



THE Y AXIS



How Cool Is That?

The new beverage of choice

“No thanks, I’ll have water.”

That’s what more people are saying when the drink menu comes around, according to a recent study.¹



For almost two decades, 62 percent of adults chugged at least one soda a day. Or about 50 gallons a year. Now only 50 percent of adults are drinking a daily soda. And that’s a good thing.

But teens and certain groups still drink too much.

Soda and other sugary drinks are loaded with empty calories that can lead to weight gain and other health problems.

Thirsty? Drink a glass of water. With or without ice, it’s cool.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:
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Lather Up to Avoid Getting Sick

It’s National Handwashing Awareness Week

Everybody knows what happens when someone comes to the office sick. Or when someone comes down with a cold at home. There’s a chain reaction. Coughing, sneezing, and the Kleenex supply become daily discussion topics.

But doing a better job at washing your hands can be a great defense against germs, and help you stay well.

It’s why you should lather up for National Handwashing Awareness Week (Dec. 4 – 10).²

Germs travel fast

Researchers at the University of Arizona wanted to show how fast germs can spread. They placed water droplets on the hands of about 80 employees in an office.

But one person actually received drops of a fake virus.

How fast did the fake virus spread? In just four hours, it was on half of the surfaces in the office. And it had spread to half of all employees.

VIDEO

How to wash your hands
tinyurl.com/yb3eezjx

Hand hygiene rules to avoid germs

“Imagine how great it would be if you or your family were never sick again from a respiratory infection,” says National Handwashing Awareness Week founder Dr. Will Sawyer.

It’s possible if you follow a few simple rules:

1. Lather up with soap and wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. Do this when they’re dirty, and always before eating.
2. Do not cough or sneeze into your hands. Cover your mouth or nose with your elbow, or use a tissue.
3. Do not put your fingers in your eyes, nose, or mouth.

Follow these hand hygiene rules, and you’ll avoid getting sick from shaking hands or touching germly surfaces. 📌



The Nutty Way to Prevent Heart Disease

Eating nuts a few times a week good for your heart

When the nut supply runs low in the fictional town of Oakton City,

an unlikely team of thieves, con-artists, and scavengers, come up with a plan. Organize the biggest nut heist in history called *The Nut Job*.

And it works. After a series of twists and turns, mistakes, and a plan to outsmart nut-hoarding mobsters in this movie, the crew manages to stock up on nuts for the winter.

A handful of nuts for heart health

You don’t need a truckload of nuts to survive the winter. But eating a handful of nuts a couple times a week may be good for your heart, according to a recent study.³

Harvard researchers followed 210,000 adults for 32 years. They looked at heart health for people who ate nuts at least once a week to those who didn’t eat any nuts. Here’s what they found. People who ate:

- ✓ **Walnuts** at least once a week had a 20 percent lower risk of heart disease.
- ✓ **Peanuts** two or more times a week had a 14 percent lower risk of heart disease.
- ✓ **Tree nuts** (almonds, cashews, pistachios, or macadamia nuts) two or more times a week had a 15 to 23 percent lower risk of heart disease.

It’s possible other habits helped reduce the risk of heart disease. Like being active each



RECIPE

Simple Roasted Butternut Squash

Looking for an easy way to add some tasty vegetables to your diet or holiday meal? Try this Butternut Squash Recipe. It's simple. It's healthy (Butternut squash is high in vitamin A needed for good eyesight, a healthy immune system, and proper organ function.) And you only need a few ingredients.⁵

Ingredients

- 1 butternut squash
- 2 T olive oil
- 2 cloves, garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Peel, seed, and cut butternut squash into 1-inch cubes.
3. Toss butternut squash with olive oil and garlic in a large bowl.
4. Season with salt and black pepper.
5. Arrange coated squash on a baking sheet.
6. Roast in the oven until squash is tender and lightly browned. About 25 to 30 minutes.

Don't Let Old Man Winter Stop You From Being Active

Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity a day

You don't have to let cold weather stop you from exercising. But it happens.

A recent Gallup survey found that only 49 percent of adults are active 30 minutes a day on at least three days a week during cold-weather months.⁴

Too cold to exercise outside? Probably not. It's possible that a winter storm could force you inside. But if it's just cold, you can still be active outdoors if you bundle up.

Need proof? There's a 26.2-mile marathon at the North Pole where temperatures are usually a chilly -4 to -40°F and the chance of polar bear attacks is real. But that doesn't deter dozens of runners from dressing in layers to go the distance.



MORE

5 of the best exercises you can ever do
tinyurl.com/y9g3fnlg

Ways to stay active indoors

But what if you're not a fan of the cold? Stay active indoors. Here's how:

- Take a brisk walk through your local **mall**.
- Find an **indoor pool** where you can go swimming or walk laps.
- Go to the **gym**.
- Play an **indoor game** with your kids like hide-and-seek.
- Find an **exercise video**, and follow along in your living room.
- Take an **exercise class** like yoga, aerobics, or kickboxing.
- Walk, jog or run on a **treadmill**. Or use a **stationary bike**.

The goal: Be active at least 30 minutes a day, even when it's cold outside. @

The Nutty Way to Prevent Heart Disease (continued from page 1)

day and having a plant-based diet. But nuts are high in fiber, nutrients, antioxidants, and healthy fats that can help lower heart disease risk.

MORE

Nuts and your heart
tinyurl.com/y77cy6nf

There's no need to go nuts. A small handful once or twice a day may be just enough to help keep your heart healthy. @

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Take the December Health Challenge!

Practice Mindfulness: Develop a daily habit to improve your life

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This Dr. Joe Raphael answers the question:

Should I take a Vitamin D supplement?

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Q. Should I take a vitamin D supplement?

A. Probably. If you spend a lot of time indoors, there's a good chance you're low on vitamin D.

Why? A little time in the sun (15 to 20 minutes a day) helps the body make vitamin D. But most people spend a lot more time inside, at home, at work, or in the car than they used to.

Is your vitamin D level low?

If you read the magazine headlines in the checkout line, you might think everybody should take vitamin D. For years, it's been touted as a kind of cure-all for a long list of health problems.

About 1 billion people have low vitamin D levels.¹ That's about 13 percent of the world's population. But some parts of the world, and some groups of people, have an even higher percentage.

If your doctor thinks your vitamin D level is too low, a basic blood test can find out.

Vitamin D health claims

Can getting enough vitamin D improve your health?

Past studies suggest that people with higher levels of vitamin D may have a lower risk for disease. Diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, cancer, and heart disease. But these studies don't prove vitamin D is the reason, just that there is a link between the two.



In the last four years, nearly 16,000 scientific articles were published on vitamin D. This new research suggests vitamin D may not be as good at preventing disease as we once thought. But marketers don't want you to know that. Vitamin D sales bring in an around \$713 million a year in revenue.²

"Just because low D levels and disease seem to be correlated, doesn't mean that vitamin D deficiency is the cause," says lifestyle medicine expert Dr. Michael Greger. "In only a handful of conditions have interventional studies proven vitamin D to be effective."³

If you are going to take vitamin D...

It may help reduce fatigue and improve bone health. And having enough D in your blood may help you live longer.⁴ But it's not

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

a cure-all for chronic disease and won't erase the impacts of poor food and lifestyle choices.

How much vitamin D should you take? Research suggests most people would benefit from taking 1,000 to 2,000 international units (IUs) of Vitamin D3.⁵

You'll also find vitamin D in mushrooms, eggs, and fortified foods like orange juice, cereal, and cheese. But your best source of vitamin D for better health? Sunshine and a brisk walk.

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Practice Mindfulness

CHALLENGE

Develop a daily habit to improve your life

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Practice Mindfulness.”
2. Make a plan to practice mindfulness that fits your life today, two weeks from now, in a month.
3. Keep a record of your completed challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

When Conor McGregor was a plumber, he wasn't happy. It was a typical career path in Ireland, but it wasn't for him. He struggled to make a living. But instead of giving up, he started thinking about how to change his situation.

At first, it was simple things like keeping a journal. Or spending a few focused minutes a day thinking about what he really wanted to do. He created a mindfulness practice.

And then it happened. He won a series of mixed-martial arts fights. He landed a contract with the Ultimate Fighting Championship. And he found himself grappling with some of the toughest fighters in the world looking for a way to land a punch or escape a submission hold.

“It's experience,” says McGregor. “It's repetition. “The more you experience in training, the more you compete, you just become comfortable in it. You're able to be more relaxed. And you realize being able to slow your mind down in a situation like that is a skill.”



Today, McGregor still uses the mindfulness practices he began years ago. He writes in a journal. He takes time to think about his training sessions and fights. And he reflects on what went right, what went wrong, and where he can improve.

You probably don't have any plans to become a professional fighter. But you can tap into the power of mindfulness to improve your life and your health. And you can benefit from mindfulness, even if you only have a few minutes a day. Take the month-long health challenge to *Practice Mindfulness*.

How much do you know about mindfulness?

Take this quiz to find out:

- | | T | F |
|----|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
1. You typically don't think about any one thing for more than 3 to 4 seconds at a time, without being interrupted by other thoughts.
2. Practicing mindfulness can improve the area of the brain used for memory and learning.
3. A daily meditation or mindfulness habit can help you sleep better, reduce stress, prevent heart disease, and lower blood pressure.
4. Multi-tasking can increase stress, impair learning, and make you less productive.
5. Paying attention to the texture and taste of food and how you feel when you're eating is an example of mindfulness.

How did you do? Mindfulness isn't just a feel-good activity. Research shows making time for mindfulness activities can actually improve your health in many ways. And it doesn't have to take long. Even a couple minutes a day of deep breathing and reflection can provide important health benefits, redirect your thoughts, and help you make better decisions.

Answers: 1. True. 2. True. 3. True. 4. True. 5. True.

The Definition of Mindfulness

Even though more than 30 million people in the United States meditate every day, it's still a bit of a misunderstood activity.

- Do you sit cross-legged on a pillow and hum quietly to yourself?
- When you meditate, do you try and solve all your problems?
- Is it just for people who have an interest in spirituality?
- Does it require long periods of silence for hours a day?
- If you do it once to try it out, will it work?

The answer to all of these questions: No.

“It's about paying attention in a systematic way,” says mindfulness expert Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn.¹

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to your thoughts, feelings, sensations, and environment. But instead of trying to problem-solve, mindfulness is simply being aware of what's happening in the present moment.²

Top 10 reasons why mindfulness is cool
tinyurl.com/y9bz74yl

Are you in control of your thoughts?

Try this out. Stop and pay attention to your thoughts for just a minute.

Is your mind racing from one thought to the next? That's typical.

Mindfulness can help you learn to focus your thoughts and be more aware of what's really happening. It takes consistent effort. But anyone

can learn to practice mindfulness. It doesn't cost anything. And you can tap into the benefits of mindfulness in just a few minutes a day.

Create Your Mindfulness Practice

Want to tap into the benefits of mindfulness? It takes practice. But you can do it, even if you're busy. This mindfulness practice only takes a total of 9 minutes a day. Here's what you'll need to know:



Where? A quiet place where you can be alone without distractions



When? Morning, afternoon, and before bed.

How long? 3 to 5 minutes

Be Mindful – Week 1

1. Set a timer for 3-5 minutes.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Pay attention to all the thoughts in your head about work, family, and other things. Notice how you're feeling.
4. Focus on your breath as you inhale and exhale.

Be Mindful – Week 2

1. Set a timer for 3-5 minutes.
2. Close your eyes. Try not to think about anything for the first minute.
3. After a minute, think about your day, what you have planned, or what you accomplished for the day.
4. After two minutes, focus on your breathing.
5. Breathe in deeply through your nose. Hold the breath for 5 seconds. Exhale slowly through your mouth for 7 seconds.

"Practicing mindfulness can bring improvements in both physical and psychological symptoms as well as positive changes in health attitudes and behaviors."

Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn

Be Mindful – Week 3

1. Set a timer for 3-5 minutes.
2. Close your eyes. Sit in silence, and try not to think about anything for the first minute.
3. Place a hand on your stomach. Breathe in through your nose for 5 seconds. Exhale through your mouth for 7 seconds. Repeat.
4. Focus your thoughts on your breathing, and feel the rise and fall of your stomach.
5. Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings. Think about what you have planned, or what you accomplished for the day.

Be Mindful – Week 4

1. Set a timer for 3-5 minutes.
2. Close your eyes. Sit in silence, and try not to think about anything for the first minute.
3. Breathe in through your nose for 5 seconds. Exhale through your mouth for 7 seconds.
4. Place a hand on your stomach. **Now breathe in through your mouth, and exhale through your nose.**
5. Focus your thoughts on your breath. Feel the rise and fall of your stomach. And notice how it's different.
6. Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings. Think about what you have planned, or what you accomplished for the day.

When you learn to practice mindfulness, it changes the way you think and feel. You can use mindfulness to improve your mood, develop healthy habits, and be healthier.

Video:
12-minute mindfulness exercise for beginners
tinyurl.com/y7vdooy3

Health Benefits of Mindfulness

Think you're too busy to set aside a few minutes a day to practice mindfulness? It's easy to think that when you've got a million things on your mind. But you don't want to miss out on the health benefits of mindfulness. Research shows daily meditation or mindfulness habits can help:^{3,4}

- ✓ Reduce stress
- ✓ Support heart health
- ✓ Lower blood pressure
- ✓ Develop healthier relationships
- ✓ Improve digestion
- ✓ Support memory and learning
- ✓ Treat depression and anxiety
- ✓ Promote positive thinking
- ✓ Improve sleep quality

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Practice Mindfulness

CHALLENGE
Develop a daily habit to improve your life

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Take action to practice mindfulness that fits your life today, in a week, in a month.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to practice mindfulness and make it a regular part of your life.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH: _____							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	
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_____ Number of days this month I practiced mindfulness
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____