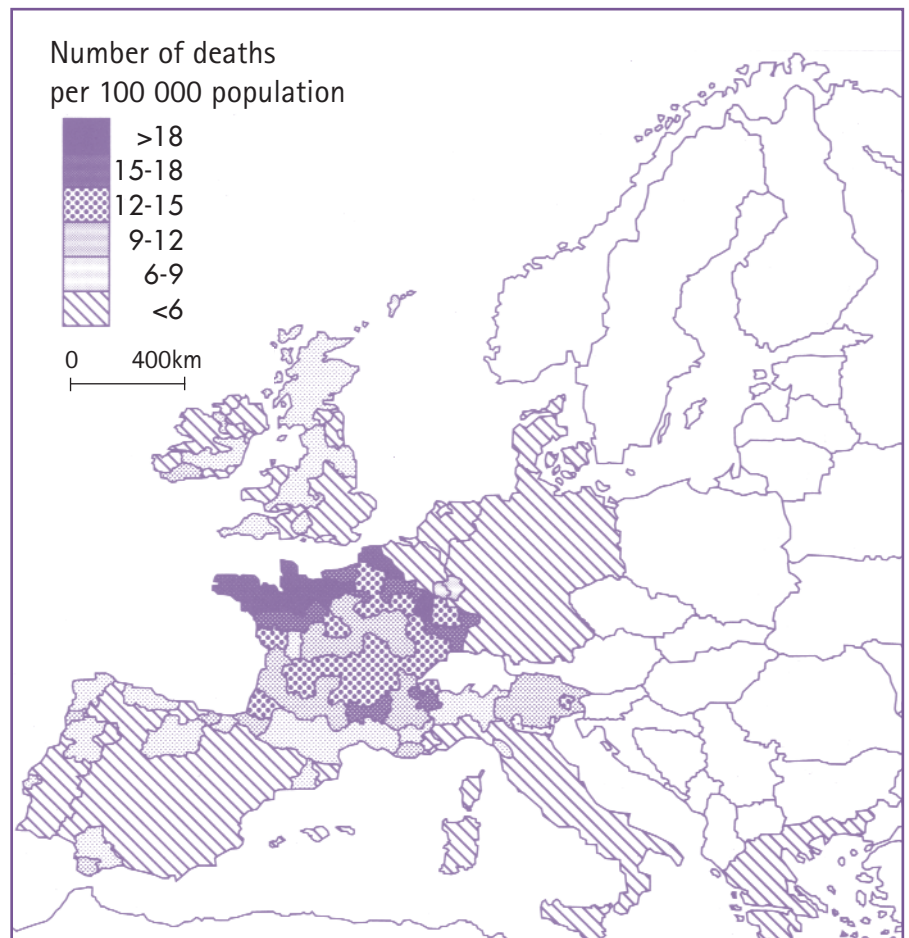


Figure 4: Deaths rates from cancers of the gullet (oesophagus) in men (1970s)

	Protein/g	Fat/g	Carbohydrates/g	Energy/kj
Orange juice	0.6	0.0	9.4	161
Apples	0.3	0.0	12.0	197
Bananas	1.1	0.0	19.2	326
Oranges	0.8	0.0	8.5	150
Tomatoes (fresh)	0.8	0.0	2.4	52
Cornflakes	7.4	0.4	85.4	1507
Muesli	10.5	8.1	67.1	1552
Bread (wholemeal)	9.2	2.5	41.6	914
Bread (white)	8.0	1.7	54.3	1068
Rye/black bread	6.4	1.0	52.7	950
Crisp bread	10.1	1.4	79.0	1461
Plain cake	6.0	24.0	49.7	1785
Milk (full fat)	3.3	3.8	4.8	274
Skimmed milk	3.5	0.1	4.8	142
Low fat curd cheese	17.2	0.6	1.8	142
Cream cheese	14.6	30.5	1.9	1415
Yoghurt (natural)	5.0	1.0	6.4	224
Eggs (chicken)	12.3	10.9	0.0	612
Butter	0.5	81.0	0.0	3006
Margarine	0.2	81.5	0.0	3019
Low fat spread	5.8	40.5	0.5	1605
Vegetable oil	0.0	99.9	0.0	3697
Ham (cooked)	24.7	18.9	0.0	1119
Salami	19.3	45.2	1.9	2031
Beef	18.1	17.1	0.0	940
Chicken	20.6	5.6	0.0	578
Pork	16.4	25.0	0.0	1218
Herring	17.3	18.8	0.0	1017
Jam	0.5	0.0	69.2	1116
Honey	0.4	0.0	76.4	1229
Sugar (white)	0.0	0.0	99.5	1680
Coffee (without milk)	0.3	0.1	0.8	21
Tea (without milk)	0.1	0.0	0.4	8
Coca Cola	0.0	0.0	10.5	168
Chocolate	19.2	24.5	43.6	1252
Ice cream	3.6	9.8	24.4	814
Milkshake	2.9	3.2	13.2	379
Mars bar	5.3	18.9	66.5	1853
French fries (chipped potatoes)	3.3	15.5	34.0	1174
Potato crisps	5.0	37.6	49.3	2275
Pizza (cheese and tomato)	9.0	11.8	24.8	984
Beefburger	20.4	17.3	7.0	1099

Table 1: Nutritional values of some foods per 100g edible portion

