



WELLNESS NEWSLETTER
MAY 2023

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HIGHLIGHTS for the **May 2023 Newsletter**

The Five-Minute Fix for Sitting Too Much

How many hours per day do you spend sitting? You know...in the car, at your desk, at the dinner table. Too much sitting is bad for your health. But new research suggests there's a five minute fix. Here's what you need to know...

Brain Drain: This is What Happens When You Eat Junk Food

You hungry? Before you scarf down some junk food or head to the nearest quickie-mart for some sweet and salty snacks, there's something you need to know. Your brain is really good at learning. Here's what happens when you eat junk food...

The Dark Side of Blue Light: 7 Reasons to Limit Screen Time

How much time do you spend staring at a screen? You know...phone, tablet, computer. You could even be staring into a screen in your car and at the grocery store. Before more binge-watching commences, there's a dark side to screen time...

Y-Axis: When You Breathe Bathroom Air...

You could be inhaling more than air-freshener aroma. When you flush the toilet or turn on an air-dryer both send something swirling into the air you may not want to breathe. Here's what you need to know...

Recipe: Stuffed Mushrooms

Hungry for a healthy no-meat dish? Try this stuffed portobello mushroom recipe.

Take the May Health Challenge!

Eat More Plant-Based Foods: Choose fresh & whole foods daily

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: Is social media bad for your mental health?



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THE Y AXIS



When You Breathe in Bathroom Air...

You might be getting a little more than air-freshener aroma.



When you flush a toilet with the lid up (or one without a lid), something kind of gross happens, according to a recent study.⁴

Tiny droplets of bacteria and fecal matter are pushed into the air. The force of the flush can make these droplets travel up to five feet.

They circulate for up to 30 minutes, before settling on surfaces like countertops, door knobs, and sink handles.

Just another reason to lather up with soap and wash your hands.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

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The Five-Minute Fix for Sitting Too Much

A short walk helps control blood pressure & blood sugar

How many hours do you sit per day?

Maybe you have a morning commute and work at a desk. Then you drive home, sit down for dinner and watch some TV. Or maybe you work remotely and sit even more with fewer transitions throughout the day.

Sound familiar? The average adult spends 6.5 to 9.5 hours per day sitting.

And that's a problem that can increase the risk for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and early death.

The prescription for too much sitting

Chances are pretty good you already know exercise will improve your health. But if you're always short on time, how do you combat the negative effects of sitting?

It's easier than you might think. No, you don't need to run a marathon, climb a mountain, or train like a bodybuilder.

You do need to find a way to be more active, but even a little effort can make a big difference. Here's how easy it is:

- For every 30-minutes of sitting, take a five-minute walk.

In a recent study, researchers found that taking a break from sitting with a five-minute walk helps:¹

- Lower blood sugar levels
- Lower blood pressure
- Improve mood
- Reduce fatigue

Want to improve your health and feel better, even if you spend a lot of time sitting? Take short five-minute walks throughout the day. Stop reading this, and go for a walk right now.

MORE

5 surprising benefits of walking
<https://tinyurl.com/5xk3nd96>

Brain Drain: This Is What Happens When You Eat Junk Food

Eating foods high in fat & sugar rewires the brain

Got a craving for junk food? You know... chocolate, sweet treats, potato chips, salty French fries.

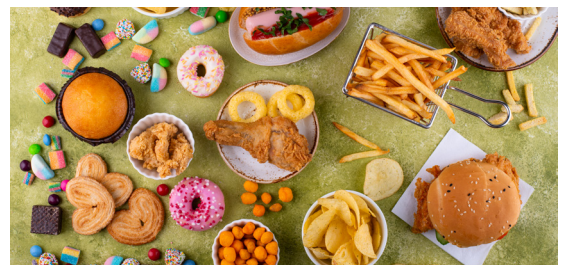
This ever happen? You munch your way through some snacks, and now you want more. And every time you see Salty and Sweet at the store, buffet, or dinner table, you practically start salivating.

You're not alone. The average adult in the U.S. annually consumes an average of:

- 12 pounds of chocolate
- 30 pounds of French fries
- 16 full-size bags of potato chips
- 39 gallons of sugary drinks

Your brain & the 'delicious' pudding test

Here's the thing. Eating foods high in fat and sugar, even in small amounts, can rewire your brain...fast, according to a recent study.²



- In the study, people ate pudding high in fat and sugar for eight weeks, and researchers measured brain activity.
- They found that eating the "delicious" pudding altered areas of the brain responsible for motivation and reward.

"Our measurements of brain activity showed that the brain.....subconsciously learns to prefer rewarding food," says lead researcher Dr. Marc Tittgemeyer.



Stuffed Mushrooms

Hungry for a healthy no-meat dish? Try this stuffed portobello mushroom recipe.⁵

Ingredients

- 8 portobello mushrooms
- 3/4 C scallions, chopped
- 2 T black olives, chopped
- 1-1/2 C tomatoes, chopped
- 3/4 C dried couscous
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 1-1/2 T oil
- 1 T balsamic vinegar
- 1-1/4 C boiling water
- 3 oz fat-free mozzarella, shredded

Directions

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
- Clean mushrooms. Remove stems and gills.
- Place mushroom caps onto a baking sheet. Bake 20 minutes.
- Chop scallions, olives, and tomatoes. Add couscous, pepper, oil, and vinegar. Add boiling water, stirring to combine. Cover tightly with plastic wrap. Steam 15 minutes, then fluff.
- Divide couscous mixture among the mushroom caps. Top with cheese. Bake additional 10 minutes.

Serves 4. 342 calories per serving.

The Dark Side of Blue Light: 7 Reasons to Limit Screen Time

Screen time linked to poor sleep, unhealthy habits, chronic disease

Did you know the average adult spends about 11 hours a day staring into a screen (phone, tablet, TV, or computer)?

Blue light emitted from screens is also known as High Energy Visible (HEV) light. Your eye can see this type of light. And it often includes a glare, flickering or both.

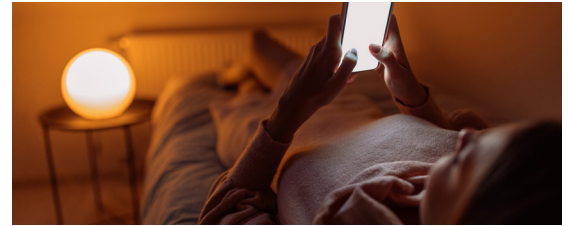
While exposure to blue light can make you feel more alert, boost reaction times, and improve your mood, there's also a dark side.

Research shows prolonged exposure to blue light may lead to:³

1. Eye strain
2. Neck, shoulder, and back pain
3. Headaches
4. Sleep problems
5. Sugar cravings
6. Poor lifestyle habits
7. Chronic disease

How to minimize the effects of blue light

Chances are pretty good you're not going to eliminate screen time from your life. But there



are a few things you can do to protect yourself from the dark side of blue light:

- **Change your nightlight.** Instead of using the blue light on your phone as a nightlight, switch to a dim red light. You'll sleep better and fall asleep faster.
- **Call it a night.** About 2 to 3 hours before bedtime, turn off all screens.
- **Wear glasses.** Blue-light blocking glasses can help minimize exposure to HEV light. Smartphone apps are also available that filter HEV light.
- **Get outside.** Increasing your exposure to natural sunlight during the day can help you sleep better at night.

MORE

The unhealthy effects of blue light
<https://tinyurl.com/22pcdpkh>

Brain Drain: This Is What Happens When You Eat Junk Food (continued from page 1)

“Through these changes in the brain, we will unconsciously always prefer the foods that contain a lot of fat and sugar.”

You hungry? Before you munch your way through more junk food, try something different.

Drink a glass of water. Eat a healthy snack. Go for a walk. Distract yourself with an activity other than eating for a few minutes. Then decide if you're

MORE

How to break a sugar addiction
<https://tinyurl.com/3vwpweb4>

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Take the May Health Challenge!

Eat More Plant-Based Foods. Choose fresh and whole foods daily

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question:
Is social media bad for your mental health?



WELLNESS CHALLENGE

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Eat More Plant-Based Foods

CHALLENGE

Choose fresh & whole foods daily

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Eat More Plant-Based Foods.”
2. Create a plan to eat more plant-based foods for meals and snacks.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



“Eat your vegetables.” It’s a mantra North Carolina parents Penn and Kim Holderness use on their two kids. But it doesn’t always work.

A side of broccoli. A scoop of peas. Even something as simple as a carrot can trigger a dinner-table incident. Sometimes there’s whining,

crying, backtalk, and pure spin-your-head-in-a-circle evil... all because of vegetables.

Picky-eating isn’t just a kid phase. Take a closer look at your own eating habits. Are you eating enough fruits and vegetables? What about other whole foods like whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, eggs and low-fat dairy?

While you think about it, chew on this. Only 10 percent of adults eat enough vegetables.¹ And fruit isn’t much better. Only 12 percent of adults eat enough fruit.

So what’s the big deal with eating fruits, vegetables, and other whole foods? After all, they’re good for you, right? Research shows people who eat more plant-based foods are healthier and live up to 10 years longer than those who don’t.²

Want to tap into the health benefits of eating more fruits, vegetables, and other whole foods? Take the month-long health challenge to Eat More Plant-Based Foods.

Quiz: Take the Fresh-Food Challenge

How much do you know about the health benefits of eating plant-based foods? Take the quiz to find out.



T F

1. Poor nutrition is a leading cause of chronic disease and early death.
2. The average adult should eat 1-1/2 to 2 cups of fruit per day, and 2 to 3 cups of vegetables.
3. A plant-based diet can help lower the risk for cancer, diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.
4. Eating a little red meat doesn’t really have an impact on heart disease risk.
5. Legumes (beans) are a good source of protein – even better than red meat.

If you want to live longer, feel better and lower your risk for chronic disease, eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Eating even a little red meat raises the risk for heart disease and other health problems.³

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

Rate your food choices: Happy or SAD?

It’s no secret that 74 percent of adults in the U.S. are overweight or obese.⁴ And the leading cause of death? It’s not a mystery either. It’s heart disease.⁵

A primary reason for both of these is SAD (Standard American Diet). You know...pizza, burgers, fries, desserts, sugary drinks, alcohol, and processed food from a can or box.

However, research points to one factor above all others as the key to a long, healthy and happier life. Want to know what it is? It’s your food choices.

5 benefits of a plant-based diet
<https://tinyurl.com/4bf2why3>



10 Ways to Eat More Plant-Based Foods

If you already eat plenty of whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, eggs, low-fat dairy, and legumes, keep up the good work. If you're ready to admit your diet isn't perfect, now is always a good time to start eating more plant-based foods. Here's how:

1. Start with salad. Going out to eat? Skip the main entrees and go with a salad: romaine lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, sunflower seeds, and an olive-oil dressing. Try fruit salad. Or make your own at home.



2. Plan a whole-foods-only day. You don't have to be a vegan or vegetarian to be healthy. But try it for a day. Plan all your meals based on eating more fruit, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, legumes, eggs, and low-fat dairy.

3. Fire up the grill. But instead of slapping a steak over the flames, slice up some bell peppers, squash, pineapple, and zucchini. Put some ears of corn or asparagus spears on the grill. Baste your vegetables of choice with olive oil and season with lemon herb. Then grill for 10 minutes until they soften.

4. Make your own soup. You can easily make your own soup loaded with vegetables in a slow-cooker. Just chop up your favorite veggies like carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, and onions. Mix in a vegetable-based broth and some water, and let it simmer for a few hours.

5. Go nuts. Eat a handful of nuts as a snack. Or add nuts and seeds to a salad. Try walnuts, almonds, cashews, or pistachios.



6. Put it in the blender. You can add pureed fruits and vegetables to sauces, dips, and smoothies. Blend up some mushrooms and spinach and add to marinara or pasta sauce. And if you like fruit smoothies, add your favorite greens to the mix. You'll get the health benefits and nutrients, but you probably won't even notice.

Eating more plant-based foods can help:⁶



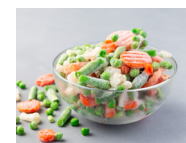
- Prevent heart disease and stroke
- Control blood sugar levels
- Prevent certain types of cancer
- Improve bone health
- Prevent depression
- Control blood pressure
- Improve cholesterol levels
- Support weight management
- Increase longevity

Video:
Do you want to have some broccoli?
<https://tinyurl.com/2v62rws5>

Hungry to improve your health, feel better and live longer? Eat more plant-based foods.

7. Eat chips. No, not the kind of chips deep fried in oil from the snack food aisle. Make your own kale chips. Tear up kale leaves into bite-sized pieces. Place on a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt. Then bake in the oven for about 10 minutes at 350 degrees.

8. Use the microwave. But not to heat up dinner from a box. Stock up on frozen vegetables like corn, carrots, snap peas, broccoli, cauliflower, and legumes. When you're ready to eat, you can pour some in a bowl, pop them in the microwave and enjoy steamed vegetables in just a few minutes.



9. Go for fresh. Pick your favorite fruits and vegetables to eat fresh. Celery, cauliflower, bell peppers, carrots, and snap peas are common favorites. So are bananas, grapes, apples, and oranges. Eat fruit and vegetables in place of foods like candy bars and donuts.

10. Try a new recipe. Look up a recipe made with healthy ingredients, and give it a try. The options are endless, even for vegetables that sometimes get a bad rap like eggplant, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, or broccoli.

Infographic:
Eat plants to feel whole
<https://tinyurl.com/3696endb>

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Eat More Plant-Based Foods

CHALLENGE

Choose fresh & whole foods daily

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Eat more plant-based foods daily.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to eat more plant-based foods 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 ate fruits, vegetables, and whole foods.

_____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____



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ASK THE DOCTOR

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Q.

Is social media bad for your mental health?

A.

If you spend a lot of time on social media, it could have a negative impact on your mood, happiness and mental health.

Think about it like this. When you click, swipe and scroll on social media, just about everybody is smiling and happy. Right?

Based on what you see on social media, it looks like most people take dream vacations and dine on gourmet food. And everybody seems to be flush with fame, fortune, money, success, and good times.

Your life might not have all these things, but it looks like everyone else does. You're missing out. And now you're not happy.¹ Ever felt this way?

The 'Highlight Reel' Effect

If you're a regular social media user, you might think all your friends are living the dream lifestyle. But it isn't true. You're only seeing the "highlight reel," according to a recent study.²

Too much social media time is a recipe for feeling unhappy and depressed, says University of Houston researcher Dr. Mai-Ly Steers.



Can social media make you sad?

"Depressed feelings and lots of time on Facebook and comparing oneself to others tend to go hand in hand."

Are you spending too much time on social media?

Compare your social media use to these trends:

- **3.5 billion** People actively use social media
- **7.6** Average number of social media accounts per person •
- **142** Number of minutes the average adult spends on social media per day
- **10** Number of times per day social media users check accounts

If you're feeling down, depressed, or unhappy, take a break from social media.

Here are some things you can do:

- Try a social-media fast for a few days.
- Cut back on how much time you spend on sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and others.

ASK THE *Wellness* DOCTOR

- Or simply call it quits to your click-tap-and-swipe habits for a while.

With all that extra time, you'll need to find other things to do, like:

- Plan a lunch date with friends.
- Go for a walk.
- Read a book.
- Cook a healthy meal.
- Volunteer.
- Spend more time with family and friends.
- Catch up on housework, laundry, grocery shopping, or yard work.

Do something other than staring at a screen comparing yourself to others, and you'll feel happier. And if you still feel sad or depressed after a break from social media, see your doctor.

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