

Health & Views

Newsletter for expat Sri Lankans globally & others

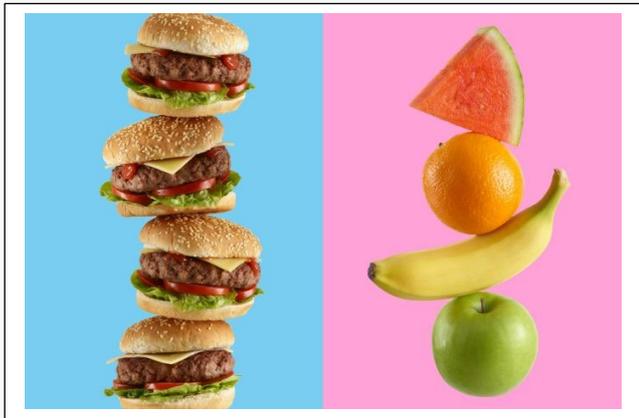
August 1st
issue 2019

[More than half of Indians who have high blood pressure don't know it](#)



[▶ Is Green Tea a Fad or a Real Health Boost? ◀](#)

Processed food leads people to eat more and put on weight, study finds



And yet nutrition scientists, who have long suspected such foods are behind the ballooning obesity epidemic, were recently surprised to make such a finding.

Why? Well, it turns out the usual suspects — sugar, salt and fat — aren't solely to blame.

In a small study published today in the scientific journal [Cell Metabolism](#), 20 people spent two weeks eating either a highly-processed or unprocessed diet, before they swapped to spend two weeks eating the opposite diet.

Despite the two groups' meals and servings being carefully matched, calorie for calorie, participants consumed more food and gained weight while on the ultra-processed diet, said lead author Kevin Hall.

"I thought that if we matched the two diets for components like sugars, fat, carbohydrates, protein and sodium, there wouldn't be anything magical about the ultra-processed food that would cause people to eat more," said Dr Hall, senior investigator at the US National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

[Highly processed food makes you gain weight, but not for the reasons you think](#)



High lead levels found in rubber playground surfaces



Rubber surface material on playgrounds may be exposing children to unsafe lead levels, according to a recent study co-authored by Nick Arisco, a doctoral student in the Department of Global Health and Population.

Say no to sugar: Sin tax does help in obesity fight



The 2017 decision in Philadelphia to impose a beverage tax on sugary and artificially-sweetened drinks caused sales to drop by 38%, according to a study. Philadelphia is one of seven US cities to have enacted the measure in recent years, along with France, Mexico and other jurisdictions. A new research also backs the argument that sin taxes reduce consumption.

[Are Diets High in Processed Foods a Recipe for Obesity?](#)



Air pollution rots our brains. Is that why we don't do anything about it?

James Bridle

Human cognitive ability is being damaged not just by CO2 and lead, but the way social media feeds us information, making us shockingly ill-equipped to clean up the air we breathe



In Mike Judge's 2006 comedy, *Idiocracy*, the participants in an ill-fated cryogenics experiment awake 500 years in the future to discover that due to dysgenic mutation, anti-intellectualism and corporate capitalism the intelligence of the population has fallen to dangerous levels. The president is sponsored by fast-food chain Carl's Jr., and crops are failing because the fields are irrigated with energy drinks. The film was abandoned by its studio and largely ignored at the box office, but its subsequent cult status might be in danger once again, this time from the overbearing reality of present events.

Researchers from Beijing University and Yale School of Health [published research](#) last month showing that people who live in major cities – which is, today, most of us – are not only suffering from increases in respiratory illnesses and other chronic conditions due to air pollution, but are [losing our cognitive functions](#). The study showed that high pollution levels lead to significant drops in test scores in language and arithmetic, with the impact on some participants equivalent to losing several years of education. Other [studies](#) have shown that high air pollution is [linked to premature birth, low birth weight, mental illness in children and dementia in the elderly](#).

A new study says there is a [growing body of research](#)



What Causes Congestive Heart Failure?

Learn about the causes, symptoms, and stages of congestive heart failure. Learn the many treatments options. [Read more...](#)

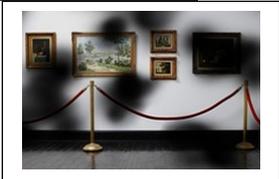
A beautiful rendition of Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper's 2019 Oscar winning song "Shallow". Featuring rising Sri Lankan talents in April Schokman and Patrick Rutnam, with the band Mirage. Filmed in Sri Lanka. Directed by Chandran Rutnam

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTG5kJUUX0&feature=youtu.be>

Health Complications of Diabetes

[Sticking to a diabetes treatment plan can help prevent problems ranging from gum disease to vision loss and even limb amputation.](#)

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What a Small Weight Loss Can Do

[You don't need to shed a large amount of weight to see healthy changes in your blood sugar, cholesterol, and more.](#)

[Read More >](#)

The Many Health Perks of Walking



How Exercise Can Help Ease Psoriasis

[Exercise helps control your weight, which can cut back on flares and may make your treatment work better. And that's just the first benefit.](#)

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‘Leading the country’: South Australia to ban plastic cutlery, straws and stirrers

State government also has polystyrene containers and cups in its sights, and more single-use items could follow



eric Baradat/AFP/Getty Images

[South Australia](#) will become the first Australian state to ban plastic straws, cutlery, and drink stirrers under a plan announced by the state government.

The SA environment minister, David Speirs, said on Saturday the Liberal government would draft legislation to ban the single-use items this year before introducing the bill to parliament in 2020.

Plastic straws, cutlery, and drink stirrers are first on the agenda, and the government is also looking to ban takeaway polystyrene containers and cups.

It is also considering outlawing items such as coffee cups and reusable plastic bags. South Australia was the first state to ban lightweight plastic bags in 2009.

“We led the way with our container-deposit scheme, we were ahead of the pack on plastic bag reform and now we will lead the country on single-use plastics,” [Speirs told the Adelaide Advertiser](#).

[South Australia](#) / [‘Leading the country’: South Australia to ban plastic cutlery, straws and stirrers](#)



Simple Ways to Lower Cholesterol

Even if you are taking pills, diet and exercise can lead to optimal blood vessel health.

[VIEW](#)

[SLIDESHOW](#)



What Happens in Heart Failure?

Does heart failure mean the heart has stopped working completely?

[TAKE THE QUIZ](#)

Heart Failure Symptoms You Should Know

Heart failure is a serious condition, but it doesn't have to stop you from leading a fulfilling life. Here are seven warning signs to watch for.

[Read More >](#)

[Best way to fight climate change? Plant a trillion trees](#)

Swiss scientists have said that planting a trillion trees or more is the most effective way to fight global warming. Even with existing cities and farmland, there's enough space for new trees to cover 9 million square km, roughly the size of the US. The study calculated that over the years the new trees could suck up nearly 830 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Gut Bacteria May Boost Obese People's Health

[Supplements of a type of gut bacteria may help people who have a high risk of heart disease.](#)

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The Truth About 'Healthy' Ice Creams

What Is Central Pain Syndrome?

[The burning, sharp pain of this neurological condition isn't usually relieved by painkillers.](#)

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New head and neck cancer drug could help patients live longer

Pembrolizumab with platinum chemotherapy less 'aggressive' and extended survival rates

Immunotherapy could help patients with head and neck cancer live longer, new research suggests.

The drug pembrolizumab, used in combination with platinum chemotherapy, was found to extend survival among those whose disease had returned or spread, according to a study presented at the American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting in Chicago.

The treatment, which works by stimulating the immune system to recognise and fight cancer, was also effective on its own for some patients and produced fewer side effects than "aggressive" chemotherapy. The findings of the study, carried out by the Institute of [Cancer](#) Research and Royal Marsden in London, suggest immunotherapy is a better first-line treatment for those with an advanced form of the disease, the researchers said. Currently, patients with head and neck cancer that has returned or spread receive two chemotherapy drugs and a targeted antibody treatment.

Prof Paul Workman, chief executive of the Institute of Cancer Research in London, which carried out the study, said: "Immunotherapy has already revolutionised the outlook for patients with melanoma, and is showing huge promise in other cancer types as well.

"Based on the results of the new clinical trial, pembrolizumab looks set to do the same for people diagnosed with recurrent head and neck cancer. Until now, immunotherapy had only been tested in patients with head and neck cancer at a later stage of treatment, when other therapies had stopped working.

[Cancer research / New head and neck cancer drug could help patients live longer](#)



[What can cause lower back pain?](#)

Lower back pain is very common and often the result of a minor injury or overuse. However, it can sometimes be a symptom of conditions that affect the spine, such as spinal stenosis, degenerative disc disease, scoliosis, sciatica, and cauda equina syndrome. [Learn more about lower back pain here.](#)

[How a diabetes drug may reduce anxiety symptoms](#)

New research in mice shows how metformin, a common drug used to treat diabetes and prediabetes, can also help reduce symptoms associated with anxiety.

[Common heartburn drug linked with fatal conditions](#)

New research finds a link between proton pump inhibitors and heightened risk of death from heart disease, kidney disease, and stomach cancer.

[Autism and the gut microbiome: Further evidence strengthens link](#)

New research in rodents finds additional evidence that the microbiome may influence the likelihood of developing autistic behaviors.

[What are the side effects and risks of Ritalin?](#)

Ritalin (methylphenidate) is a stimulant medication for the treatment of ADHD and narcolepsy. Ritalin can cause side effects and has the potential for misuse and addiction. Researchers are investigating the long-term safety and effectiveness of this drug in children and adolescents. [Learn more here.](#)

[What to know about neuralgia](#)

Neuralgia is a condition that causes shooting and burning pain in the nerves. There are many types of neuralgia. Treatment options include medications and surgery. [Learn more about neuralgia here.](#)

[Early-onset Alzheimer's: Is 'bad cholesterol' a factor?](#)

A new study connects high blood levels of 'bad' cholesterol with the presence of early-onset Alzheimer's. The link, the authors suggest, could be causal.

[Cardiovascular disease: 7 simple steps that lower future risk](#)

New research examines how adhering to the American Heart Association's recommendations for a healthy heart predicts future risk of cardiovascular disease.

DASH diet reduced heart failure risk 'by almost half' in people under 75

Published Tuesday 14 May 2019

By [Catharine Paddock PhD](#)

[Fact checked](#) by Jasmin Collier

Sticking to a plant-rich diet that can reduce high blood pressure may also lower the risk of heart failure in people under the age of 75.



The DASH diet is rich in fruit, vegetables, and fish, as well as poultry and nuts. This was the conclusion of a study that a team at Wake Forest School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, NC, led to assess the impact of the [Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension \(DASH\)](#) eating plan on [heart failure](#).

They report their findings in a paper that now features in the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#).

According to figures from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), there are around 5.7 million adults with heart failure in the United States.

The condition arises when the heart continues to beat but cannot pump blood as well as it should.

The result is that organs and tissues do not get the oxygen and nutrients they need to function properly and remain healthy.

"Heart failure is a frequent cause of hospitalization in older adults and is associated with substantial healthcare costs, so identifying modifiable risk factors [for] heart failure is an important public health goal," says lead study author Dr. Claudia L. Campos, an associate professor of general internal medicine at Wake Forest School of Medicine.

Read more

[DASH diet reduced heart failure risk 'by almost half' in people under 75](#)

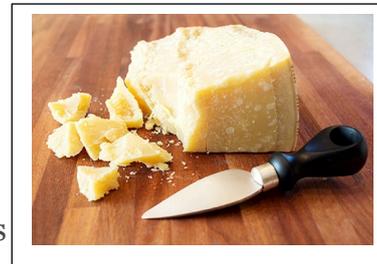
Deli Turkey

One serving of slices could have more than 1,000 milligrams of sodium. That's about half of what's OK for an entire day. Eating too much salt raises your blood pressure, and high blood pressure can raise your chance of AFib. It may also make symptoms harder to manage, so your odds of having a stroke go up. Other super-salty foods include pizza, canned soups, breads, and rolls. Check food labels to find lower-sodium options.



Aged Cheese

Think cheddar, parmesan, and gorgonzola -- strong cheeses that have tyramine, an amino acid that helps raise blood pressure. Some scientists think eating foods with it may bring on symptoms for some people with heart disease. Tyramine is also in pepperoni and salami, sauerkraut and kimchee, and soybeans and snow peas.



Coffee

The science on caffeine as a trigger for AFib is somewhat mixed. Older research suggests a link, newer studies don't. But either way, you should go easy on your coffee. Too much caffeine could raise your blood pressure and heart rate, which might set off episodes of AFib. Stick to no more than two or three cups a day. Or switch to decaf. Or do both.



Leafy Greens

Taking a blood thinner can help stop clots, which lead to a stroke, from forming. But warfarin (Coumadin, Jantoven) may not work as well when you eat foods high in vitamin K like lettuce, spinach, and kale. No need to keep these healthy veggies off your table, though. The trick is to eat the same amount of them every day. Then your doctor can adjust the dose of your medicine so it can still do its job.

Migraine and Headaches: Top Migraine Hacks



Does light makes you wince in pain? You could be one of the many people with migraine who have light sensitivity, called photophobia. If you can't dim the brightness around you by drawing the curtains or turning off the lights, make your own darkness and wear sunglasses indoors.

The key word is "regular." Pick set times to go to bed and wake up every day. Exercise regularly. Stick to usual times for meals and snacks. Consistency helps your body know what's coming up next and may give you fewer migraine attacks.

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['We were the industry joke': Farmers turn back time to increase biodiversity](#)



Storage hacks for your fruit and vegies

By and large once you pick something it starts to die a slow death. So, if you can't eat it immediately, the trick is to keep it alive as long as possible.

"All these products are still alive and are still respiring, like we are," said post-harvest physiologist Dr Jenny Ekman of Applied Horticultural Research. "Like us they breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide."

Salad leaves respire a lot, and along with a lot of other **green vegetables** are best stored in the fridge. Low temperatures will slow down respiration and help keep the bacteria and fungi at bay.

Vegetables like this also need to be in a humid environment to stay crisp, but if they get too wet they can get attacked by microbes and you'll end up with a rotten slimy mess.



No sweat! Stop leafy greens respiring by keeping them in the fridge.

(Pixabay: moeschy)

So, avoid washing vegies before you store them in the fridge — wait until you're ready to use them. And watch out for condensation in the fridge, which tends to occur when you open and close the door a lot, causing temperature fluctuations.

Keeping produce in the crisper should help protect it, but even here, the cold air can suck moisture out of vegies, so it's best to keep them in something like a plastic bag.

The plastic bags that loose salad leaves come in can be good for storage, says Dr Ekman because they allow the produce to breathe. But you need to keep greens cool and transfer them to the fridge as soon as you get home.

"Don't leave them sitting in the back of the car when it's hot," she said.

[How to keep your fruit and vegetables fresh](#)



[Are you a 'responsible drinker'?](#)
[Many of us think we are, even if we drink to get drunk](#)

Nine in ten Australians consider themselves "responsible drinkers", yet a quarter of people drink to get drunk at least once a month, new polling shows.

[More](#) →

[Antibiotic use has fallen for the first time in decades. But drug-resistant infections are on the rise](#)

The message about antibiotics is beginning to cut through — but they're still being overprescribed. A new report several dangerous bacteria are growing increasingly resistant to common medications.

[More](#) →

[What are the best cereals for people with diabetes?](#) ←

Many commercial cereals are high in carbohydrates and contain added sugars. Learn about which cereals are safe for people with diabetes to eat in this article.

[Global alcohol intake has increased by 70%, study warns](#) ←

A large new study shows that global alcohol intake increased sharply between 1990 and 2017. This pattern is set to continue up to 2030, the authors warn.

Not all ginseng is created equal and it may be beneficial for erectile dysfunction, but it will not be as effective as prescription medications. Red ginseng has been studied and found to be marginally effective as Viagra®.

Sugar and Some Carbs are bad for acne



You're more likely to have acne if your diet is full of foods and drinks like soda, white bread, white rice, and cake. The sugar and carbohydrates in these foods tend to get into your blood really quickly. That means they are high on the glycemic index, a measure of how foods affect blood sugar. When your body makes more insulin to bring down blood sugar, it affects other hormones that can boost oil production in your skin.

Best and Worst Foods for Acne

Food alone doesn't cause acne -- or prevent it. Your genes, lifestyle, and what you eat all play a role in the condition.

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Oxytocin



Oxytocin is a hormone released from the pituitary gland that has been well studied for its role during childbirth. Oxytocin makes the cervix and uterus ready for delivery. It also promotes bonding between couples during sex. Oxytocin is released during orgasm and is believed to strengthen social relationships and maternal instinct.

[What to know about supplements for muscles](#) ←

There is evidence that some beneficial muscle-building supplements include protein, creatine, and caffeine. The best choice depends on a person's needs. Learn more here.

[Sleep after sex](#) is common and likely due to the release of some of the same hormones that are associated with orgasm. In addition to oxytocin, the brain releases norepinephrine, vasopressin, serotonin, and prolactin. It may be that prolactin is the culprit chemical that induces sleep after intercourse. It is also true that sex is a very physical activity, often happening at night and in bed, all of which make falling asleep a little more likely.

Sugary Drinks and Fruit Juice May Increase Risk of Early Death

FRIDAY, May 17, 2019 (HealthDay News) -- Most folks know that sugary [drinks](#) aren't healthy, but a new study finds fruit juices are not much better.

In fact, consuming them regularly may help shorten your life, researchers say. "Older adults who drink more sugary [beverages](#), which include fruit juice as well as sodas and other [sugar](#)-sweetened beverages, may be at risk of dying earlier," said study author Jean Welsh. She is an associate professor at Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta.

"Efforts to decrease consumption of sodas and other [sugar](#)-sweetened beverages should also include fruit juices, and these efforts need to include adults as well as children," Welsh said.

Adults who drink sugary beverages, including fruit juice, may be at risk of dying earlier.

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[The Top 5 Veggies to Add to Your Diet](#)



10 Overlooked Benefits of Water

You've heard it's important to keep yourself properly hydrated. But did you know that water does all these amazing things for your body?

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New research suggests sugar taxes and labeling are effective

Heart problems are often considered a men's issue, but that's just a myth. Women are at risk of it too. In fact, you may be surprised to learn that the leading cause of death among women in the United States is actually heart disease and not cancer. Unfortunately, the condition can be what's known as "silent" or symptom-free in many women...

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Effective Natural Remedies For Chin Hair Removal

Let's face it, having squiggly strands of chin hair does not fit most women's idea of feminine beauty. And while chin hair can be removed by waxing or laser, they spring back within a few days. Which indicates that chin hair is a symptom of a bigger underlying problem...

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10 Side Effects Of Ketosis: The Pitfalls Of A Keto Diet

When you follow a diet which drastically restricts the amount of carbs you consume, you will not have enough glucose in your blood to fuel your body. In this situation, your body turns to fats for energy. When your fats are broken down, small molecules called ketone bodies are produced, which act as an alternative source of energy...

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How to Prevent a Yeast Infection

Most women will have at least one at some point. See what you can do to help prevent that from happening.

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Brown Rice vs White Rice: What Should I Be Eating?

There is a constant, on-going debate between nutritionists, dietitians, doctors and anyone interested in nutrition, on the advantages and disadvantages of white rice vs brown rice. Polished white rice is proven to have an adverse effect on the body's metabolism as it has a high-glycemic index and raises the body's blood sugar immediately upon consumption...

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Obesity and Diabetes link

Type 2 diabetes, also called insulin resistance, is a condition where the body does not use insulin properly. Type 2 accounts for 90% to 95% of all cases of diabetes and is generally considered a preventable condition. In contrast, in type 1 diabetes, the body does not produce insulin at all and the illness cannot be prevented.

Being overweight or obese increases the chances of developing type 2 diabetes. Being overweight or obese stresses the body, and hinders the body's ability to maintain blood sugar levels and it can cause the body to become resistant to insulin.

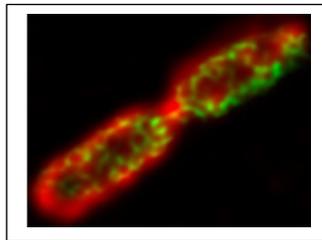
The good news is that type 2 diabetes is often preventable or reversible with weight loss and exercise.

Baby fat

We have two main types of body fat, brown fat (which is also referred to as "baby fat") and white fat.

White fat is the predominant fat in the body that stores energy, insulates the body, and produces hormones. Brown fat helps produce heat, which is important in babies who are not yet able to shiver. Infants are born with reserves of this brown fat (about 5% of their total body mass) on the neck, upper chest, and shoulders and it was thought until recently that most of this fat disappeared by adulthood. It turns out that everyone has small stores of brown fat, and this fat helps burn calories.

New compound which kills antibiotic-resistant superbugs discovered



Being teased about weight linked to more weight gain among children, NIH study suggests

Processed foods may hold key to rise in autism

High fat in the blood

Hyperlipidemia is defined as high levels of fat (lipids) in the blood. This usually refers to high cholesterol and high triglycerides. Fats play an important role in the body's metabolism when levels are normal, but when fat levels get too high they can cause health problems including atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), which raises your risk for heart disease, stroke, and other vascular diseases.

Hyperlipidemia is caused by lifestyle habits such as poor diet, obesity, lack of exercise, and smoking. It can also be caused by medical conditions including diabetes, underactive thyroid, kidney disease and pregnancy. In some cases, hyperlipidemia has a genetic cause.

It is important to keep high cholesterol and high triglycerides under control. The first line of treatment usually involves lifestyle modifications including a healthy diet and exercise. In some cases you may need prescription medications to help regulate your levels of cholesterol.

Medicine.net

There are 9 calories in one gram of fat. In contrast, one gram of carbohydrate or one gram of protein each contains just 4 calories.

Study suggests avocados suppress hunger, but can we trust the research?

Published Tuesday 14 May 2019

By [Yella Hewings-Martin PhD](#)

[Fact checked](#) by Gianna D'Emilio

Can replacing carbohydrate with avocado keep us fuller for longer? A new study suggests so, but industry funded the research.

Can avocados curb hunger?

The avocado is widely hailed as a superfood. With its creamy green flesh, it adorns dishes of all varieties and features in breakfasts, lunches, and dinners.

The fruit contains a rare combination of healthful fats and fiber and is associated with a host of [health benefits](#).

[Study suggests avocados suppress hunger, but can we trust the research?](#)



Clinical trial participants were less hungry and more satisfied after breakfast with avocado than a low-fat meal. But the study received industry backing.

How to manage panic attacks

Data shows over a million Aussies are affected by panic attacks. How can you prevent them? [Read more](#)

Would You Recognize a Stroke?

[Strokes are medical emergencies and a leading cause of death in the U.S. Learn the symptoms to watch for, and how to respond.](#)

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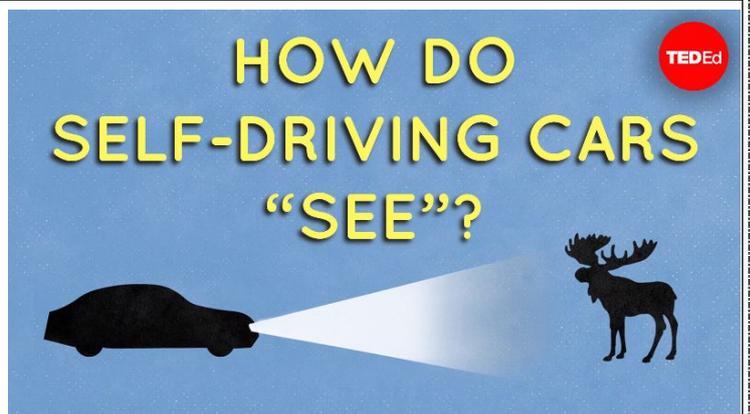


Can a black hole be destroyed?

By Fabio Pacucci, directed by Provincia Studio

Black holes are among the most destructive objects in the universe. Anything that gets too close to a black hole, be it an asteroid, planet, or star, risks being torn apart by its extreme gravitational field. By some accounts, the universe may eventually consist entirely of black holes. But is there any way to destroy a black hole? Fabio Pacucci digs into the possibility.

[View full lesson »](#)



How do self-driving cars "see"?

Lesson by Sajan Saini, directed by Igor Coric

It's late, pitch dark and a self-driving car winds down a narrow country road. Suddenly, three hazards appear at the same time. With no human at the wheel, the car uses smart eyes, sensors that'll resolve these details all in a split-second. How is this possible? Sajan Saini explains how LIDAR and integrated photonics technology make self-driving cars a reality.

[View full lesson »](#)

[Do You Need Vitamin-Enhanced Foods?](#)



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