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## Topics:

- Firefighter Heart Attack
- Causes
- Intervention Strategies
- Healthy Recipe
- Leading Up

## Safety Tip

Seek annual physical evaluations from your physician.

## Healthy Tip

**Brisk Walking: 10 minutes daily can reduce a heart attack by 50%.**

# North County Fire Authority Health & Wellness Newsletter

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## Firefighter Heart Attack

According to the Harvard School of Public Health, firefighters have a 300 times more likely risk to suffer a heart attack. As the #1 killer among firefighters, more deaths are being recorded to on-duty firefighting linked to a response in performing emergency duties. Studies explain the increased mortality is due to cardiovascular events not limited to smoke and chemical exposure, irregular physical exertion, heavy equipment handling, heat stress, shift work and psychological stress.



According to a study performed at the Illinois Fire Service Institute (5), three hours of prolonged firefighting stiffens arteries and impairs heart function in young, healthy male firefighters.

## Causes

As we have mentioned in past newsletters, sleep should be recognized as important rest by allowing our bodies to recover from stress, illness and fatigue. If we do not achieve quality regular sleep, our resting metabolic rate will decrease and in turn cause weight gain. The average uninterrupted sleep an adult individual should strive for is 7 hours per night in a dark peaceful setting. Findings show that less than 6 hours sleep as well as greater than 8 hours sleep showed an increase in stroke, heart attack and congestive heart failure.

Abdominal fat, also known as visceral fat, is generally associated with diabetes. Increased visceral fat could lead to diabetes, which creates a change in blood vessels that reduce blood flow to the brain causing stroke or to coronary arteries causing heart attack.

Firefighters are often exposed to traumatic stress both physically and mentally. According to researchers at the University of California - San Francisco, these experiences over a lifetime or career will boost inflammation in the body which contributes to heart attacks. Stress of the job can impact firefighters health even without symptoms.

## Intervention Strategies:

Help combat stress, with exercise, yoga & other health-related activities.

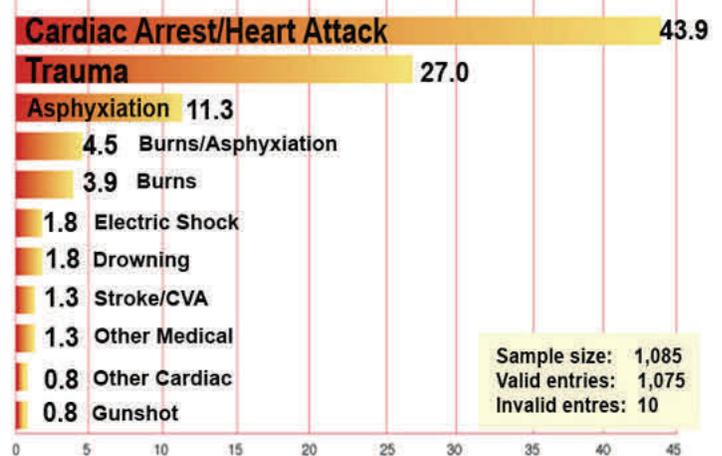
Get an annual physical with a complete blood panel, EKG and complete set of vital signs. Make sure your physician knows your occupation.

Eat healthy by eating more fruits & vegetables, which are high in antioxidants. Dark chocolate & cocoa, as well as plant-based compounds found in red wine & green tea are high in antioxidants, which help fight cell damage that can cause fatty plaque to build up on artery walls. Eating more fiber helps lower cholesterol.

Get 30 minutes of aerobic activity.

Always balance work with non-stressful activities such as time with family, friends and vacation. Know your own risk factors and make changes to decrease your risk of heart attack and death.

## Major Causes of Firefighter Line of Duty Death 1994 - 2004



## Healthy Recipe

# Salmon with Toasted Israeli Couscous

Yields approximately 4 servings

### Ingredients

- 1 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 c. Israeli couscous
- 1/2 c. finely chopped red bell pepper
- 1/3 c. coarsely chopped unsalted pistachios
- 1 large shallot, chopped
- 1/2 tsp. salt, divided
- 1 1/2 c. water
- 1 tbs. chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tbs. chopped fresh oregano
- 1 1/4 lbs. Alaskan salmon fillet, skinned & cut into 4 portions
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 4 lemon wedges

### Directions

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add couscous, bell pepper, pistachios, shallot and 1/4 tsp. salt. Cook stirring frequently, until the couscous is lightly toasted, about 5 minutes. Stir in the water. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Stir in 1 tbs. each parsley and oregano.
2. Sprinkle salmon with ground pepper and the remaining 1/4 tsp. salt. Place the salmon on top of the couscous, reduce the heat to medium-low. Cover and cook until the salmon is cooked through and the water is absorbed, 5-7 minutes.
3. If desired, garnish with additional parsley and oregano and lemon wedges.



### Nutritional Info:

413 calories

13 grams fat

66 mg cholesterol

35 grams protein

3 grams fiber

Recipe provided by  
[EatingWell.com](http://EatingWell.com)



# LEAD Time

## Leading Up

*Leadership Category*

Looking out for our people includes not only those who work for us but also our leaders and peers. Leadership is about influencing others to accomplish tasks that are in the best interest of our organization which often means influencing those above us and leading up. Similarly, we are open to upward leadership – and, in fact, encourage and reward it.

- Fire leaders are expected to lead in many directions, an expectation that increases complexity and risk.
- Summoning the courage needed to intervene and influence peers or leaders above can be difficult, especially if providing unwelcome feedback about behavior or pointing out an alternative to a potentially bad decision.
- In high-risk environments, no one can afford to assume that anyone has all the answers.
- To build the kind of healthy and resilient culture required in the wildland fire service, we lead up – holding our leaders accountable, providing unvarnished situational awareness in challenging situations, and offering unbiased and viable alternatives.

### **Discussion Points**

- How can we practice leading up?
- Describe a situation where leading up took place. How was the situation affected?
- Describe a situation where there was opportunity for leading up but it was not done. How was the situation affected?
- Discuss leading “laterally”: influencing peers or those with similar responsibilities.

<http://www.wildfirelessons.net/6minutesforsafety>