

Cervical Screening: What do your results mean?

The Cervical Screening Test has replaced Pap Smears, and here's what you need to know about your results. [Read more](#)

A new blood test could make diagnosing cancer as easy as undergoing a pregnancy test, the Herald Sun reports, with scientists hoping the test could become cost-effective within a decade.

Diagnosing Ovarian Cancer Symptoms

Ovarian cancer may not produce symptoms, particularly in the early stages.

[VIEW SLIDESHOW](#)

[Acid Reflux, Heartburn, GERD](#) 

Eucalyptus Oil for allergies

This oil is known to have a cooling and anti-inflammatory [effect on](#) the respiratory tracts, and can also help to slow down mucus production. When your body is reacting to a perceived threat (allergen), [eucalyptus oil](#) can moderate the response of your immune system.

How to Use: You can simply inhale the oil to benefit from its aromatic compounds or you can mix it with warm water and sea [salt](#) for a mucus-clearing gargle, which can also reduce inflammation in the throat.



8 Proven Health Benefits of Dates

Dates are chewy fruits with a sweet flavor. This article discusses 8 health benefits of dates, as well as how to add them to your diet.

[READ ON](#)

Epilepsy and Seizure Disorders

Having a single seizure does not necessarily mean that a person has epilepsy.

[TAKE THE QUIZ](#)

Lemongrass Oil

Some of the lesser known allergic reactions are [muscle cramps](#) and [headaches](#), both of which lemongrass can handle. The anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic [properties](#) of this oil can help counter these somewhat uncommon symptoms of an allergic reaction.

How to Use: You can apply [lemongrass oil](#) directly to the temple, although you may want to dilute the oil. You can also rub lemongrass on the chest to relieve tightness or swelling in that area of the body.

[Study Weighs Heart Danger of Antibiotics for Older Women](#) 

Miles Franklin prize awarded to Michelle de Kretser

It's the second time Sri Lanka-born Michelle de Kretser has won the Miles Franklin Literary Award, this time for her novel *The Life To Come*.



How Can Tryptophan Help Your Mental Health?

You may have heard that more tryptophan can reduce anxiety and depression symptoms. But just what is it? [Read on](#) 

Chromium Picolinate: What Are the Benefits?

Chromium picolinate is a supplemental form of chromium said to improve nutrient metabolism and promote weight loss. This article examines the evidence to determine the benefits of chromium picolinate.

[READ ON](#)

[Want to Live Longer? Eating a Little Less Might Do the Trick](#) 

Climate change could trigger more than just temperature rises, with a new global study revealing [a significant potential rise in the rate of crop destruction by pests](#). Overall losses could tally between 20% and 50%, with wheat, maize and rice dramatically affected. "Warmer temperatures increase insect metabolic rates exponentially [and] increase the reproductive rates," said the lead researcher, Prof Curtis Deutsch. "You have more insects, and they're eating more." Should temperature rises approach 4C rather than 2C, the scenario is expected to be twice as severe, with the authors stating that their overall findings were deliberately conservative.
The Guardian

DON'T fear all fats

Monounsaturated fat and omega 3s actually promote heart health. Focus on making smart fat choices to meet your daily recommendations. Fats found in nuts, olive, soybean and canola oils, fish and seafood all help your heart.
To reduce your risk of heart disease you need to choose the right types of fat. Avoid fats that elevate your cholesterol – saturated and trans fats.

[Amazonian fruit may help prevent obesity: Study](#)

The chemical composition of camu camu is unique in that it contains 20 to 30 times more vitamin C than kiwis and five times more polyphenols than blackberries. Researchers at the Universite Laval in Canada fed two groups of mice a diet rich in sugar and fat for eight weeks.

DO cut back on saturated and trans fat

To reduce your risk of heart disease you need to choose the right types of fat. Avoid fats that elevate your cholesterol levels: saturated fats (usually found in high-fat meats and dairy products, baked goods and fried foods that contain palm oil, palm kernel oil) and trans fats (hydrogenated oils found in baked goods and some margarines. Choose products lower in saturated fat, try baking or broiling instead of frying, and reduce or omit the saturated fats that recipes call for (butter, shortening, lard).

16 Herbs For Liver Health And Detoxification

With the word "detox" being featured on most teas, juices, and diet plans, it's easy to feel that you need to take charge of ridding your body of all the harmful toxins you are exposed to. But the body has its own detox system...

[READ MORE](#)

DON'T miss out on fibre

A high fibre diet (up to 30 g per day) can help reduce the risk of heart disease. Certain types of fibre may help lower LDL cholesterol. To meet your daily quota, select a variety of unprocessed plant-based foods each day, including whole grains, oats, whole-wheat bread/flour/cereal, fruits, vegetables and legumes including beans. While it may seem like there are a lot of 'rules' to follow to protect your heart and your health, it all boils down to making smart choices on a consistent basis. Make healthful choices most of the time, you'll be doing your body – and your heart – well.

The vagina is self-cleaning – so why does the 'feminine hygiene' industry exist?

From talcum powder to jade eggs and douches, an industry has grown up to sell products – some of which are harmful – that play on women's fears about being dirty or smelly

Which of the following should go nowhere near your vagina: a penis, a finger, a tampon or talcum powder? According to a jury in Missouri in July, it is the talc: the court found in favour of 22 women who claimed their ovarian cancer had been caused by their use of Johnson & Johnson baby talc, because it contained asbestos. [The women were awarded \\$4.14bn in punitive damages.](#)

[The vagina is self-cleaning – so why does the 'feminine hygiene' industry exist?](#)



Chemicals in Consumer Products May Promote Weight Gain. But There's an Easy Fix.

By Rachael Rettner, Senior Writer

For those who have a hard time losing weight, there's some good and bad news. The bad news is that common chemicals in the environment may play a role in [weight gain](#), a new study suggests. The good news? Diet and exercise may counteract these obesity-promoting effects, according to the study.

The findings suggest yet another benefit of diet and exercise, the researchers, from Harvard Medical School, wrote in [their paper](#), published online yesterday (Aug. 31) in the journal JAMA Network Open. [\[12 Worst Hormone-Disrupting Chemicals & Their Health Effects\]](#)



Chemicals in Consumer Products May Promote Weight Gain. But There's an Easy Fix.

September 01, 2018 | Article

Chemicals in the environment may play a role in weight gain, a new study suggests. But the good news is there may be an easy way to counteract these effects.

[Read More](#)

What Can Honey Do For You?

Humans have gathered honey for thousands of years. When early people cleared forests into pastures, they created bee-friendly habitats where flowers and bushes grew.

[READ MORE](#)

Origins of Matcha



Although you may have only recently discovered matcha – the super-concentrated 100 percent green tea powder – only recently, it is nothing new. Matcha has been drunk in Japan since the twelfth century, and before that in China.

[Learn about matcha's rich history!](#)



Sodium:

While the Daily Value is **2,300 mg**, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, the Center for Science in the Public Interest and others urge the government recommendation to be lowered to **1,500 mg**. This is about 2/3 teaspoon of salt. Over 70 percent of our sodium intake comes from food eaten away from home (processed or prepared foods from the grocery store, or food from restaurants), so along with added sugar, this is one of the most important things to check on the Nutrition Facts panel.

Visitors to our VACD centre in Bandarawela:

Ms Yolanda Castro (Teacher & Psychopedagogue) from Spain and her friend Susana (Nurse) from Belgium paid the VACD Centre in Bandarawela a surprise visit while holidaying in the township of Ella and spent a day with our children, parents and the team.



Left photo: Yolanda, Colonel Kumarasinghe – Secretary VACD Sri Lanka and Susana enjoying a Sri Lankan lunch. Centre photo: Yolanda with the dance instructor and students. Right photo: Yolanda and Susana with our VACD children.

[Unchecked Air Pollution a Death Sentence for Millions: Study](#)



Added sugar: While the Daily Value is **50 grams**, the American Heart Association recommends keeping it to **25-36 grams** per day:

- Men: 9 teaspoons = 36 grams = 150 calories
- Women: 6 teaspoons = 25 grams = 100 calories

Dietary fiber: 28 grams. This has been deemed a “nutrient of public health concern” because of the [health risks associated with low intake](#) and the fact that the vast majority of Americans don’t get enough. [Fiber is important](#) for overall digestive health, so inadequate intake can lead to constipation and other bowel problems; it may also make you not feel as full, which can lead to excess calorie intake and potential weight gain.

Cholesterol: While blood cholesterol is an important health consideration, the amount you get from food ([dietary cholesterol](#)) is no longer considered as concerning for most people as it once was.



Alcohol / No healthy level of drinking, says worldwide study

Governments should consider advising people to abstain entirely, say authors



Why Are Pregnant Women Told to Sleep on Their Left Side?

Doctors have a very good reason for this recommendation.

[Read More](#)



21 Ayurvedic Practices for Transitioning into Autumn

Ayurveda is the ancient holistic healing system of India, and the name translates from Sanskrit as “the science of life.” Ayurveda includes a vast collection of interrelated practices that encompass every aspect of a person’s health and lifestyle.

[Incorporate simple lifestyle choices into your routine for a balanced, healthful season.](#) 



Cancer

Cucumbers contain a unique compound called cucurbitacin, which acts as a powerful antioxidant in the body. [6] In recent years, this compound has been the subject of a great deal of research, and it has been found that drinking cucumber water can lower your risk of prostate [cancer](#), among others.

Heart Issues

Drinking cucumber water is an excellent way to increase your potassium levels, which is a vital electrolyte for overall health. Potassium also acts as a vasodilator to reduce blood pressure and lower strain on the cardiovascular system, thus reducing your risk of atherosclerosis, heart attacks, strokes and coronary heart disease.

Organicfacts.net



Health Benefits of Pumpkin Seeds

TEA PLUCKERS AND THEIR LIFE IN MOTHER LANKA



RADHIA RAMEEZ wrote of the “Real Line Room Experience” which evoked sadness and horror. Their living quarters are roughly ten by twelve feet for each family. Their working hours plucking tea earn them about 26 rupees for one kilo and they get no paid holidays. Women are known to do a better job than their male counterparts. They need to pluck at least 22 kilos per day or they don’t get paid at all! The estate community appears to be especially disadvantaged as regards health care. AUSLMAT were happy to do general medical clinics in the hill country and we hope to extend our sphere of activity on future medical missions. We were happy to assist the estate medical practitioners and gave them glucometers and sphygmomanometers as we left. The seniors retire without a pension and continue to live in the “line rooms”. Travel to the local hospital can be difficult and time consuming. They were delighted with the gifts of new sarees as shown in the picture.

Last year Sri Lanka celebrated 150 years of the tea industry and one is left to wonder what has changed since it all started?!

Quintus de Zylva



New Cervical Cancer Screening Guidelines: What You Need to Know

Some women have a new option for cervical cancer screening — and it doesn't necessarily involve a Pap test — according to updated guidelines.

[Read More](#)



Colorectal Cancer Screening: Guidelines, Options and Risks

Colorectal cancer is preventable. Here are the types of colorectal cancer screenings and when you should get tested.

[Read More](#)

'Good' Cholesterol May Be Bad for Some People

Having high levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, the so-called good [cholesterol](#), is usually considered positive. But that might not be true for everyone: According to a new study, higher levels of HDL cholesterol may not always be healthy for the hearts of postmenopausal women. HDL cholesterol protects the heart by carrying LDL cholesterol — the "bad" cholesterol — away from the arteries and to the liver, where it can be broken down and eliminated from the body, according to the [American Heart Association](#). In general, a high HDL measurement along with a low LDL measurement is considered healthy.

Good' Cholesterol May Be Bad for Some People

[Read More](#)

The rise of the body neutrality movement: 'If you're fat, you don't have to hate yourself'

Instead of emphasising the need to love how you look, concepts such as body neutrality, fat acceptance and body respect are allowing women to make peace with their bodies



When Stephanie Yeboah was 12 years old, she was put on a diet and began restricting herself to 300 calories a day. People told her she would be so pretty, if only she could lose weight. By her early 20s, a preoccupation with counting calories had led to a devastating pattern of disordered eating. She was bulimic, but, she says, she did not recognise it because her body shape hadn't changed and society had made it clear: "Fat people don't have eating disorders; if they did they wouldn't be fat."

It wasn't until she discovered body positivity in 2014 that Yeboah found an alternative to self-loathing and depression. Body positivity first emerged in the US in the 60s to raise awareness of the barriers faced by fat people (and as a result, the word "fat" was reclaimed as a descriptor rather than insult). Advocates eschewed diets and weight-loss surgery and highlighted the need for human rights for bigger bodies. [Read more](#)

[The rise of the body neutrality movement: 'If you're fat, you don't have to hate yourself'](#)

The widespread belief that taking omega-3 capsules will help protect you from a heart attack, stroke or early death is wrong, according to a large and comprehensive review of the evidence. [Read more](#)
[Omega-3 no protection against heart attack or strokes, say scientists](#)



When We Eat, or Don't Eat, May Be Critical for Health

By Anahad O'Connor

Nutrition scientists have long debated the best diet for optimal health. But now some experts believe that it's not just what we eat that's critical for good health, but when we eat it.

A growing body of research suggests that our bodies function optimally when we align our eating patterns with our circadian rhythms, the innate 24-hour cycles that tell our bodies when to wake up, when to eat and when to fall asleep. Studies show that chronically disrupting this rhythm — by eating late meals or nibbling on midnight snacks, for example — could be a recipe for weight gain and metabolic trouble.

That is the premise of a new book, "The Circadian Code," by Satchin Panda, a professor at the Salk Institute and an expert on circadian rhythms research. Dr. Panda argues that people improve their metabolic health when they eat their meals in a daily 8- to 10-hour window, taking their first bite of food in the morning and their last bite early in the evening.

This approach, known as early time-restricted feeding, stems from the idea that human metabolism follows a daily rhythm, with our hormones, enzymes and digestive systems primed for food intake in the morning and afternoon. Many people, however, snack and graze from roughly the time they wake up until shortly before they go to bed. Dr. Panda has found in his research that the average person eats over a 15-hour or longer period each day, starting with something like milk and coffee shortly after rising and ending with a glass of wine, a late night meal or a handful of chips, nuts or some other snack shortly before bed.

[When We Eat, or Don't Eat, May Be Critical for Health - The New York ..](#)



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['New blood test could help diagnose brain injury'](#)

The test called Banyan Brain Trauma Indicator, described in The Lancet Neurology journal, aids in the evaluation of patients with a suspected traumatic brain injury or concussion, also known as a mild traumatic brain injury.

[Silverbeet, chickpea and ricotta rolls recipe](#)

Healthy vegetarian alternative to the classic sausage roll. [Read more](#)



From Sohan Pieris in Hawaii



While I was at an official hand-over ceremony today where the Hawaii Coast Guard gifted A 300 ft coast guard cutter to the SI Navy. 140 sailors in Hawaii to train and take over the ship before taking off to SL. It was quite a ceremony with the national anthems Played and handing over protocol which is an exercise in itself that took 1.5 hrs. After which there was a reception with Kavum cokis kiributh lunu miris along with American Hors d'oeuvres... and CEYLON TEA !
...nice



7 Compelling Reasons To Add Moringa To Your Smoothie

Breakfast smoothies are great way to pack as much nutrition as possible to start your day. If there's one ingredient that you need to add but probably aren't, it's moringa powder. Most people haven't even heard of moringa leaves and so, miss out on all their amazing health benefits.

Moringa leaves are quickly gaining a reputation as an organic superfood...

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[A new way to remove CO2 from the atmosphere](#) ←

<https://www.elanka.com.au/> ←

What Causes Eye Flashes and Floaters?

By Scott Fields, Life's Little Mysteries Contributor

Undulating like strands of kelp drifting on a minuscule ocean, "eye floaters" can be annoying. Sooner or later 70 percent or so of us will endure eye floaters or their pesky cousins, eye flashes.



Although a variety of [medical conditions](#) can cause floaters and flashes, the most common culprits are iffy connections between the back of the eye and the vitreous, the eye's Jell-O-like core.

Sometimes — especially as we age and our vitreous thins — little patches of the wobbly thing can pull free from the back of the eye. As the vitreous yanks on the touchy retina nerves, sparks fly and flashes appear. And sometimes strings of vitreous cells are torn free. These cells bobbing about in the vitreous cast shadows on the retina, which we see as floaters. The sudden appearance of bursts of flashes or large floaters can indicate serious medical conditions, such as a detaching retina, and warrant a trip to an ophthalmologist.

Follow Life's Little Mysteries on Twitter @[llmysteries](#). We're also on [Facebook](#) & [Google+](#).

Cigarettes not sold in certain towns.

The Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) Union of Sri Lanka has informed Health Minister Dr. Rajitha Senaratne that there are 107 towns in Sri Lanka which do not sell cigarettes, a Health Ministry spokesman said. According to the spokesman, the Union launched several programmes to educate the public on the ill effects of smoking and as a result shop owners and businessmen from many towns stopped selling cigarettes. There are 22 towns in the Jaffna district, 17 towns in the Matara district, 16 towns in the Kurunegala district which do not sell cigarettes. The total number of towns which do not sell cigarettes is 107. Minister Senaratne admired the contribution made by PHIs to minimise smoking in the country and expressed hope on increasing the number of towns which do not sell cigarettes up to 200 by 2019 (next year), he said. Several steps were taken under the direction of Minister Senaratne during past three years to discourage smoking in the country. "Increasing the tax on tobacco up to 90 percent, increasing the pictorial warning covering 80 percent of the cigarette packet, banning the sale of cigarettes around a radius of 100 metres from a school and banning smoking in public places are some of those steps," the Minister added. (Daily News, 22.8.2018).

Exercise a Little Each Day

Moderate physical activity lowers your chances of a heart attack. Shoot for 30 minutes of exercise that gets your heart pumping at least 5 days a week. Brisk walking or swimming are some good choices. On the other 2 days, do strength training, like lifting weights. If you've got a tight schedule, break your exercise routine into small chunks. Try a 15-minute walk in the morning and another before lunch.



Brain Scans Yield Clues to Autism

MRI scans show abnormalities in a deep brain circuit that makes socializing enjoyable.

[READ MORE](#)



The Power of Protein

Calories aren't the only thing you need to watch as you get older. Protein is important because it helps keep your muscles strong. You need muscles for strength and balance, as well as for everything from walking up stairs to carrying groceries.

How Much Protein Do You Need?

Women should get about 46 grams of protein a day, depending on age and activity level. Men need about 56 grams. As people get older, they will need more protein to remain healthy and physically active. People with some conditions like kidney disease may need less. Spreading your protein throughout the day helps keep you full so you eat fewer calories. Here's how to make sure you get a healthy variety of proteins every day.



Poultry and Eggs

Choose lean poultry like skinless chicken breasts and turkey cutlets. A 3-ounce grilled chicken breast has 25 grams, more than half the protein you need each day. A large egg has about 6 grams. Research suggests that an egg a day doesn't raise heart disease chances in healthy people. But if you have high cholesterol, heart disease, or diabetes, check with your doctor or dietitian about how much cholesterol-rich food like eggs you can eat.

More Pregnant Women Are Having Heart Attacks. But Why?

Women who are pregnant may not spend much time worrying about their own hearts, but a new study suggests they should.

[Read More](#)

Parkinson disease

At the Probus meeting today, Dr. David Finkelstein, Melbourne University was our guest speaker. He is a research scientist associated with Parkinson Institute of Australia. He spoke of brain research with special reference to Parkinson disease. I give below some of the key take aways from his talk fyi.

1. The incidence of Parkinson disease is growing exponentially in Australia. The disease changes the lives of people dramatically.
2. No actual reason is yet found why people get this disease. Some attribute to genetics, too much iron in the brain (some studies have reported infant formulas have had excessive iron content and as a result iron deposits in the brain). Higher iron content in your body is considered a risk factor.
3. Our body changes rapidly after the age of 45. Our brains rust as we grow older - "rusty brain" in usual parlance. Brains indeed rust.
4. Statistics indicate people - men live longer when they socialise with their friends and counterparts (women have always been living longer than men). In Australia people seem to extend their life span by one year every ten years (due to improved health, sanitary and diet).
5. Diabetes is a risk factor (2.2 fold) but some medication like metformin may reduce this risk. There is research being done to find out whether asthma medication can reduce the risk as well.
6. Exercise is critical (any type of repetitive exercise) and should be continuous.
7. Caffeine is considered (not excessive) therapeutic - neuro-protective. Drinking coffee and tea is recommended. I have also read an article on the salutary effects on the heart from coffee drinking. Cheers for coffee and tea!! (but don't forget wine has similar therapeutic qualities)



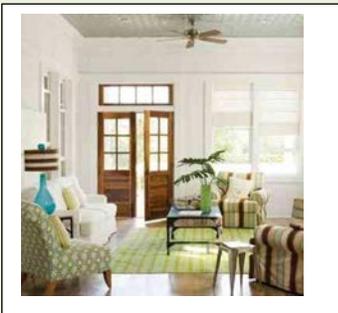
Want to Beat Your Belly Fat?

Visceral fat is the most dangerous kind of fat because it can wrap around organs.

[VIEW SLIDESHOW](#)

- <https://www.elanka.com.au/visit-to-the-super-fish-market-kandy-by-dr-harold->





[Keep Your House Cool Without Air Conditioning](#)



Americans want to feel comfortable indoors when outdoor temperatures climb—so much so that we collectively spend more than \$15 billion each year on air conditioning (the equivalent of about 140 million tons of CO2 emissions).

[Try no- and low-cost methods to stay comfortable this summer.](#)

Red Meat Is Very Nutritious

Red meat is one of the most nutritious foods you can eat.

It is loaded with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and various other nutrients that can have profound effects on health.

A 3.5-ounce (100-gram) portion of raw ground beef (10% fat) contains (2):

- **Vitamin B3 (niacin):** 25% of the RDA
- **Vitamin B12 (cobalamin):** 37% of the RDA (this vitamin is unattainable from plant foods)
- **Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine):** 18% of the RDA
- **Iron:** 12% of the RDA (this is high-quality heme iron, which is absorbed much better than iron from plants)
- **Zinc:** 32% of the RDA
- **Selenium:** 24% of the RDA
- Plenty of other vitamins and minerals in smaller amounts

This comes with a calorie count of 176, with 20 grams of quality animal [protein](#) and 10 grams of fat.

Red meat is also rich in important nutrients like creatine and carnosine. Non-meat eaters are often low in these nutrients, which may potentially affect muscle and brain function (3, 4, 5).

Grass-fed beef is even more nutritious than grain-fed beef, containing plenty of heart-healthy omega-3s, the fatty acid CLA and higher amounts of vitamins A and E (6, 7, 8).

SUMMARY Red meat is very nutritious, especially if it comes from animals that have been naturally fed and raised. It's a great source of protein, iron, B12, zinc, creatine and various other nutrients.

Healthline

Alcohol link with cognitive decline

There is some evidence that moderate consumption of alcohol reduces the risk for cognitive decline and dementia. A study in JAMA, for example, found that people over age 65 who drank up to one alcoholic beverage a day had about half the risk as nondrinkers over five to seven years. Another study reported that resveratrol, a compound in red wine, broke down beta-amyloid (abnormal deposits of protein associated with Alzheimer's disease) in laboratory experiments, suggesting that red wine in particular may be protective, but further study is needed. In the meantime, experts do not recommend drinking alcohol to fend off Alzheimer's disease.

However, experts do not recommend drinking alcohol to prevent cognitive decline. If you enjoy an occasional alcoholic beverage, you should limit your consumption to no more than two drinks a day if you are a man or one drink if you are a woman.

In the JAMA study, heavy drinkers — defined as more than four drinks per day or 14 per week for men and more than three drinks per day or seven per week for women — had a 22% higher Alzheimer's risk than the nondrinkers.

Harvard School of Medicine

Mental stimulation link with cognitive impairment

Many researchers believe that education level is less important in maintaining a healthy brain than the habit of staying mentally active as you age. In one study, mentally intact people in their 70s and 80s were asked how often they did six activities that required active mental engagement — reading, writing, doing crossword puzzles, playing board or card games, engaging in group discussions, and playing music. In the following five years, those who placed in the highest third in terms of how often they engaged in mentally stimulating activities were half as likely to develop mild cognitive impairment as those in the lowest third. An earlier report found a similar link between brain-stretching activities and a lower risk of Alzheimer's.

Amyloid PET scans

Scientists have developed new techniques that allow them to detect in the living brain the presence of amyloid plaques, the hallmark of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. Amyloid plaques are tangles of proteins that aggregate and stick to one another in the brain, leading to the disruption of cellular structure and eventually cell death. To confirm the presence of amyloid plaques, one technique involves PET scans that use chemical tracers, which bind specifically to amyloid deposits, allowing them to show up clearly on brain scans. The type of amyloid PET scan most widely available is called a florbetapir PET scan.

Harvard Medical School

18 Surprising Health Benefits of Sex



Learn the surprising health benefits of sex, including stress relief, boosting immunity, improving cardiovascular health and more.

[READ MORE](#)



7 Plants You Can Eat If You're Stranded in the Wild

On the off chance that you find yourself stranded in the wilderness on your next camping trip or hike, don't panic — there are plenty of things to eat once you've run out of trail mix.

[Read More](#)

Scientists study possible strategies for prevention and treatment of children's allergic disease through the gut microbiota

| **Kristina Campbell**

- [Allergies](#), [Asthma](#), [Early Life & Infants](#), [Food & Ingredients](#), [Immune Health](#), [News Watch](#), [Nutrition](#), [Prebiotics](#), [Pregnancy & Early life](#), [Probiotics](#), [Probiotics](#)
- Tagged: [allergy](#) [Early life](#) [Gut microbiota](#) [prebiotics](#) [probiotics](#) [Synbiotic](#)

Allergic diseases are [increasing in prevalence worldwide](#).

Chances are, you know someone with a condition like asthma, eczema, an allergy to specific foods or drugs, or even anaphylaxis (an acute hypersensitivity reaction that involves multiple body systems).



But lately, groups of researchers around the world are looking at new solutions to treat—or even prevent—allergic diseases through the gut microbiota.

Several [studies](#) have linked the microbes in a developing child's gut to different manifestations of allergic disease. The question is: could the gut microbiota in early life flag the children who are going to develop allergic disease later on, leaving open the possibility for intervening before that allergy manifests?

For asthma specifically, a picture is developing: children that lack four key microbial groups within their first 100 days are [more likely to develop asthma](#) by age three. Now, two recent studies have provided further insights about gut microbiota and allergic disease.

The [first study](#) looked at the broad spectrum of allergic diseases. The researchers selected two groups of Chinese children (from a larger study)—some who were healthy and some who were known to have an allergic disease: eczema, allergic rhinitis, asthma, or food allergy. The researchers found a **high ratio of *Klebsiella* to *Bifidobacteria* at three months was correlated with an increased risk of allergic disease by three years of age.**

Even as groups continue to investigate the predictive value of early-life gut microbiota in allergic conditions, other researchers are trialling interventions that modify the gut microbiota in an attempt to make a difference to allergic disease. Thus, in a [second recent study](#) (a randomized, controlled trial), one group of infants with suspected cow's milk allergy was given a hypoallergenic infant formula with a [prebiotic](#) (fructo-oligosaccharides) and a probiotic (*Bifidobacterium breve* M-16V)—combined to make a 'synbiotic'. Another group with the same suspected allergy was given formula minus the synbiotic. The researchers compared the fecal microbiota of both of these groups with that of healthy breastfed infants, and found the infants receiving the synbiotic formula had levels of fecal bacteria closer to what was seen in the healthy breastfed infants. Bifidobacteria were successfully increased in the 'synbiotic' group, but it was not certain what effect this may have had on disease course.

These two studies, while very different in their approaches, together reinforce the idea that the early-life gut microbiota is worth investigating for both the prevention and the treatment of allergic diseases.

[Infographic from ISAPP explains gut microbiota and its role in health](#)

Nowadays, few people doubt the major role of the trillions of intestinal microbes – known as the gut microbiota – in terms of our health. Have you ever asked yourself, however, what do microbes do,...

['Microbiome: Gut Bugs and You' - TEDx Talk by Warren Peters](#)

Warren Peters has dedicated the last part of his medical career to study the molecular and genetic basis of obesity. In this talk at TEDxLaSierraUniversity (California, US) held in April 2016, Peters wonders if the...

What is hydronephrosis?



Hydronephrosis

occurs when urine cannot drain out of the kidneys properly, causing them to swell up or stretch.

Hydronephrosis is a condition affecting one or both of the kidneys. It happens when urine cannot drain out of the kidneys properly, causing them to swell up or stretch.

The bladder, kidneys, and linking tubes are known as the urinary system. When working correctly, the kidneys filter blood to remove waste products from the body. The kidneys create urine, which carries the waste products down tubes to the bladder. Urine then passes through a tube called the urethra and can be expelled.

Hydronephrosis can develop when there is a problem with the urinary system. It can happen to a person of any age. It usually affects only one kidney but, occasionally, both are involved.

Read more

[What causes hydronephrosis?](#)

[You can also view this email in your browser](#)



[Are You Drinking Enough Water?](#)

As the weather heats up, make sure you're hydrating yourself properly. You may need more -- or less -- water than you think.

Why is it so difficult to stop hair loss?

While hair loss has likely been occurring as long as humans have been around, it's only in the last 40 years that consumers have had access to topical treatments that encourage hair growth.



And these medical options don't help everyone or treat every type of hair loss.

The most common treatment for hair loss, minoxidil, was introduced to the masses in 1998. The drug is often referred to as Rogaine, one of the most popular name brands on the market.

Despite its popularity and widespread use, scientists aren't actually sure how minoxidil promotes hair regrowth, but it does. The drug, a topical treatment, was first used to treat ulcers, and hair growth was a side effect. More than 40 percent of people who use minoxidil will see their hair grow back to some degree. Another option on the market is finasteride, an oral medication, commonly found under the brand name Propecia. Finasteride is an anti-androgen. It was first developed to treat enlarged prostates. In 1997 it was approved to treat hair loss. Of the two choices, finasteride comes with many more side effects. It's not approved for use by women, and it can cause birth defects if they become pregnant. People who opt for this treatment also aren't allowed to give blood.

As Kaminska noted, it's too soon to tell if this new drug studied will end up being the cure for hair loss that people have been looking for. She said in order for this new theory to really take root, more research will need to be conducted.

Future studies would need to engage in multiple phases of research to figure out how the drug would best be administered and, importantly, what side effects it produces, she added.

"We don't know what would happen if we put the medication on live humans," Kaminska said.

Hawkshaw told the BBC that clinical trials would be next in line.

Kaminska also reminded Healthline that this test was only for androgen alopecia — hair loss that occurs on the scalp

There are many types of other hair loss that can occur. Alopecia areata is when your hair falls out in spots, while alopecia universalis is total body hair loss. Both are considered to be autoimmune disorders.

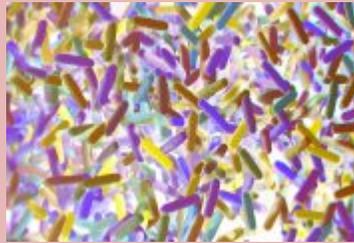
If these or other types of hair loss occur, it's important to get an accurate diagnosis, she added.

Can a Drug Cure Baldness? New Study Shows Potential

[Read on](#) →



[Small bowel microbiota may contribute to fat digestion and absorption in mice](#)



[Scientists discuss the need to rethink microbiome biomarkers in the context of microbial ecology](#)



Gut microbiota has been related to several pathologies over the past two decades. Nevertheless, not all pathology-associated microbiome signatures have been found to be equally consistent and the organization and ecological properties of the intestinal...

Supplement Safety



St. John's Wort

This popular supplement is often taken for depression, anxiety, and sleep problems. But it can cause side effects like headache, nausea, dizziness, and dry mouth. And it may make you more likely to get sunburned. It also can cause problems if you take certain drugs -- from heart medicines to antidepressants, and even birth control pills. And it can make chemotherapy less effective.

WebMD

[Lake Illawarra man makes device so wife can paint post-stroke](#)



[Antarctica Is Melting Away: More Than 3 Trillion Tons of Ice Vanished Since 1992](#)

Trillions of tons of ice melted away from Antarctica during the past 25 years.

[Read More](#)



Earlobe Crease

Also called "Frank's sign" (after the doctor who first noticed it), a diagonal crease in your lobe may be a sign of heart disease. Scientists don't know exactly what causes the crease, and not everyone who has it will have heart disease. If you notice you have one, talk to your doctor about it. WebMD



Pits and Folds

Babies can be born with conditions that affect how they develop. One of these, Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome, causes creases or small holes around the ear. The baby also may be bigger than usual and have a large tongue and low blood sugar. The syndrome doesn't cause major health problems for most people who have it. But as the child grows, one side of his body may be larger than the other, and he can be more likely to get certain tumors. WebMD



Low-Set Ears

Two of the more common conditions linked to this are Down and Turner syndromes. Problems with a chromosome cause both. People with Down syndrome also have other physical differences and development issues. Turner syndrome can cause problems with how the head and the neck form, and issues with growth and puberty. Two rare conditions -- Shprintzen-Goldberg and Jacobsen syndromes -- also can cause low-set ears and development problems.



Ringing in the Ears (Tinnitus)

This is usually caused by something directly related to your ears -- like wax buildup or being around loud noises. But it also can be a sign of a problem with the joint where your jawbone meets your skull (the temporomandibular joint, or TMJ), or an injury to your neck or head, among other things. If you hear ringing, buzzing, roaring, clicking, or hissing sounds, see your doctor to find out what's going on.



Itchy Ears

A fungal infection or other ear irritation often causes this. Another possible reason is psoriasis, which happens when your immune system attacks your skin by mistake. It can be very painful if you have it on your ears, where your skin is thin. It can happen outside and inside your ear and may lead to a buildup of dead skin that makes it hard for you to hear. There's no cure for psoriasis, but your doctor can help you manage symptoms.

Older adults grow just as many new brain cells as young people 

Best Exercises for Knee Pain

As long as your doctor says it's OK, the best thing you can do is to strengthen the muscles that support your knee and keep them flexible.

What's Your Risk for Cardiovascular Disease?

If you're concerned about developing heart disease, factors such as family history and stress levels can help gauge your risk. We'll delve into the full list. [Read on](#) 

Aerobics

Your heart's main job is to deliver oxygen to your body. Aerobic exercise, also called cardio, helps it do this better. It includes any activity that makes your body need more oxygen, like jogging.



What Are the Healthiest Ways to Cook Eggs?

Just because eggs are a superfood doesn't mean all cooking methods are equal. We'll show you the healthiest ways to cook eggs. [Read on](#) 

Obesity can cause progressive disability in people with rheumatoid arthritis

Overweight means having more body weight than is considered normal or healthy for one's age or build, while obesity is the condition of the excess amount of body fat with a body mass index (BMI) of over 30.

What is the difference between leukemia and lymphoma?

By Jenna Fletcher

Reviewed by [Yamini Ranchod, PhD, MS](#)

1. [What are they?](#)
2. [Prevalence](#)
3. [Symptoms](#)
4. [Causes and origins](#)
5. [Risk factors](#)
6. [Diagnosis](#)
7. [Treatment](#)
8. [Outlook](#)

Cancer can affect any part of the body, including the blood. Leukemia and lymphoma are both forms of blood cancer. The main difference is that leukemia affects the blood and bone marrow, while lymphomas tend to affect the lymph nodes. Though there are some similarities between the two types of [cancer](#), their causes and origins, symptoms, treatment, and survival rate are different.

In this article, we take a comprehensive look at the similarities and differences between [leukemia](#) and [lymphoma](#).
Read more.

[What is the difference between leukemia and lymphoma?](#)

These common drugs may raise your risk of dementia

By [Catharine Paddock PhD](#)

[Fact checked](#) by Jasmin Collier

A landmark study has linked the long-term use of certain anticholinergic drugs to a higher risk of dementia later on.



Several common drugs may put you at higher risk of dementia later in life.

This investigation is believed to be the "largest and most detailed" study to date into long-term anticholinergic use and [dementia](#) risk.

Anticholinergics work by blocking a chemical messenger, or neurotransmitter, called acetylcholine that carries brain signals for controlling muscles.

They are used to treat a variety of conditions, from [Parkinson's disease](#) and loss of bladder control to [asthma](#), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and [depression](#).

Anticholinergics for depression, such as amitriptyline, dosulepin, and paroxetine, have previously been linked to higher risk of dementia, even when they were used up to 20 years beforehand.

Some studies have also suggested that use of any anticholinergic is linked to raised risk of dementia.

Read more

[These common drugs may raise your risk of dementia](#)

Could this vitamin A derivative cure liver cancer?

By [Honor Whiteman](#)

[Fact checked](#) by Jasmin Collier

A new study reveals how a derivative of vitamin A called acyclic retinoid could help to eradicate the most common form of liver cancer: hepatocellular carcinoma.



Researchers shed light on how a synthetic form of vitamin A could help to eradicate liver cancer.

Led by researchers from the RIKEN Center for Integrative Medical Sciences in Japan, the study found that acyclic retinoid blocks the expression of a gene that gives rise to [liver cancer](#) tumors. Study leader Soichi Kojima, of the Micro-Signaling Regulation Technology Unit at the RIKEN Center, and colleagues recently reported their [findings](#) in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Around [22,000 men and 9,000 women](#) in the United States are diagnosed with liver cancer every year.

The most common type of liver cancer is hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC). This [cancer](#) may begin as a single liver [tumor](#) that gets bigger over time, or it can start as multiple cancer nodules throughout the liver.

The biggest [risk factor for liver cancer](#) is infection with [hepatitis B](#) or [hepatitis C](#); these viruses can lead to liver [cirrhosis](#), which can cause cell damage that gives rise to cancer.

[Previous research](#) has found that acyclic retinoid — which is a synthetic derivative of [vitamin A](#) — has the potential to stop the recurrence of HCC in individuals who have undergone surgical removal of primary tumors.

The precise mechanisms underlying this association, however, have been unclear.

Read more

[Could this vitamin A derivative cure liver cancer?](#)

What causes my feet to suddenly become numb?

Ask the Doc: My feet tingle or feel numb like they are asleep at times, mostly when I am in bed or with my legs elevated. What causes that?



Cardiac Calcium Scan

A cardiac calcium scan is a specialized type of low-dose X-ray that highlights calcium deposits in the plaque that can line and clog arteries feeding the heart. The more calcium, the more plaque a person is likely to have and the greater the risk of a blockage that can precipitate a heart attack if a piece of plaque breaks loose. The procedure, known as multi-slice computerized tomography, does not require that a dye be injected into the bloodstream to visualize the coronary arteries, though the findings are less precise than those from a CT angiogram, which requires a dye.

A calcium scan is most useful to assess patients considered to be at moderate risk of heart disease, as well as those whose risk is uncertain. Someone who has 5 percent to 7.5 percent chance of suffering a heart attack in the next 10 years, based on standard risk factors like age, gender, race, cholesterol level, blood pressure, smoking behavior and the presence of diabetes, is considered to be at moderate risk. The scan can also be helpful for patients deemed at low risk but with a family history of heart attack at a relatively young age, as in the case of my brother.

Dr. Mandrola, a cardiac electrophysiologist at Baptist Health in Louisville, Ky., recently reviewed both the main benefits and limitations of a cardiac calcium scan. He pointed out that the accepted nonmedical way of assessing a person's risk of a heart attack — based on standard risk factors — is imprecise and often overestimates the risk of underlying heart disease, although it is frequently used to decide whether the patient should be taking medication, like a statin to lower cholesterol.

But when findings on a calcium scan are combined with the presence of these traditional risk factors, the result gives a clearer picture of a person's risk of suffering a heart attack in the next decade. Also, if the calcium score is zero, it might mean the person can safely skip taking a statin or other heart-protective medication.

On the other hand, Dr. Mandrola suggested, if the scan shows calcium deposits, it might motivate some people "to make healthy lifestyle changes." As shown in one analysis of six studies involving 11,000 patients, those told they had coronary calcium were two to three times more likely than those with zero calcium to start taking a baby aspirin or a drug to lower cholesterol or reduce blood pressure and to adopt heart-saving behaviors like quitting smoking or exercising more. NYT-WELLS



How Body Shape May Hold Clues to Heart Health

Research now shows that the areas in which your body deposits fat — often in the thighs or abdomen — can greatly affect your cardiac risk. [Read on](#) →



Diabetes Perspectives, Part 1: One Woman's 22-Year Journey Since Diagnosis

As diabetes blogger and advocate Gretchen Becker details in this first-person account, so much has changed since her diagnosis in the mid-1990s. [Read on](#) →

Diabetic Neuropathy: Can It Be Reversed?

Diabetic neuropathy is a common, but painful symptom of diabetes. We'll discuss its underlying causes and possible complications, as well as ways you can manage it. [Read on](#) →

Interactive Video: A Lifestyle Guide for Type 2 Diabetes

Answer three questions as you watch this short video to learn about simple lifestyle changes that can make living with type 2 diabetes more manageable. [Read on](#) →

Eliminating trans fats

U.S. food manufacturers will be banned from using partially hydrogenated oils—known as trans fats—in their products. Nutrition experts examine how these harmful fats become so ubiquitous in our food, and the decades-long battle to remove them from our food **supply**.

Cardiovascular exercise, also called cardio or aerobic exercise, raises your heart rate and makes you sweat -- and that's great for your ticker. Regular cardio, whether it's jogging, cycling, swimming, or brisk walking, will make your heart stronger. It also helps with blood pressure and cholesterol, and can even help ward off some cancers. The American Heart Association recommends that both types of exercise be part of your regimen to help prevent heart disease.

Alzheimer's Symptoms to Look Out For

Learn to spot seven stages and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. Find out what to expect from these different stages. [Read more...](#)

Why do I have a salty taste in my mouth?

By Jon Johnson

Reviewed by [Alana Biggers, MD, MPH](#)

1. [Causes](#)
2. [Treatment](#)
3. [Diagnosis](#)
4. [Complications](#)
5. [Home remedies](#)

Eating salty foods will often leave an aftertaste in the mouth. However, when this taste is present for a long time, it may be a symptom of an underlying issue. A salty or odd taste is usually not a cause for concern, but these symptoms can be annoying or distracting. Some causes of a lasting salty taste require a doctor's diagnosis and treatment. In the meantime, home remedies can help to relieve the symptom. [Read more:](#)

[Why do I have a salty taste in my mouth?](#)



Why Superfood Ginger Is a Breakfast Champion

It's an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, free radical-fighting wonder. Ginger even boosts metabolism. Let ginger butter — and seven other simple ideas — change your breakfast game forever. [Smart food](#)

How Much Sugar Is In A Can Of Soda?

Let's just say it's an amount that is way past the recommended daily intake of 6 teaspoons...and that's just one can! On an average, a 12-oz can of a fizzy drink has about 10 tsp of sugar. Though you may feel a little more forgiving for orange sodas because of the *orange*, don't be. One can has about 13 tsp of sugar. Cola follows close behind with about 10 tsp.

[VIEW ARTICLE](#)

What are the best teas for health?

By [Maria Cohut](#)

[Fact checked](#) by Jasmin Collier

It's likely that we all enjoy a hot cup of tea — or herbal infusion — at least from time to time, if not on a daily basis. But what are the most important health benefits that some of these soothing teas can bring us? Read on to learn more about the top teas for our health.



Some teas and herbal infusions have long been appreciated for their alleged health benefits, but what does research have to say?

"Tea began as a medicine and grew into a beverage," writes 19th-century Japanese scholar Okakura Kakuzo in his infamous publication *The Book of Tea*.

[Read more](#)

[What are the best teas for health?](#)

FEATURED

Low Blood Pressure: How Low Is Too Low?

Blood pressure refers to the force blood applies on the blood vessel walls during the contraction and relaxation of the heart muscle.

[READ MORE](#)

Why does my urine smell sweet?

By Zawn Villines

Reviewed by [Maria Prelicpean, MD](#)

1. [Overview](#)
2. [Causes](#)
3. [Warning signs](#)
4. [When to see a doctor](#)
5. [Outlook](#)

Urine may smell sweet if it contains extra glucose, which is a type of sugar. Diabetes is a common causes of this, but the smell of someone's urine can also change for other reasons. Urine can reveal a lot about someone's health. So while it might feel strange to discuss the odor of urine with a doctor, it is important that a person talks to a health provider if they notice a sudden change in the appearance or odor of their urine.

In this article, we discuss the reasons for sweet- or fruity-smelling urine, symptoms, warning signs, and when to see a doctor.

[Read more](#)

[Why does my urine smell sweet?](#)

Can yogurt treat a yeast infection?

By Lana Burgess

Reviewed by [Debra Rose Wilson, PhD, MSN, RN, IBCLC, AHN-BC, CHT](#)

1. [How to use yogurt](#)
2. [Why use yogurt?](#)
3. [Research](#)
4. [Risks](#)
5. [Yeast infection overview](#)
6. [When to see a doctor](#)

Many women use yogurt to treat vaginal yeast infections. Is this home remedy backed up by scientific research? The answer is yes: studies support using yogurt to combat these infections.

Several types of yeast and bacteria can build up in the vagina. A yeast infection happens when one type of yeast multiplies too much. This yeast is a fungus called *Candida*.

In this article, we explain the science behind yogurt as a treatment for a vaginal yeast infection. We also discuss the most effective ways to use it.

[Read more](#)

Your Grilled Burger May Come with a Side of High Blood Pressure

By Rachael Rettner, Senior Writer



Bad news for barbecue lovers: Regularly eating meats that are sizzled on the grill may increase the risk of high blood pressure, a new study suggests.

Other high-temperature cooking methods, including broiling and roasting, were also linked with [high blood pressure](#), the study found. In the study, the researchers analyzed information from more than 86,000 women and 17,000 men who, at the beginning of the study period, did not have high blood pressure and were followed for up to 16 years. All of the participants were health professionals who were surveyed about their diet and cooking methods.

[\[9 New Ways to Keep Your Heart Healthy\]](#)

[Your Grilled Burger May Come with a Side of High Blood Pressure](#)

Regularly eating meats that are sizzled on the grill may increase the risk of high blood pressure, a new study suggests.

[Read More](#)

Early Brain Cancer Symptoms

Brain cancer is a malignant growth of abnormal brain cells in the brain. A grouping of abnormal cells is called a tumor.

[READ MORE](#)



SLIDESHOW

Brain Foods for Concentration

Listen to the buzz about foods and dietary supplements, and you'll believe they can do everything. [Read more...](#)

Additional News from Harvard Health Publishing

[Coffee: More links to health than harm](#)

[The magnitude of marriage: Better for your heart?](#)

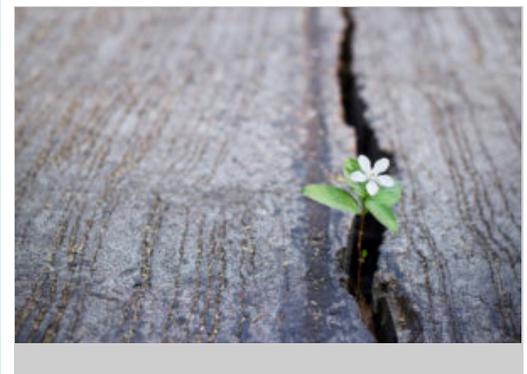
[Does your child need a tonsillectomy?](#)



Is your pillow hurting your health?



You probably know someone who claims that a particular bag of fluff or feathers is the key to a good night's sleep. And that person may be on to something. But the benefits of pillows don't go much further than comfort and positioning. Sometimes pillows even hurt your health.



When dying is a rebirth



Life can be so strange, so surprising. I never thought I'd be diagnosed with lung cancer at the age of 45 and that I'd be facing death at 48. But the biggest surprise was yet to come.

Antibiotic Warning for Heart Risks

Link between long-term antibiotic use and increased risk for heart-related deaths.

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Neck Pain: Causes and Treatments for Relief

The most common causes of neck pain, along with treatments that can offer pain relief when you need it most. [Read more...](#)

[Acid Reflux, Heartburn, GERD](#)



[The Many Types of Cancer](#)

Constipation Myths and Facts

Should you have a bowel movement every day or is a few days without one fine?

[VIEW SLIDESHOW](#)

What Is Myocardial Infarction?

Heart disease causes the deaths of over half a million people annually.

[TAKE THE QUIZ](#)



Surprising Headache Triggers

What does a migraine headache feel like? Learn to spot symptoms early, identify triggers, and find treatments.

[READ MORE](#)

[Cancer Survival Drops With Complementary Therapy: Study](#)



Limit exposure to the sun:

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one in five cases of cataracts may be caused by overexposure to UV radiation. With Australia's sunny climate, it's important to protect your eyes with sunglasses or a hat.

What Are the Symptoms of IBS?

IBS is a chronic gastrointestinal disorder in which the GI tract functions abnormally.

[TAKE THE QUIZ](#)

[What happens at each stage of breast cancer?](#)



There are multiple stages of breast cancer, ranging from 0–4. Each has its own particular set of symptoms and treatment possibilities. There are treatment options for each stage with varying outlooks for success depending on the stage and person. The earlier the stage, the more likely treatment will be successful

[Which Fish Is a Popular Superfood?](#)



[How long will my hip or knee replacement last?](#)



No operation is 100% successful, and nothing lasts forever. In addition, a number of factors, including surgical technique and surgeon experience, how many operations a particular hospital or surgeon performs each year, and patient factors (including age, weight and activity level) can all have powerful effects on how long a replaced joint lasts. But we do have a general idea of how long a joint replacement will last, based on data from past surgeries.



[Small tricks to help you shed pounds and keep them off](#)



If you're struggling to lose weight, you probably feel like the odds are stacked against you. But don't throw your hands up and resign yourself to keeping those extra pounds. There are strategies that can help you chip away at excess weight. Here are some simple tips that you can use to get the scale moving in the right direction — and keep it there.



[What Happens to Your Body While You Sleep](#)



All night long, your body and brain are working hard. See the changes they're going through during a night's rest.

[What Causes Vertigo?](#)



It's the feeling that you or your surroundings are spinning. Learn why it happens, and what to do about it.

3 simple ways to get more restful sleep

Even people without insomnia can have trouble getting a good night's rest. Many things can interfere with restorative sleep — crazy work schedules, anxiety, trouble putting down the smartphone, even what you eat and drink.

The following three simple steps can help you sleep better.

1. Cut down on caffeine

Caffeine drinkers may find it harder to fall asleep than people who don't drink caffeine. Once they drift off, their sleep is shorter and lighter. For some, a single cup of coffee in the morning means a sleepless night. That may be because caffeine blocks the effects of adenosine, a neurotransmitter thought to promote sleep. Caffeine can also interrupt sleep by increasing the need to urinate during the night.

People who suffer from insomnia should avoid caffeine as much as possible, since its effects can endure for many hours. Because caffeine withdrawal can cause headaches, irritability, and extreme fatigue, it may be easier to cut back gradually rather than to go cold turkey. Those who can't or don't want to give up caffeine should avoid it after 2 p.m., or noon if they are especially caffeine-sensitive.

2. Stop smoking or chewing tobacco

Nicotine is a central nervous system stimulant that can cause insomnia. This potent drug makes it harder to fall asleep because it speeds your heart rate, raises blood pressure, and stimulates fast brainwave activity that indicates wakefulness. In people addicted to nicotine, a few hours without it is enough to induce withdrawal symptoms; the craving can even wake a smoker at night. People who kick the habit fall asleep more quickly and wake less often during the night. Sleep disturbance and daytime fatigue may occur during the initial withdrawal from nicotine, but even during this period, many former users report improvements in sleep. If you continue to use tobacco, avoid smoking or chewing it for at least one to two hours before bedtime.

3. Limit alcohol intake

Alcohol depresses the nervous system, so a nightcap may seem to help some people fall asleep. However, alcohol suppresses REM sleep, and the soporific effects disappear after a few hours. Drinkers have frequent awakenings and sometimes frightening dreams. Alcohol may be responsible for up to 10% of chronic insomnia cases. Also, alcohol can worsen snoring and other sleep breathing problems, sometimes to a dangerous extent. Even one drink can make a sleep-deprived person drowsy. In an automobile, the combination significantly increases a person's chance of having an accident.

You can also improve the amount and quality of your sleep by getting regular physical activity and creating and sticking to a regular sleep schedule and routine.

For more details on developing strategies to improve your sleep, buy [*Improving Sleep: A guide to a good night's rest*](#) from Harvard Medical School.

Share this story:



Good advice from Dr Harold

About Bread you purchase



The brown bread you buy from the bakery or supermarket may not be whole meal. Molasses or other things can give bread a brown colour. Always read the ingredient list.

The word "whole" should always appear before the name of the grain, such as whole wheat, whole oats, or whole rye. And it should be the first thing on the ingredient list.... [See More](#)

7 tips for travelling with diabetes

How to maintain your blood sugar levels on the go. [Read more](#)

[Exercise still the best approach to prevent falls](#)



Woman Tried to Treat Athlete's Foot with Raw Garlic. It Burned Through Her Toe.

A woman in England learned the hard way that it's not safe to treat a foot fungus infection by covering it with slices of raw garlic, according to a new report of the woman's case.

[Read More](#)

What is the best predictor of a heart attack?

Written by Dr Harold Gunatillake-health writer

There are many health nuts, who seems to eliminate risk factors to prevent a heart event, by eating the right foods (low carbs, low saturated and low trans-fat containing foods, low salt, etc.), exercising daily, keeping their weights within BMI calculations, controlling their lipid levels in the blood (LDL cholesterol), checking blood pressures to maintain within normal range and so on. But can we predict in such healthy absolute situations you could avoid a cardiac event?

A good example is the death of former Australian Ironman Dean Mercer who suddenly died of a cardiac arrest at such young age of 47. There are many who believe by keeping the cholesterol numbers in your blood as low normal as possible, are quite complacent about not getting a heart attack. But the stats show that 60 percent of the people who have had heart attacks the cholesterol levels have been even below normal. There are many situations that even with high cholesterol levels you may not suffer from a heart attack. In fact, studies have been done among old people in nursing homes, when half the inmates were given statin to control cholesterol levels and the other half not given statins with no control of cholesterol levels, and 10 year studies have revealed that the incidence of heart attacks and death were higher in those who had statin during that period. It is presumed, that in old age cholesterol acts as an antioxidant and it is best not to reduce by giving medication. Most people check their blood pressure regularly which may prevent from getting atherosclerotic diseases, stroke or heart failure, but still, can you predict in such a situation one would not get a heart attack. Recently, Sydney cardiologist Dr. Ross Walker on ABC radio interview said that common health checks for blood pressure and cholesterol were not the best predictors of heart attack. He seems to think rightly that to predict whether you would get a heart attack is to do a scan for coronary calcium levels, which is a far more accurate predictor of heart disease. It is also known as the coronary artery calcium (CAC) scoring, and this test was pioneered by Dr Ross Walker in the late 1990s in conjunction with the Sydney Adventist Hospital.

In a way doing your annual lipid assay (LDL cholesterol and others) on your blood is a waste of time. It is much better to consume a diet that does not raise cholesterol numbers in your blood. It is not the cholesterol in food that raises the serum cholesterol numbers, but it seems that saturated and trans-fat foods when eaten, through the liver manufacturing cycles that increase the blood cholesterol levels. Not consuming carbs containing high starch levels like the root veggies, beverages and treats with added sugar, and eating dark green veggies like the salad leaves, spinach, and cruciferous veggies and so on would keep your fat in your body under control.

People over the age of 50 should have a coronary calcium score as required if the initial score is above average.

According to Dr Ross Walker, it is the best predictive test for heart disease risk.

Coronary CT scan-overview: It is also called a heart scan. It is a specialized X-ray test that provides pictures of your heart that can enable your doctor to detect and measure calcium- containing plaque in the arteries.

Plaques are found in the inner layers of the arteries: they eventually grow and restrict or block the flow of blood to the muscles of the heart. With time these plaques get calcified (calcium deposits). These calcified spots can be counted and given a score. The resultant CAC score is used to grade according to the risk of heart attack.

If the coronary calcium scans show a progressive increase in calcium scoring on regular check-ups, such individuals need closer supervision, and education to reduce all risk factors that may be responsible. Stress could be one of the worst factors that you need to get rid of or reduce.

The Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand describes the test as a 'robust' way to estimate future risk of cardiac events.

There is one problem- each coronary scan is equivalent of 50 chest x-rays per scan and such exposer, and the sub-committee of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council responsible for new and emerging technologies caution that calcium scoring for predicting heart disease "is of unproven clinical benefit or utility"

Our advice

Every Sri Lankan person at the age of 60 should have a CT scan of the heart, at least once.

If you come from a family with a history of heart disease, it is advisable to have a test once in 5 years. Meanwhile, strict adherence to a sensible diet, keeping the weight in control, daily exercising will prevent further calcium deposition in the plaques, and further growth of the plaques may be minimised.

If the initial CAC score is 0- further scans would be a waste of time.

If CAC score is 1-100 -healthy diet and lifestyle would be advised. No further scans required.

If the score 101-400 and over- Daily aspirin and statins are recommended

The cost of this test costs between \$100- \$400

Conclusions: In addition to your 'Fact check' done annually, where the results do not indicate any prediction of an impending heart attack, it is advised to get a heart scan at least once, after the age of 60. The CAC score will assist your cardiologist in further management of your heart condition.

Heart scan machines are available in Colombo in some private hospitals.

[Here's the Latest Study on the Links Between Alcohol and Cancer](#)

How much alcohol is linked to a lower risk of cancer?

[Read More](#)



7 Years After Fukushima Disaster: Little Radioactive Material in US Waters

Now that seven years have passed since the Fukushima disaster, how radioactive are the waters around the U.S.-Canadian West Coast?

[Read More](#)



San Francisco's Airport is Sinking into the Bay

Sinking could make flooding in the Bay Area worse than sea level rise alone would predict.

[Read More](#)

Vitamin D May Not Protect Against These Dangerous Pregnancy Complications

Proper nutrition during pregnancy is important for mother and baby, but there's been a debate about exactly how much vitamin D pregnant women need.

[Read More](#)



What Is Ramadan?

February 20, 2018 | Reference

Ramadan is the most sacred month of the year in Islamic culture. During Ramadan, Muslims fast, abstain from pleasures and pray to become closer to God.

[Read More](#)



How Much Money Would It Take to Make You Happy? Scientists Calculate

Money may not buy you love, but it turns out that the green stuff can bring happiness, to a point.

[Read More](#)

Chamomile has antimicrobial effects

This seemingly delicate flowering plant is actually potent medicine, particularly when it comes to skin and dental infections. The German Commission E monographs approve German chamomile as a skin treatment for bacterial infections. Researchers assessed the antimicrobial activity of a German chamomile extract against the fungus *Candida albicans* and the bacteria *Enterococcus faecalis*. *Candida albicans* is a common fungus associated with yeast infections, and *E. faecalis* is an antibiotic-resistant and often life-threatening infection that sometimes inhabits root canal-treated teeth.

The Indian Journal of Dentistry published an assessment of a lab study of a high-potency chamomile extract and found that it helped kill both microbes. This study could help explain German chamomile's longstanding reputation for healing dental abscesses and gum inflammation.

Chamomile goes by many names but the two main types are German chamomile, known as *Matricaria chamomilla* or *M. recutita*, and Roman chamomile, known as *Chamaemelum nobile*. It is best to avoid using chamomile if you are allergic to ragweed. Also, the drug warfarin has been found to interact with chamomile. Additionally, other blood thinners may interact with chamomile, so it is best not to use chamomile if you are taking these drugs.

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