



**WELLNESS NEWSLETTER  
DECEMBER 2022**

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## HIGHLIGHTS for the [December 2022 Newsletter](#)

### **The Breakfast Survival Food to Improve Your Health**

Ever wonder what survival expert and TV host Bear Grylls eats besides beetles, larva, spiders, and raw snake meat? You might be surprised. This breakfast food will improve your health in more ways than one.

### **The 10-Digit Formula to Avoid Getting Sick**

Want to avoid getting sick during cold and flu season? The 10-digit formula is one of the best ways to stay healthy. And you can deploy this cold-and-flu fighting strategy in just 20 seconds. Here's what you need to do:

### **7 Ways to Stay Active When Old Man Winter Arrives**

Too cold to exercise when winter weather hits? Let's be honest...that's just an excuse. Here are seven ways to stay active even when the weather looks icy and dicey outside.

### **Y-Axis: Nutty Advice to Manage Your Weight**

Looking for a simple way to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight? Go nuts. Don't worry, it's a lot easier than you think. Here's how:

### **Recipe: Black Bean Quesadilla**

Beans, beans, the magical fruit. The more you eat, the more you (ahem, feel better). Beans, also called legumes, are good for your health. Give this Black Bean Quesadilla recipe a try.

### **Take the December Health Challenge!**

Laugh More: Laugh more to improve your health

### **Ask the Wellness Doctor:**

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: Should I take a vitamin D supplement?



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THE Y AXIS



### Nutty Advice to Manage Your Weight

Did you know there's a nutty diet hack that can help prevent weight gain?



Forget fad diets, weight-loss pills, and gimmicky workouts.

If you want to maintain your weight, or even lose a few pounds, crack this open.

New research shows that eating a small handful of nuts each day may help prevent 1 to 2 pounds of weight gain a year.<sup>4</sup>

In the study, this habit also helped lower the risk for obesity by 16%.

Craving a snack? Skip the chips and candy bars, and go nuts. Try walnuts, peanuts, cashews, almonds, or pistachios.

### COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

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## The Breakfast Survival Food to Improve Your Health

Discover the health benefits of oatmeal

Survival expert, TV host, and author of *Never Give Up* Bear Grylls is known for his appetite for anything that will keep him alive in the outdoors.

He's eaten things like beetles, larva, spiders, and raw snake meat. But he also likes eating oatmeal for breakfast.

When he's not trying to survive in the wild, he eats whole-grain oatmeal for breakfast. If you haven't enjoyed a bowl of oatmeal lately, give it a try.

### Health benefits of whole-grain oatmeal

Topped with fruit and nuts, eating whole-grain oatmeal is a tasty way to start your day. It's healthy, too. Research shows that eating oatmeal can help:<sup>1</sup>

- Decrease bad cholesterol levels
- Lower the risk for heart disease
- Control blood sugar levels
- Improve digestive health

- Aid in weight management
- Reduce the risk for certain types of cancer
- Lower blood pressure

### Instant Oats vs. Whole-Grain Oats

Skip the instant packets of sugar-flavored oatmeal, and forget about ordering oatmeal from a fast food menu.

Why? Processed oatmeal like this usually contains higher levels of carbohydrates, fat, sodium, sugar, and calories.

- It only takes a few minutes to cook whole-grain oats on the stove.
- For steel-cut oats, the healthiest form of oatmeal, plan on 20 to 30 minutes of cooking time.
- You can also make steel-cut oatmeal in a crock pot, simmer on low overnight, and enjoy for breakfast.

### MORE

Try these healthy oatmeal toppings <https://tinyurl.com/a4fcrynd>

## The 10-Digit Formula to Avoid Getting Sick

December 4-10 is 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 digits (all 10 fingers) and 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 (December 4 -10).<sup>2</sup>

### 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.



### Black Bean Quesadilla

Beans, beans, the magical fruit. The more you eat, the more you (ahem, feel better). Beans, also called legumes, are good for your health. Give this Black Bean Quesadilla recipe a try.<sup>5</sup>

#### Ingredients

- 3/4 C chunky salsa
- 1 15.5-ounce can low-sodium black beans (drained and rinsed)
- 2 C shredded low-fat cheese
- 2 T chopped cilantro
- 4 8-inch tortillas
- 1/2 tsp olive oil

#### Directions

1. Use a small strainer to drain liquid from salsa.
2. Mix salsa, black beans, cheese, and cilantro in a bowl.
3. Divide black bean mixture evenly over half of each tortilla (about 1/2 cup each).
4. Fold tortillas in half.
5. Place tortillas on griddle or skillet on medium-high heat.
6. Cook each side until golden brown.
7. Cut into wedges to serve.

Serves 8. 160 calories per serving.

## 7 Ways to Stay Active When Old Man Winter Arrives

Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity a day

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

About half of all adults get 30 minutes of cardio-based exercise a few times a week. But that drops dramatically with falling temperatures and winter weather, according to a recent study.<sup>3</sup>

**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.

And that doesn't deter dozens of runners from dressing in layers to go the distance.

But what if you're not a fan of Old Man Winter and his minions: snow, ice, wind, rain, and freezing temps?

**MORE**

Harvard: 5 exercises for better health  
<https://tinyurl.com/y9g3fnlg>



**Here are 7 ways to stay active indoors:**

1. Take a brisk walk through your local **mall or big box store**.
2. Find an **indoor pool** where you can go swimming.
3. Go to the **gym**.
4. Play an active **indoor game** with your kids like hide-and-seek.
5. Find an **exercise video**, and follow along in your living room.
6. Take an **exercise class** like yoga, aerobics, or kickboxing.
7. 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 10-Digit Formula to Avoid Getting Sick (continued from page 1)

### 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. Cover your mouth or nose with your elbow, or use a tissue.** Do not cough or sneeze into your hands.

**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 germ-y surfaces.

**MORE**

How to wash your hands  
<https://tinyurl.com/yb3eezjx>

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**Take the December Health Challenge!**  
Laugh More: Laugh more to improve your health

**Ask the Wellness Doctor:**

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question:  
Should I take a vitamin D supplement?



# WELLNESS CHALLENGE

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# Laugh More

## CHALLENGE

Laugh more to improve your health

## Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Laugh More."
2. Create a plan to laugh more and stress less to improve your health.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



In the 1960s, doctors told journalist and educator Norman Cousins that he didn't have long to live.

He was diagnosed with heart disease and a painful form of arthritis at age 35.

But instead of giving up hope, Cousins developed his own form of therapy: Laughing.

Watching just 10 minutes of slapstick comedy by the Marx Brothers and laughing helped him be pain free for at least two hours at a time.

He made laughter and humor a regular part of his life. And he lived 36 years longer than doctors predicted.

Just think about... laugh-out-loud movies. A good joke. Funny videos on YouTube. And all those priceless moments with family and friends when you laugh until you cry.

They all have something in common. Laughing is good for your health. Your doctor may not write out a prescription for laughter, but it's still good medicine.

Ready to beat stress and improve your health? Take the month-long health challenge to Laugh More.

## Take the LOL Quiz

How much do you know about the health benefits of laughing? Take this quiz to find out.



### T F

1.   Laughing 100 times has the same effect as riding a stationary bicycle for 15 minutes.
2.   Stress hormones that weaken your immune system decrease after a good laugh.
3.   A good laugh strengthens the heart and lungs and increases your body's ability to use oxygen.
4.   Laughter has little to no effect on blood pressure, stress, muscle tension, or pain.
5.   When you laugh, endorphins are released in the brain that help improve your mood.

How did you do? There's some truth to the phrase, "Laughter is the best medicine." Research shows laughter is good for your mental and physical health in many ways.

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

## LOL: 3 Surprising Reasons to Laugh More

Can laughing really make a difference?

Norman Cousins made it his lifetime pursuit to laugh more and live longer. And it worked.

He lived to be 75 years old, despite a doctor's prediction that he would be dead before age 40.

In his book, *Anatomy of an Illness*, Cousins provides a detailed look at how he used laughter to reduce pain, maintain a positive outlook, and live a long and happy life.<sup>1</sup>

Personal experiences like his prompted researchers to begin taking a closer look at the health benefits of laughter.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Lower heart disease risk

It's the leading cause of death in the United States and claims the lives of nearly 700,000 people a year.

But laughing can reduce your risk, according to a Japanese study.<sup>3</sup> Researchers followed 17,000 people for six years. They found that:

- **People who laugh daily live longer** and have a lower risk for heart disease, than people who laugh less often.

30 mistakes in Star Wars  
<https://tinyurl.com/nm73ssl>





## 23 Fun Ways to Laugh More

Need a good laugh to lighten your mood and improve your health? Here are 23 ways to help you smile, be happier and laugh more:

### Media that makes you laugh

After just 10 minutes of watching comedy on TV and laughing, Norman Cousins felt better for hours. If you're in need of a good laugh, enjoy a funny movie, TV show, or video on the Internet. Then walk away with a smile on your face.

1. Watch a funny TV show or movie.
2. Even if you've seen it before, watch your favorite funny movie again.
3. Watch funny videos on the Internet.
4. Instead of hitting fast-forward, watch commercials and look for clever and funny ads.
5. Even if you're not a Star Wars fan, watch the 1977 George Lucas movie, and try to find the mistakes, like when a Stormtrooper bangs his head on a door.

### Laugh with your peeps

Some of the best laugh-out-loud moments occur when you're with family, friends, or co-workers. Here are some ways to enjoy a few laughs when you're with others:

6. Tell a funny story or embarrassing moment about yourself.
7. If your kids say something funny at home, share it with others.
8. Play silly practical jokes on each other.
9. Plan an ugly sweater day at the office.
10. Post funny comics on your office door or share on social media.
11. Look at old photos of yourself, family, and friends.
12. Make funny faces at each other, or have a staring contest.
13. Organize a funny movie night, and dress as your favorite character.
14. Call each other by funny nicknames for a day.
15. Laugh at other people's jokes.

### Find something to laugh about every day

You never know when something funny might happen that turns an ordinary day into a can't-stop-laughing day to remember. Here are a few more ways to laugh more and stress less:

16. Try not to take yourself too seriously.
17. Go to a comedy club, show, or funny movie.
18. Look for things that are interesting, funny, or out-of-the-ordinary.

## (Cont'd) LOL: 3 Surprising Reasons to Laugh More



### 2. Reduce stress

Ever feel stressed out? You're not alone. An estimated 76% of adults report feeling stressed during the past month, according to a recent survey.<sup>4</sup>

Too much stress can increase: blood pressure, anxiety, depression, obesity, and even weaken the immune system.

Fortunately, laughter can help, according to researchers at Loma Linda University.<sup>5</sup>

**"Laughter causes the release of endorphins,"** says Dr. Lee S. Berk. "...It also decreases cortisol, which then reduces stress."

### 3. Lower blood pressure

Half of all adults in the U.S. have elevated or high blood pressure, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There are typically no symptoms, but it's a major risk factor for heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.

In a recent study, researchers found that **attending a stand-up comedy act once a week** for a month "resulted in a significant reduction in systolic blood pressure and heart rate."<sup>6</sup>

But wait...there's more. Laughter may also help:<sup>7</sup>

- Boost immune system
- Increase oxygen consumption
- Reduce pain
- Improve mood
- Protect memory

112  
clean jokes  
<https://tinyurl.com/rd847dy5>

19. Smile more.
20. Skip instead of walk.
21. Order a diet water with a serious face.
22. Share a funny joke with co-workers or friends.
23. Learn to laugh at your own mistakes.

Laugh every day. You'll feel better and live longer.

5 reasons to  
laugh every day  
<https://tinyurl.com/mr3y8j4u>

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# Laugh More

## CHALLENGE

Laugh more to improve your health

### Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Create a plan to laugh more and stress less to improve your health.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to laugh more.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, 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 laughed more  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

### Other wellness projects completed this month:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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**ASK THE DOCTOR**

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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 (especially during the winter months).

### Is your vitamin D level low?

About 1 billion people have low vitamin D levels.<sup>1</sup> That's about 13 percent of the world's population. In the United States an estimated 42% of the population is vitamin-D deficient.

A blood test is the only way to tell if your vitamin D levels are low. But if you are vitamin-D deficient, symptoms can include:<sup>2</sup>

- Muscle pain and weakness
- Poor bone health
- Tingling sensation in hands or feet
- Difficulty walking

### Vitamin D health claims

Can getting enough vitamin D improve your health?



Yes. But probably not as much as marketers want you to think. Vitamin D sales generate an estimated \$1.1 billion a year.<sup>3</sup>

In the last five years, more than 20,000 scientific articles were published on vitamin D.

However, this new research suggests vitamin D may not be as good at preventing disease as we once thought.<sup>4</sup>

"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."

### If you are going to take vitamin D...

It may help reduce fatigue and improve bone health. Having enough D in your blood may help you live longer, too.<sup>5</sup>

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

## ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

### How much vitamin D should you take?

The National Institutes of Health recommends most adults take 600 to 800 international units of vitamin D per day.<sup>6</sup> However, some studies suggest 1,000 to 4,000 international units may be needed to maintain vitamin D levels.

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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