

TOPHEALTH®

We Care About Your Health

The Health Promotion and Wellness Newsletter

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SURPRISING FACTS ABOUT SLEEP

You may be surprised to learn that scientists are still figuring out why we sleep. Of course, sleep rejuvenates tired bodies, but recent research reveals other interesting findings.

Sleep improves memory. After memorizing a series of numbers, study participants recalled these numbers better after a night's sleep than they did before.

Lack of sleep has immediate consequences. Impaired attention, memory and thinking speed can occur after just one night of inadequate sleep. Each additional night of poor sleep increases the effects.

Sleep deprivation could cause catastrophes. Some of the world's best-known disasters, including the Exxon Valdez oil spill and the Chernobyl and Three Mile Island nuclear accidents, may have involved insufficient sleep.

Countermeasures don't help much. Many people use strategies such as drinking coffee or playing music in the car to combat drowsiness. In reality, these strategies help only temporarily.

Sleepy people don't know they're impaired. Sleep-starved people are poor judges of how impaired they really are. In addition, many people who think they get enough sleep are unaware that their sleep is of poor quality.

Poor sleep may contribute to serious health problems. Sleep may play a role in obesity, emotional problems, heart disease and diabetes. Sleep quality affects our metabolism and maybe even aging.

Think about it. How are you sleeping? The average adult needs seven to eight hours of sleep. If you sleep poorly or too little, correct the problem and catch a few more ZZZs.

DON'T EAT THAT! Facts About Food Poisoning

Good food can be delicious, but spoiled food can make you sick — causing fever, cramps and diarrhea a few hours or even a few weeks after eating. *Here are some simple food rules to keep the "bad bugs" off your plate:*

WHEN SHOPPING:

- ✓ Don't purchase torn, damaged, cracked or leaking containers.
- ✓ Put perishable items into an ice chest if your trip home from the market is longer than an hour.
- ✓ Place meat or seafood packages in plastic bags to avoid contaminating other foods.
- ✓ Choose refrigerated eggs and avoid any that are dirty or cracked. *(continued on next page)*

"It's what you learn after you know it all that counts."
— Attributed to Harry S. Truman



Nutrients and Your Vision

Evidence is mounting that nutrition can have a big impact on the development of vision problems. *Learn more about these "vision-friendly" nutrients:*

• **Antioxidant Vitamins and Zinc** For people at high risk for advanced-stage, age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a combination of vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, zinc and copper may slow the progression of the disease. Vitamins C and E may also reduce the development or progression of cataracts. AMD and cataracts are the two leading causes of blindness and visual impairment among older Americans. Additional studies may help determine if nutritional therapy can prevent eye disease.

- **Vitamin A** This nutrient is critical to eye health. While a deficiency is uncommon in developed countries, people who have liver problems or who have undergone weight-loss surgery may be at higher risk.
- **Lutein and Zeaxanthin** These carotenoids are linked with reduced risk of AMD and cataracts.
- **Omega-3 and Omega-6 Fatty Acids** These fats may help proper tear formation and eye lubrication, preventing the development of chronic dry eye syndrome. *(continued on next page)*

■ DR. ZORBA'S LONGEVITY CORNER

REAL MEN EAT BROCCOLI Now there's one more reason to eat your vegetables. The *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* reports that men who eat four or more servings of vegetables a day can lower their risk of prostate cancer by 35 percent. In addition, eating three or more weekly servings of cruciferous vegetables (think cabbage and broccoli) may lower your risk even more.



Facts About Food Poisoning ... (continued)

WHEN STORING:

- ✓ Refrigerate or freeze perishables promptly.
- ✓ Keep your refrigerator below 40°F and freezer below 0°F.
- ✓ Store eggs in the carton, not on the refrigerator door where the temperature is warmer.
- ✓ Check product labels for storage recommendations.

WHEN PREPARING:

- ✓ Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds or longer before handling food.
- ✓ Keep work areas clean — wipe up spills promptly and wash countertops well.
- ✓ Thoroughly wash dishes, utensils or cutting boards that have been used for raw eggs, meat or fish. Use plastic or hardwood cutting boards that are free of cracks.



- ✓ Defrost foods in the refrigerator or in the microwave, not on the countertop.

And never eat cooked foods that have been left out for more than two hours. For more information, go to www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/qa-fdlb1.html.

Keeping a Sharp Mind

Concerned about protecting your mind from the effects of advancing years? *Experts offer these tips to help you retain your mental edge:*

Stay fit. Physical activity promotes alertness and appears to slow mental deterioration.

Exercise your mind too. Learn a new language, take a class, or try crossword puzzles or word games to stimulate your brain. Turn off the TV — more than three hours a day is associated with a 30 percent higher risk of dementia.

Stay smoke-free. Avoiding cigarettes can cut your risk of dementia in half.

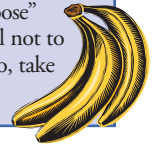
Simmer down. Excessive stress takes a toll on your brain and body. Talk out or write down your concerns, or take up a relaxing hobby.

Remember that fish is brain food. Eating fish high in omega-3 fatty acids may lower the risk of lesions that cause dementia and strokes.

Eat your veggies. Antioxidants found in colorful fruits and vegetables may help protect the brain and body from age-related damage. The B vitamins in lean meat, whole grains, fortified cereals and beans may be helpful too, as well as curcumin, a component of turmeric, commonly found in Indian curries.



WEEKEND WEIGHT WOES People typically eat more on the weekend and increase their intake of fat and alcohol consumption. These added calories could derail your weight control program. **Take note:** If you enjoy “cutting loose” on the weekends, watch your portions and be careful not to consume alcohol and fat in excess. If you’re on the go, take healthy foods along so fast foods won’t tempt you.



3 Warning Signs of Endometriosis

Endometriosis, a common health problem for women in their reproductive years, can interfere with school, work and social life. **Key facts:**

What it is: This condition occurs when tissue that acts like the uterine lining grows outside the uterus. This displaced tissue can develop into nodules or lesions that swell and grow with each menstrual cycle. Though rarely cancerous, these lesions can cause symptoms of endometriosis.

What to watch for:

1 Pain: Symptoms include pain before and during menstrual periods, especially during intercourse, urination or bowel movements. Chronic lower back, pelvic or intestinal pain and digestive problems (bloating, diarrhea and constipation) may also occur. However, pain is not a reliable indicator of the severity of the condition — some women experience no pain at all.

2 Abnormal bleeding: Endometriosis can also cause heavy or long menstrual periods and spotting or bleeding between periods.

3 Infertility: As the displaced tissue grows, it can cover or spread into the ovaries and also block the fallopian tubes, making it more difficult for women to get pregnant.

What to do: If you suspect you have endometriosis, make an appointment with your health care provider to get a definitive diagnosis. Treatment options vary from over-the-counter pain medication to surgery, depending on the severity of the condition and other health factors.

Vision ... (continued)

Your Vision Plan: Consider eating (1) five daily servings of fruits and vegetables, including citrus fruits and colorful vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, corn, kale, broccoli and peas; (2) one to two daily servings of nuts or seeds; (3) lean meat and seafood; (4) whole grains; and (5) low-fat dairy products. Dietary supplements may also be useful, but check with your health care provider first.

Keeping an “eye” on nutrition might be one of the best things that you can do for your vision.

NEXT MONTH: Make Every Step Count