

SLASH YOUR CANCER RISK

June 2023

# Prevention

## IS YOUR BRAIN OK?

What's Normal and  
When to Worry



**BEST FOODS**  
FOR WOMEN  
OVER 45

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SECRETS  
TO A  
BETTER  
**DOCTOR**  
VISIT

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IF YOU'RE  
**TIRED RIGHT**  
**NOW**, SEE p. 48

**ACTION PLAN**

**WEIGHT LOSS**  
**THAT**  
**STICKS**



# PERMISSION TO DIG IN

The Breyers you love, with **fewer carbs.**



BETTER STARTS WITH



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GIVE THAT  
BRAIN OF  
YOURS SOME  
TLC.  
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Prevention  
PREMIUM



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# A Little Forgetful

**IN HONOR OF** our article on brain blips in this issue (page 66), I wanted to tell you a story about a time when I was riding the subway and realized I must have left a tote bag—filled with all the materials I needed for a class I was teaching—on the platform. But then it seemed to me that I'd told you about this already, in this space, so I went to look up when that had been. After spending a whole lot of time searching the archives without luck, I felt like I was losing my mind.

Later, in a quiet moment, I remembered: I *had* written about my frantic call to my husband and my rush to get on a train going in the other direction—but not in *Prevention*. I'd written about it in the foreword to one of our books, *Get Sharper Every Day*. (I highly recommend it, by the way: You can get it at [shop.prevention.com](http://shop.prevention.com).)

If you happen to have that book already, you know what happened next. By the time I got back to my original station, my husband had arrived there too, but there was no sign of the tote bag on the bench where I'd been sitting. I was starting to cry when he said, "Is *this* the one?" while pointing at the "missing" bag—still on my shoulder, nestled under my regular work bag. Reader, I still cried.

Fortunately, neither my lapse that day nor my forgetfulness as to whether you'd heard this one before are warning signs about my overall brain function. I've read our piece on the subject, and I'm pretty confident that what I'm dealing with is "trying to do everything all at once." Multitasking is wasting my time—and making me cry in public. Check out the story for other reasons you might have totally normal brain blips and to see what the actual red flags are. Then let's give ourselves a break!

Sarah



Take a deep breath: Your brain will thank you!

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# Mood Lifters:

## A Guide to Elevating Your Mental Health

Our minds have a lot to deal with—from overpacked schedules to the relationships we deal with daily to the anxieties of everyday life. These regular stressors can wreak havoc on our outlook—and tactics that support balance are vital for our overall health. If you are already eating well and getting plenty of exercise, here's your guide to shopping for products from **The Vitamin Shoppe®** designed to help support your mental health and mood.



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Though these products are not a replacement for prescribed medications or counseling, here are four supplement options designed to help you feel your best, day and night. If you're looking for more ways to support your mental resiliency, kick it up a notch by trying out a new hobby such as yoga, reading, or writing!



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*Arete Adaptogens*  
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**Root Strength** is an adaptogen-powered energy blend that supports both the mind and the body.

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For more mental health support, visit [VITAMINSHOPPE.COM](https://www.vitaminshoppe.com)

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# PULSE

## Saving the Birds

Our feathered friends play an important role in maintaining Earth's ecosystem, and one huge threat to their well-being is window strikes: During daylight hours, some birds fly into windows, unable to see the glass. Applying window films or decals meant to prevent this can help, but only if they're applied properly.

That means on the *outsides* of windows, says a new study in *PeerJ Life & Environment*. They were ineffective when placed on the insides of windows, the research showed. Try these other bird-saving tricks from the National Audubon Society too:

- Move interior plants away from windows.

- Place multiple decals two to four inches apart; try to create patterns.

- When possible, keep blinds or curtains closed during daylight hours.

- If you're buying a bird feeder, get one that can be placed directly on the window.







DENNY SYMES/500PX/GETTY IMAGES.



## CLIMATE AND YOU

# Go Electric!

Some 42% of climate-warming emissions come from decisions made at the kitchen table, says Joel Rosenberg of Rewiring America. “You can make an impact on climate and improve daily life by upgrading machines you depend on to electric,” he says.

The nonprofit’s free guide ([rewiringamerica.org/electrify-home-guide](http://rewiringamerica.org/electrify-home-guide)) details switches we all should make, whether as soon as we can or the next time a major appliance breaks down. Rebates and/or tax credits from last year’s Inflation Reduction Act make these changes less costly (Rewiring America’s homepage includes an IRA calculator), as can incentives from your state or your local utility.

### **The best climate-friendly swaps:**

- AC and/or oil furnace to electric heat pump (works in hot or cold weather)
  - Gas clothes dryer to electric dryer (better yet, hang most items on a rack to dry)
  - Gas water heater to heat pump water heater
  - Gas stove to electric/induction stove
  - Gasoline-burning car to electric vehicle
- Meryl Davids Landau



## Slash Your Cancer Risk

**+** Cutting back on ultra-processed foods may help keep cancer at bay, per a study of nearly 200,000 adults. Every 10% increase in consumption of ultra-processed food was associated with a 2% greater chance of developing any of 34 cancers analyzed. Clues that a packaged product is ultra-processed: The nutrition label contains lots of hard-to-pronounce ingredients and things you wouldn’t use in a home kitchen, like high-fructose corn syrup and hydrogenated oils. You can also think about how far the food has come from its original form—for instance, corn is minimally processed, canned corn is processed, and corn chips are ultra-processed. You don’t have to give up your favorite chips and guac completely—just enjoy them in moderation.

CAR: POGONIC/A DOBE STOCK; SNACKS: SHANA NOVAK/GETTY IMAGES.





## A Better Litter Box Setup

Nobody wants to live in a home where the cat avoids

the litter box, so if that's happening, your first step is to head to the vet, says Best Friends Animal Society cat expert Samantha Bell. If the problem can't be solved with medicine or new food, try these tactics:

**GET A NEW BOX:** Smells can get trapped in scratches over time, driving your cat out. Get a large, open box at least 1.5 times the size of your cat with sides they can easily climb over.



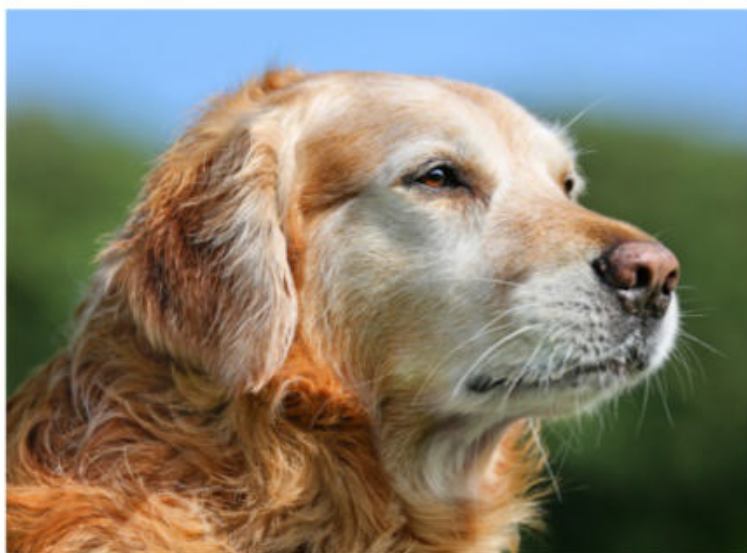
**MOVE IT:** The best spot is easily accessible but quiet, where your cat can see all around them when using it. Keep it away from food and water and any noisy appliances.

**SCOOP TWICE A DAY:** Also clean it thoroughly every two weeks.

---

## Dealing With Dog Dementia

An estimated 28% of dogs aged 11 to 12 and 68% of those aged 15 to 16 are affected by canine dementia, or cognitive dysfunction syndrome (CDS), says Matt Spiegle, D.V.M., director of veterinary programs at Vetster. Common symptoms include confusion or disorientation, decreased activity, sleep changes, and forgetting long-established training. If you notice any of these, see your vet for treat-



ment options. While there is no cure, early detection can improve your pooch's quality of life and slow the disease's progression. Treatments can include diet and exercise

changes, supplements, or medication. Dogs with CDS are also very dependent on routine, so keeping them on a schedule can help make your last years together happy.



# The Yum Power of Plants

Want to eat more plant-based but not sure where to start? We asked Marisa Moore, R.D., creator of the new cookbook *The Plant Love Kitchen*, which is packed with tips and recipes designed to make plant-forward eating work for you.

**What would you tell people who are on the fence about “giving up” meat or seafood?**

■ *Moore:* I love that there’s balance in this trend. Adopting a plant-forward way of eating lets you drop the all-or-nothing mindset and embrace flexibility, and it makes a difference: Research suggests that semi-vegetarian diets may help improve blood pressure, reduce type 2 diabetes risk, and play a role in treating inflammatory bowel conditions.

**Many ethnic cultures and geographic regions of the U.S. feature plant foods. Can tapping into**



**this help make this eating style more inclusive?**

■ *Moore:* Absolutely. Many cultures thrive on plant-based eating. In fact, when working with clients who are new to a more vegetarian lifestyle, I often encourage them to try Ethiopian, Indian, and other cuisines with a high plant slant. It’s a great way to explore new flavors and cooking techniques that can nourish you. Plus, it keeps things interesting and exciting.

**Your plant-forward meals are inviting and accessible. What are your favorite tricks for**

**making the transition less overwhelming?**

■ *Moore:* Start with what’s in season where you are; seasonal produce tends to cost less and taste better. And focus on what you can add to the plate versus take away from it. That might mean you add greens to a pasta dish or swap in mushrooms or lentils for half the ground meat in a recipe. Mushrooms are especially useful, with a meaty texture and rich flavor, and they add fiber, vitamin D, and other nutrients to the mix.

# The Perfect Way to Say “I’m Sorry”

A social circle is so important for our mental and physical health, and part of maintaining close bonds is knowing how to navigate conflict. Follow these steps to make a genuine apology.

## DO SOME REFLECTING

First you have to understand how you harmed the other person. If you jump right to “fixing” the situation, the other person may not trust that you won’t do it again. Then check in to see if the other person is ready to talk about the problem. Try saying, “I can see you’re hurt, and I think I’ve caused that. Are you ready to talk about it? Because I owe you an apology.”

## LOSE THE EXCUSES

A sincere apology won’t have a caveat

like “I only did it because you did...” or “That’s not how I felt as if it happened.” If the focus is on how you aren’t such a bad person, you aren’t apologizing. Instead, listen without getting defensive.

## OWN YOUR ACTIONS

If you don’t admit that your actions caused hurt feelings, the other person won’t know that you’ve learned from the mistake. Be honest about having messed up. You might say, “I’m sorry I forgot your birthday, and I can see that it made you feel uncared for.” Tell them what you plan to do to avoid hurting them again (whether intentionally or not).



## A Tasty Boost

Make your gut *and* your taste buds happy with small-batch fermented veggies and fruits from woman-owned **Small Town Cultures**. Each glass jar is filled with raw fermented goodness that keeps the beneficial probiotics intact—no additives, preservatives, or added sugar—and you also get prebiotic fiber to complete the microbiome balance. Must-try standouts: baby carrots, dilly beans, jalapeños, red onions, turmeric kimchi, and purple sauerkraut. ([smalltowncultures.com](http://smalltowncultures.com))



## MOVE OF THE MONTH

# STRENGTHEN YOUR PELVIC FLOOR

The Hip Clock is a great daily move for getting a stronger pelvic floor and core, which can help with lower-back and hip tightness or pain and even incontinence.

- 1** Lie down on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor about hip distance apart.
- 2** Imagine that your belly button is 12:00 and your pubic bone is 6:00; your hip bones are at 3:00 and 9:00. Inhale to tilt your pelvis toward 6:00, extending your lower back and contracting your hips. Slowly and gently rotate your pelvic region so you tilt toward 3:00 and 9:00, and slowly exhale on your way back to where you began.
- 3** Repeat 10 to 12 times for 3 to 5 sets.



PHILIP FRIEDMAN



## ADVERTISEMENT

GET MORE OUT OF EACH DAY

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### 1 IN 3 AMERICANS DON'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP<sup>5</sup>

A good night's sleep can seem elusive with busy schedules and a never-ending to-do list. Magnesium is a mineral element that can help reduce stress and anxiety.<sup>6</sup> It supports nerve and muscle function and produces a calming effect that supports quality sleep.<sup>7</sup>

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DID YOU KNOW?

AS MANY AS 75% OF AMERICANS DON'T GET ENOUGH MAGNESIUM.<sup>1</sup>

Magnesium levels continue to decrease as you grow older.<sup>2</sup>

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than other Mg preparations in a randomized, double-blind study. *Magnes Res.* Sep;16(3):183-91. 4.  
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# 25-Minute Meal Under \$11

## Barley Salad with Strawberries and Buttermilk Dressing

**SERVES 4**

**1**  
Cook 1 cup **quick-cooking pearl barley** per pkg. directions. Drain and run under cold water to cool.

**66¢**

**2**  
Meanwhile, bring small pot of water to a boil. Add ½ tsp **kosher salt** and 8 oz **fresh (or frozen) peas** and cook until just tender,

2 to 3 min. Using slotted spoon, transfer peas to bowl of ice water to cool.

**59¢**

**3**  
In small bowl, whisk together ¼ cup each **sour cream** and **low-fat buttermilk** and 1 tsp each **poppy seeds** and **Dijon mustard**; stir in 1 **shallot** (finely chopped).

**\$3.17**

**4**

In large bowl, combine 5 oz **baby spinach**, 1 lb **strawberries** (hulled and sliced), 2 oz **Parmesan cheese** (shaved), peas, and barley, then gently toss with half of dressing. Serve with remaining dressing.

**\$6.41**

**PER SERVING** About 314 cal, 8.5 g fat (4 g sat), 23 mg chol, 650 mg sodium, 50 g carb, 9 g fiber, 9.5 g sugar (0 g added sugar), 14 g pro

**TOTAL: \$10.83**





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**PULSE**

# COMPLETE YOUR SALAD

Whole grains can transform a salad into a filling meal. Jaclyn London, R.D., nutrition consultant, podcast host, and author of *Dressing on the Side (and Other Diet Myths Debunked)*, shares satisfying add-ons to try.

## FREEKEH

"We're not talking about freekeh enough! It has key minerals like iron, calcium, and zinc and provides a satiating combo of protein and fiber," London says. It has a similar vibe to bulgur or farro, so try making a grain salad to scoop onto your greens.

## SORGHUM

This gluten-free grain is like chewier pearl cous-cous, and it's an ideal veggie swap for meat: It has more protein than quinoa and twice as much iron as steak per serving, London says.

## KAMUT

This is the brand name for khorasan wheat, an ancient grain that's filled with selenium (an important immunity nutrient) as well as carotenoids and polyphenols (antioxidant compounds that may be critical for heart health and cognition), says London. Try cooking it in a flavorful broth.

## BLACK RICE

This is sometimes called purple rice or forbidden rice, and its pigment comes from anthocyanins, antioxidants with big anti-inflammatory power that help protect

our cells from damage.

"Plus, it's higher in protein than brown rice, so it's a satisfying base to top with veggies and your favorite protein," London adds. Try pairing it with Asian flavors.

## POPCORN

"Popcorn is the ultimate swap for regular croutons, which are often a little soggy, am I right?" says London. "It's a whole grain that provides about 4 g of fiber and 3.5 g of protein per ounce, which will help sustain energy, and it adds a nice crunch to any salad," she says.

MIKE GARTEN



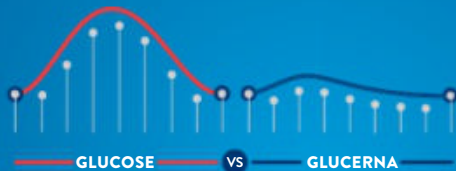
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## Q&amp;A

## Is hair removal worth it?

If you wince at the thought of a wax, laser hair removal can get rid of up to 98% of face or body hair for years—or for good. Christian Karavolas, owner of Romeo & Juliette Laser Hair Removal in New York City, shares what to know before giving it a go.

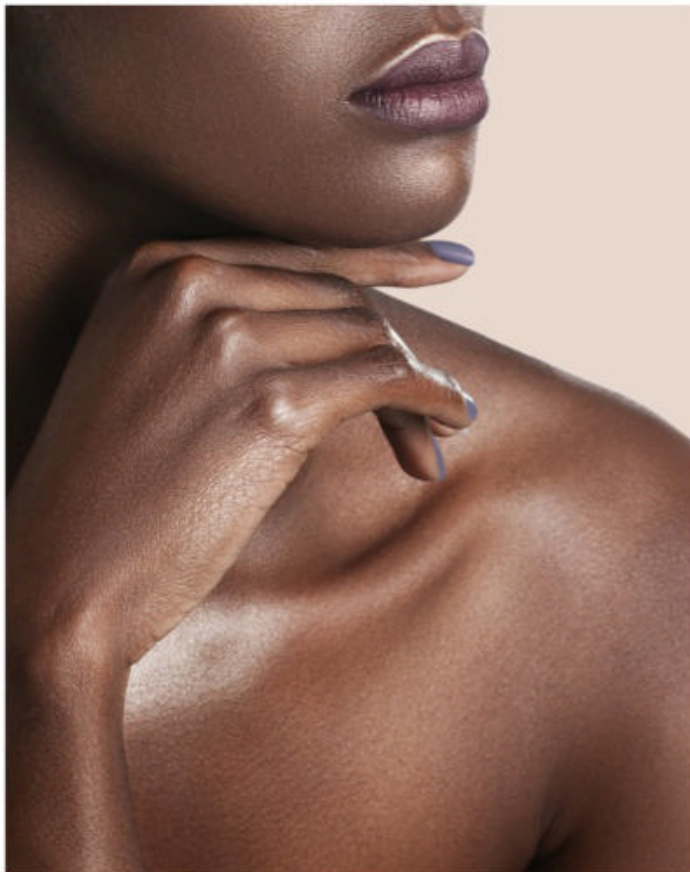
▶ **It works best on darker hair.**

Pigment, or melanin, in hair follicles absorbs laser light and converts it to heat to destroy the growth cycle. When there's less melanin, the laser has less to work with, "so it's not recommended for white, light blonde, or red hair," says Karavolas.

▶ **You need to do the full series.**

Laser hair removal isn't a one-and-done deal. For most areas, you'll need five to six sessions a month or so apart. The price is based on the size of the area, and touch-ups later on cost extra.

▶ **Hormonal changes can cause regrowth.** Hormonal shifts caused by pregnancy, menopause, starting or stopping birth control, and other factors can make hair grow back on the face, chest, and upper arms (requiring touch-ups), but legs, underarms, and the bikini



region aren't typically affected, so they can stay hair-free longer.

▶ **Other hair treatments can affect results.** Hair-growth supplements such as biotin will rev it up everywhere, not just your scalp, so you may need more treatments or touch-ups. And never use other hair-removal methods (except shaving) while undergoing laser treatments.

▶ **Have it done by a doctor or a specialist.** To improve your chances of seeing the most permanent and satisfying results, go to a specialty clinic that focuses solely on hair removal or see a dermatologist, Karavolas says—this will ensure that you're getting a well-trained, highly skilled aesthetician working with top-quality devices.





ADVERTISEMENT

# MY FRIEND NOTICED AN INCREASE IN HAIR GROWTH

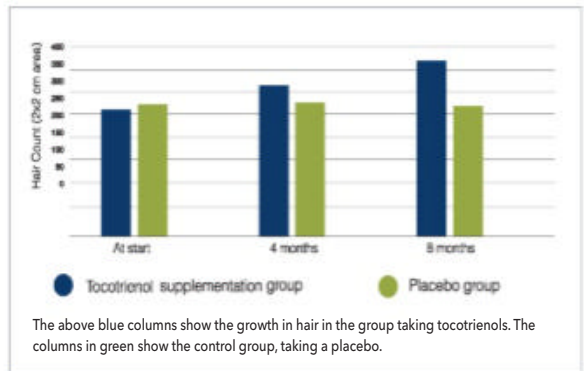


Raico lives in Ontario and is 47 years old. He is passionate about fitness and healthy living. In his early 30s however, he started losing his hair, due to what he thought was stress.

## WHAT THE STUDIES ARE SHOWING

Clinical studies done at the University of Kuala Lumpur, are repeatedly confirming the effects of tocotrienols. In a study, done to obtain a patent, scientists showed that every person in the study group, taking the specific tocotrienol complex, had positive results. The mean increase in hairs was 42%\*.

## HAIR COUNT IN STUDY GROUP AND PLACEBO GROUP



In a second, and larger study, done to confirm these results, the number of hairs in a pre-determined scalp area was observed at 0, 4 and 8 months. The results were significant. The number increased by 16% at 4 months on average, and by 34.5% at the end of the 8-months, compared to a 0.1% decrease in the control group.\*

\*Both studies used a patented tocotrienol complex, which in the USA is available in the product Hair Gro™, sold at Walgreens and other participating retailers.



"When I started losing my hair, I was very surprised as there was no history of hair loss in my family. I tried to find ways to hide the thin spot, including micro needling and extra biotin, but nothing worked. I was determined to find a long-lasting solution.

It was at my local Costco that I came across Hair Gro from New Nordic. I was hesitant about hair supplements, but this one used naturally derived ingredient, and the claimed benefits convinced me to try it.

To my surprise I started to get results after only a few months. In fact, a friend of mine noticed lots of increased hair growth, so he immediately started taking pictures. I couldn't be happier with the results and highly recommend this product for anyone with thin hair."

*-Raico L, Ontario*



The picture on the left was what my hair looked like the last many years.

The picture on the right is after using Hair Gro™.

## A FRUIT EXTRACT FOR HAIR GROWTH?

Scientists in Kuala Lumpur have identified compounds in palm fruits, called tocotrienols, which in clinical studies, have shown to significantly promote hair growth and hair count. These so-called "super antioxidants", from the vitamin E family, and are thought to help reduce inflammation levels especially in the scalp, which is a condition associated with hair loss.

Results may vary. Please read the information on the packaging to determine if this product is right for you. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

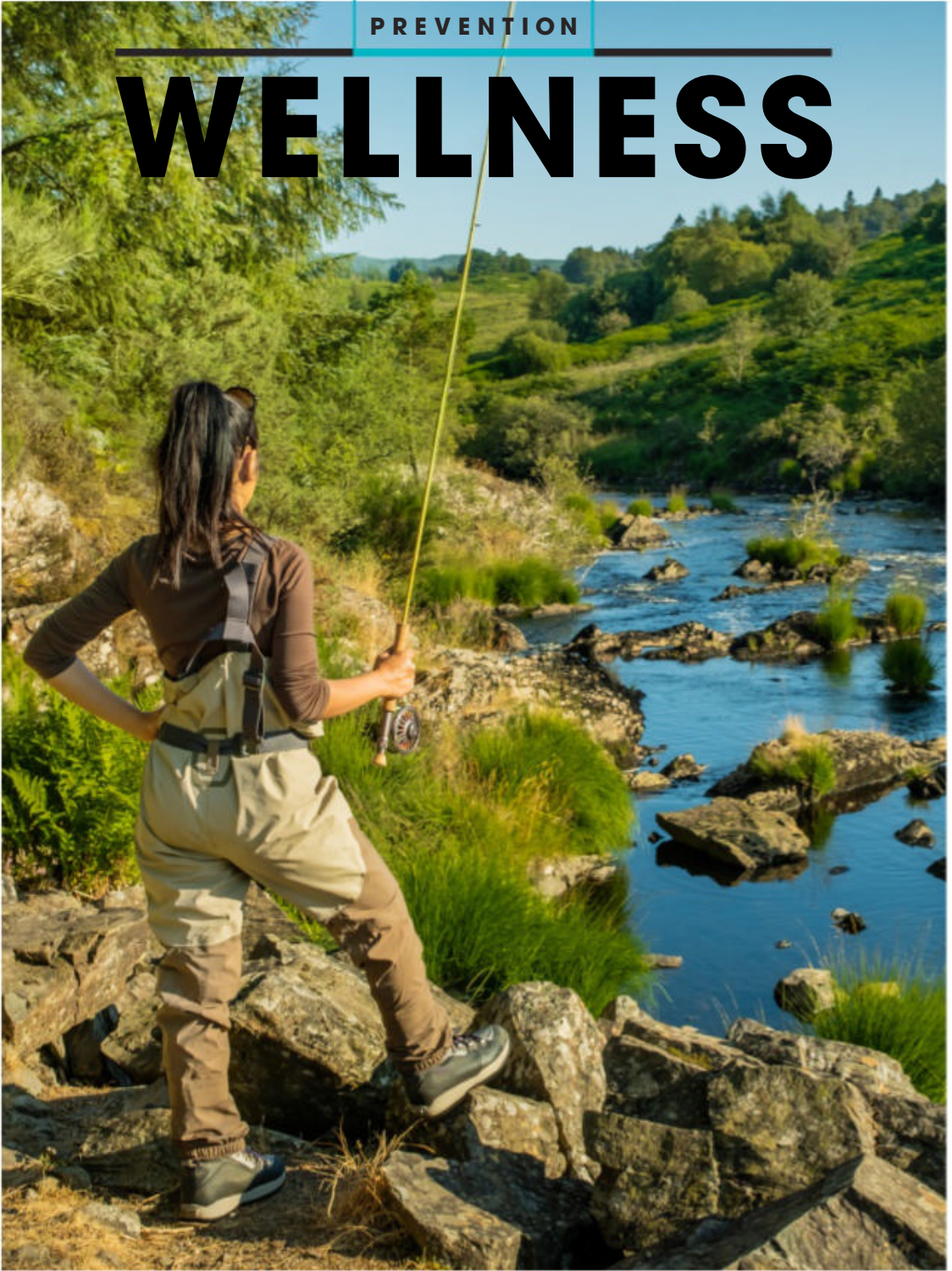
\*\*Tropical Life Sciences Research 2010 "Effects of Tocotrienol Supplementation on Hair Growth in Human Volunteers" Beoy, Woei and Hay, University Sains Malaysia. \*11/120,268, us patent, hair growth formulation, hovis, sdn bhd



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There's much more to this sport than catching fish.

BY KAITLYN PHOENIX




**IT'S HARD NOT TO** feel at peace when you smell the forest and hear birds sing as you search the current for fish and carefully cast your line. "Fly-fishing requires observation of nature, which is so good for your mental and physical health," says Sheila Hassan, a master certified casting instructor and the director of the Wulff School of Fly Fishing in Livingston Manor, NY.

●●● **ONE OF THE BEST THINGS** about the sport is its accessibility. "If you have a disability or if you're missing a limb, you can still partake," says Hassan. Fly-fishing can be done on the shoreline of nearly any body of water, from a stream to the ocean—you just need to get there safely. "You learn to work within your own abilities," she adds.


It's also practice in perseverance and hopefulness. "You can spend hours and not catch a fish," says Hassan, "but you learn to set your disappointment aside and keep going." Plus, she says, you're not competing: "You are a team of one, so you're your own supporter and your own critic."

#### GET STARTED

 **Contact local fishing clubs,** community centers, fishing shops, Trout Unlimited chapters, or Fly Fishers International councils and ask about beginner classes. "Many of these places will provide equipment for the class, and then you'll make a more informed choice about what gear might be good for you," says Hassan. Some organizations offer classes for people facing specific problems; these include Casting for Recovery (for women with breast cancer), Reel Recovery (for men with all forms of cancer), and Project Healing Waters (for veterans). "It's a physical sport, and you can only

learn so much on your own," says Hassan. To enhance your knowledge, Hassan recommends checking out books by fly-fishing legends Lefty Kreh, Mel Krieger, and Joan Wulff.

#### GEAR UP

 **If after taking classes** you decide to go all in, it's time to buy equipment. "You need a rod, a reel, a fly line, a leader, and some flies," says Hassan. "There are many, many companies that put these things together in nice little starter kits, and that makes it affordable." It may not be top-of-the-line gear, but it's enough to catch a fish.

IF YOU WANT TO  
KICK THINGS UP

**Ask a local shop to recommend a one-on-one instructor. "You can take a single class or indulge yourself and go away for a weekend of immersion," says Hassan. Some fishing brands and schools host guided trips.**



## NATURAL FIXES

# Targeting Lyme Disease

Got a tick bite? Prompt treatment is essential to avoid complications that can last for years.

BY ANDREW WEIL, M.D.

**T**iny deer ticks can cause big problems for humans as carriers of Lyme disease. This infectious disease is caused by a bacterium, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, which is transmitted to a person through the bite of an infected tick. If recognized early, the infection can usually be eliminated by antibiotics. But if not promptly diagnosed and correctly treated, Lyme disease can persist and lead to a host of severe, chronic symptoms, including arthritis and nerve damage.

Unfortunately, misdiagnosis of Lyme disease is common. That's because the disease may remain dormant in the body, and some of its symptoms mimic those of other conditions, from chronic fatigue syndrome to Parkinson's disease. While many people develop flu-like symptoms and a telltale bull's-eye

skin rash within a few days or weeks of being bitten, others don't—and signs don't show up until much later. At that point, the infection may have spread to the joints, the heart, and the nervous system.

## HOW TO AVOID TICKS

If you live in or visit areas where Lyme disease is prevalent—including Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin—be vigilant. In wooded areas (most likely to be infested), wear light-colored clothing with long sleeves and tuck pants into socks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends using an EPA-registered insect repellent for yourself and a tick-preventive



**Dr. Weil** is founder and director of the Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine.



product on pets. As soon as you get home, tumble your clothes in the dryer for 10 minutes, wash yourself thoroughly, and check your body for ticks. They can attach to any body part but often prefer hard-to-see areas such as the groin, scalp, and armpits. Check pets daily too.

### **WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET BITTEN**

If you find a tick attached to you, don't pinch or swat it. Instead, use a tick-removal tool or tweezers. Grasp the tick as close as possible to its mouth (the part buried in your skin) and slowly pull the tick straight out. Wash the area well with mild soap, then apply an antibiotic ointment. In most cases, a tick must be attached for 36 to 48 hours before the Lyme disease bacterium can be transmitted, so speed is important.

If you're worried that you could have contracted Lyme disease, I recommend conventional diagnosis and treatment by a skilled, experienced practitioner. A physical exam could be all that's needed, but your physician might use diagnostic testing such as an enzyme-linked immunoassay followed by a Western blot assay. They'll also likely prescribe antibiotics as a treatment (or in some cases as a preventive measure). If you are experiencing chronic symptoms such as swollen joints and severe fatigue and live in an area where Lyme is common, be sure to see a doctor well versed in the disorder. In addition to antibiotic therapy, you might consider consulting a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine, who may treat symptoms with herbs, acupuncture, dietary changes, and other approaches.

# LOVE



The best time to take great care of your face and body is right now, and all you need are great tools in your beauty bag. So fill it with the winners of our 2023 Healthy Skin Awards: We tapped industry pros for their insights and tested piles of products to share the top ways to put your brightest face forward.

BY EMILY GOLDMAN



# YOUR SKIN

## PREVENTION'S EXPERT PANEL

▲ **Mona Gohara, M.D.**, a board-certified dermatologist, an associate clinical professor of dermatology at the Yale School of Medicine, and a *Prevention* medical review board member in Branford, CT

▲ **Aanand Geria, M.D., F.A.A.D.**, a board-certified dermatologist and founder of Geria Dermatology in Verona, NJ

▲ **Azadeh Shirazi, M.D., F.A.A.D.**, a board-certified dermatologist specializing in medical, surgical, and cosmetic dermatology at La Jolla Dermatology & Laser Surgery Center in La Jolla, CA

▲ **April Franzino**, beauty director at *Prevention*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Woman's Day*

2023  
Prevention  
HEALTHY SKIN  
AWARDS

1. BEST FACE  
CLEANSER

**Drunk Elephant**  
Beste No.9  
Jelly Cleanser  
(\$34, drunk  
elephant.com)

▲ “This is a silky gel cleanser that removes makeup, excess oil, pollution, and any other grime from the day. It uses mild surfactants along with glycerin, a humectant, to clean skin without overly drying it, creating a lightweight yet hydrating formula that is suitable for dry or oily skin.”

—Dr. Shirazi

2. BEST BODY  
MOISTURIZER

**Kate McLeod** Grounding Stone Lotion Bar  
(\$45, katemcleod.com)

▲ “Not your average body moisturizer, this solid formula is handmade into a round ‘stone’ with just a few nourishing plant-derived ingredients like cocoa butter and sweet almond oil. Applying it

turns a basic part of your routine into a moment of self-care that’s almost like getting a spa treatment: You massage the stone into your skin, and it melts with the heat of your body.”

—April Franzino

3. BEST FACE  
MOISTURIZER

**La Roche-Posay**  
Lipikar Lotion  
(\$20, laroche-posay.us)

▲ “This lotion’s skin lipids are similar to our skin’s natural barrier and help lock in water. And this product is phenomenal for both face and



1



3



2



body. For those of us in middle age with dry skin everywhere, this is a must that brings back radiance.” —*Dr. Gohara*

#### 4. BEST FACE EXFOLIATOR

**Dr. Dennis Gross Alpha Beta Universal Daily Peel** (\$20 for five, drdennissgross.com)

▲ “This peel has a two-step treatment plan. The first step exfoliates with five different AHAs and BHAs that help diminish fine lines, even the skin, and boost radiance by removing dead skin cells. The second step contains retinol, which smooths out wrinkles and fine lines. This exfoliator can be used daily as long as your skin tolerates the formula.” —*Dr. Shirazi*



#### 5. BEST SERUM FOR MATURE SKIN

**Vichy Minéral 89 Hyaluronic Acid Serum** (\$30, vichyusa.com)

▲ “Hyaluronic acid repairs and strengthens the skin barrier, making skin better able to withstand elements that age us such as pollution, UV rays, and stress. The volcanic water in the formula has minerals with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties too.” —*Dr. Geria*

collagen and elastin, which makes a big difference in how the skin around the eye looks. It’s one of the few creams that can produce a noticeable result without creating irritation. This should be a part of everyone’s routine as they hit middle age.” —*Dr. Gohara*

#### 6. BEST EYE CREAM

**Obagi Elastiderm Eye Cream** (\$118, obagi.com)

▲ “Using minerals such as zinc and copper, this cream builds



2023  
**Prevention**  
**HEALTHY SKIN**  
**AWARDS**

**7. BEST FACE TOOL**

**Olay Regenerist Face Cleansing Device** (\$13, [olay.com](http://olay.com))

▲ “Take your face-washing routine to the next level by applying your cleanser using this oscillating cleansing brush. It gives a deeper clean with gentle exfoliation and a pampering massage-like experience at the same time. My skin feels silky and looks clearer than when I use a cleanser alone.”  
—April Franzino

**8. BEST FACE MASK**

**Caudalie Vinergetic C+ Instant Detox Mask** (\$42, [us.caudalie.com](http://us.caudalie.com))

▲ “This face mask is like a mini facial; it’s made with pink clay to purify skin and botanical oils to nourish. I smooth it on when I get into the shower and let it work as I’m washing up before rinsing it off at the end.

My face feels unbelievably smooth and looks fresher and brighter afterward.”  
—April Franzino

**9. BEST HAND CREAM**

**SkinCeuticals Hydra Balm** (\$25, [skinceuticals.com](http://skinceuticals.com))

▲ “An intensely hydrating treatment cream for dry, compromised

skin, this balm hydrates hands, giving long-lasting comfort. And it’s ideal for skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis and after treatments like lasers and peels because of its soothing emollients. The aloe and chamomile help reduce inflammation and redness.”  
—Dr. Geria







If you are feeling exhausted and in need of revitalization, you should consider a detox or cleanse. With Active Liver™ you have the tool to do this gently and on a daily basis.

# Detox your body - all year long



Each day, our liver is working hard to remove waste products and toxins from processed foods, unclean air, water and even our own body. But as we get exposed to increasingly more toxins, the liver struggles to remove them all and can start storing them in our body fat. We quickly may notice the results in our energy levels, in our lack of youthful appearance – and surprisingly, on our waistlines.

## UNJUNKING YOUR BODY

A detox, like a water or juice fast, is an excellent way to rid

the body of stored toxins, but it is often difficult to abide by, and involves days or even weeks of feeling tired and sick. However, there are other ways.

## DETOX WITH ONE TABLET A DAY

Active Liver™ is a dietary supplement that helps promote a healthy liver and helps you detox on a daily basis – all year round. With just one tablet a day, it gently but effectively uses known herbal extracts to facilitate detoxing of the body without the “side effects”.



## THE LIVER & YOUR WAISTLINE

The liver is an important fat burning organ. If the liver is sluggish or clogged with waste material it will be less able to work, and fat can start to build up, under the skin, as belly fat and even inside the internal organs (as in a fatty liver). Making sure your liver is working well will help you flush fats from the body.



### TEST YOURSELF:

	YES	NO
I have trouble fasting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a hard time losing weight	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have indigestion & bloating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm tired all the time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My liver could use some help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am exposed to pollutants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does this sound like you? Then try Active Liver as a help to promote your liver health.



Results may vary. Please read the information on the box to determine if this product is right for you. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.



2023  
**Prevention**  
**HEALTHY SKIN**  
**AWARDS**

**10. BEST  
BODY WASH**

**L'Occitane** Almond Shower Oil (\$29, loccitane.com)

▲ "This body wash will leave dry, flaky skin feeling hydrated and smooth. It starts as a silky oil, transforming into a lather as you rub it into your body."  
—Dr. Geria

**11. BEST BODY  
SUNSCREEN**

**Sun Bum** Original SPF 50 Sunscreen Lotion (\$19, sunbum.com)

▲ "Whether indoors or outdoors, it's vital to apply sunscreen daily for your skin's health. This water-resistant broad-spectrum sunscreen is formulated without oxybenzone and octinoxate to be as reef-friendly as possible. And Sun Bum's



sunscreen lotion has a popular scent many of my patients love."  
—Dr. Geria

**12. BEST FACE  
SUNSCREEN**

**Eltamd** UV Daily Broad-Spectrum SPF 40 Moisturizing Facial Sunscreen (\$36, eltamd.com)

▲ "This is a sunscreen with moisturizer built in—better than a moisturizer



with ingredients that block or absorb UV rays. This is a favorite multitasking product of my patients because it is easy to put on as your last step before going out of the house or applying makeup."  
—Dr. Gohara



# THE BEST PROTECTS YOU BEST<sup>†</sup>

INTRODUCING 7 DROP PADS



BLADDER LEAK PROTECTION THAT'S

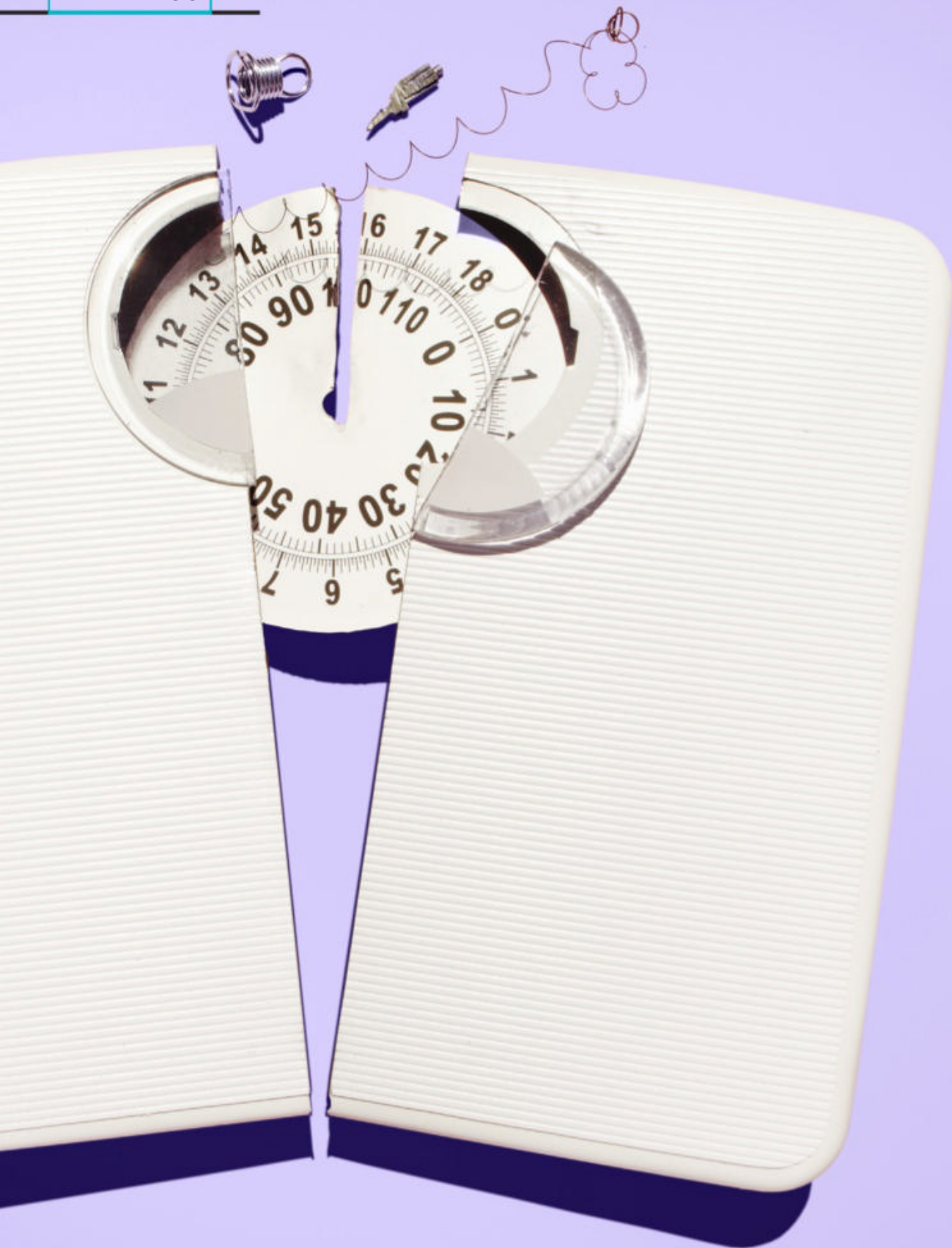
**2X MORE  
ABSORBENT<sup>‡</sup>**

<sup>†</sup>vs. national brand daytime pads

<sup>‡</sup>vs. leading 4 Drop Pad

IT TAKES *Poise*

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IF SLIMMING DOWN IS YOUR  
GOAL, THE MOST POWERFUL,  
EFFECTIVE THING YOU CAN  
DO FOR YOUR BODY—  
AND FOR YOUR MIND—  
IS **SHIFT THE WAY YOU  
THINK ABOUT FOOD.**



**MAKE OVER YOUR  
WEIGHT  
LOSS  
STRATEGY**

**BY LISA BAIN**

# THERE'S A SAYING: "IF NOTHING CHANGES, NOTHING CHANGES."

That's true when it comes to losing weight, of course—no pounds will be dropped if you don't adjust your lifestyle—but it's also true when it comes to how we approach weight loss in the first place. If you aren't happy with your past experiences, thinking about it the same way you did before won't get you to a new place.

Considering what we eat is at the crux of slimming down, but it's our feelings about food that really drive how we eat. "Food means so many different things to people," says Anne Poirier, director of behavioral health at Hilton Head Health, an integrated wellness and weight-loss resort in South Carolina. "Food can be love, it can be family, it can be rebellion." Her goal is to help people recognize their relationship with food in order to make lasting change. "How do you create a friendship with food where it becomes something that works for you rather than against you?" she says.

That's a powerful goal, for reasons beyond losing weight: Eating in a healthy, nourishing way is good for your heart, brain, muscles, and immunity. If you're ready for change, these fresh ways of thinking will help you make real progress.

## Look at **WHAT YOU EAT**

Remember that being healthy is possible at many sizes and doesn't necessarily mean being thin. When you focus on the foods you're eating and what they do for you (and don't), you set yourself up for mind and body wellness. Make these your new what-to-eat guidelines:

### ■ **GET ENOUGH FIBER.**

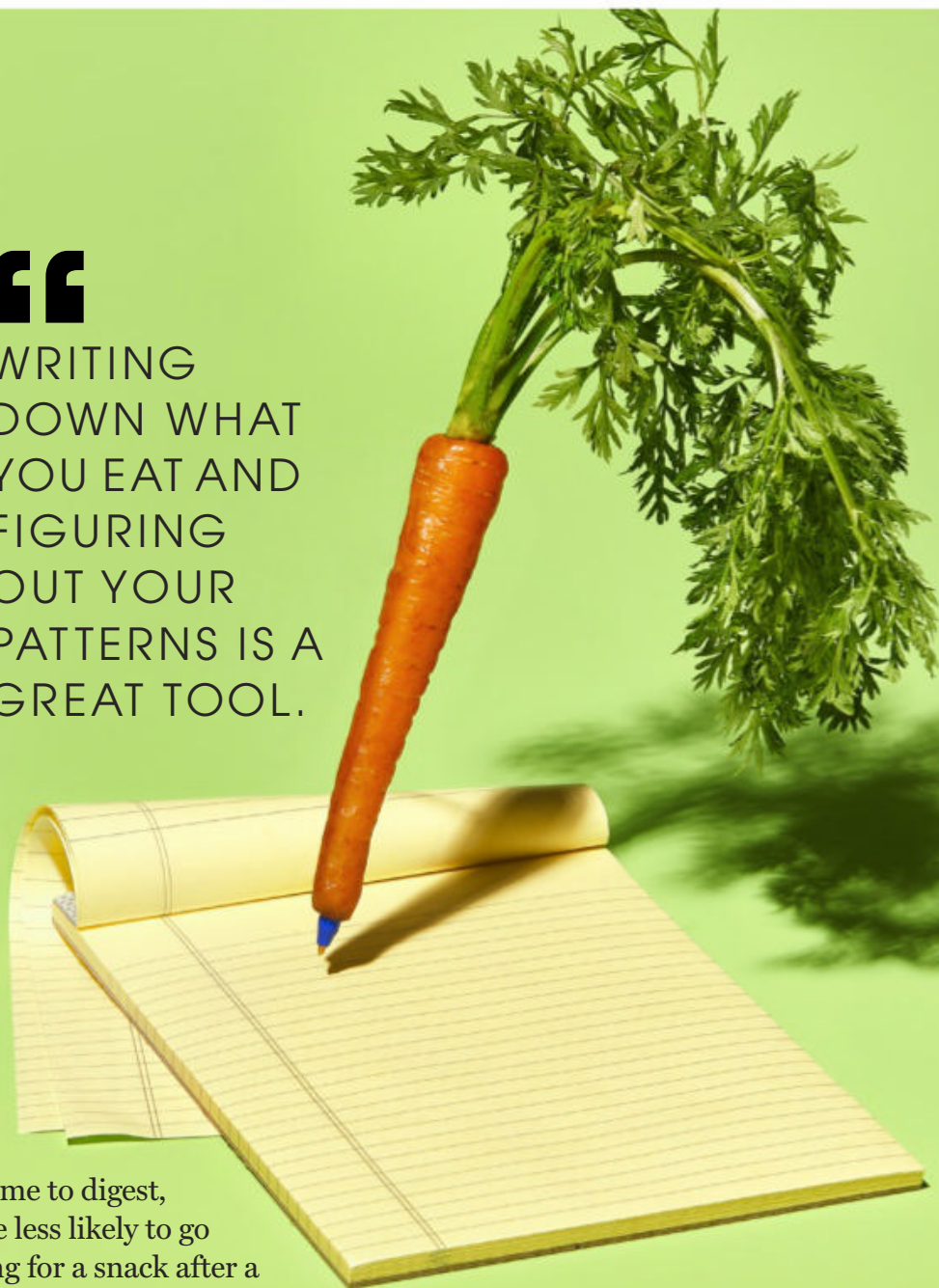
Fiber has superpowers for our overall health: There's evidence that it supports our metabolic health, can protect against cardiovascular disease, may reduce inflammation, and more. And when it comes to losing weight, "fiber helps in so many ways," says Karen Ansel, M.S., R.D.N., author of *Healing Superfoods for Anti-Aging*. "For starters, it expands in your gut and helps you feel full longer. Plus, the latest research shows it has a beneficial impact on good bacteria that help produce gut hormones that tell your brain you've had enough to eat."

### ■ **FOCUS ON PROTEIN TOO.**

"Like fiber, protein naturally helps you feel full by influencing the production of satiety hormones," says Ansel. "It takes

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WRITING  
DOWN WHAT  
YOU EAT AND  
FIGURING  
OUT YOUR  
PATTERNS IS A  
GREAT TOOL.



a long time to digest, so you're less likely to go searching for a snack after a protein-rich meal." And protein doesn't just equal meat or dairy, says Elizabeth Huggins, R.D., a certified diabetes care and education specialist at Hilton Head Health. "Those are excellent sources of protein, but there are a lot of plant-based proteins that are just good, healthy things to eat." So keep foods like beans, tofu, peas, nuts and seeds, and grains in mind.

DANIELLE DALY.

■ **DON'T BE SCARED OF FAT.**

Of course there are healthy and not-so-healthy fats, but the healthy ones are good for your heart, brain, and more. Fat and fiber both slow down the emptying of food from your stomach, Huggins says, which helps you feel fuller and more satisfied. Salmon is a great example of a powerful protein-fat



combo; nuts are too. “They were labeled evil at one point because they’re high in fat,” Huggins says, “but now we know it’s the healthy kind.” Consider a pecan-crusted salmon, she suggests, for double the benefits. Avocado, seeds, olive oil, and other seafoods are also smart sources of healthy fats.

### ■ CUT DOWN ON SUGAR.

“It’s unclear whether sugar in and of itself makes you gain weight,” says Ansel. “But one thing is for sure—it tends to travel in foods that have way too many calories and zero or few nutrients.” Huggins suggests starting by cutting back on the heavy hitters, meaning things like sugary beverages: sodas and fancy coffee drinks. One way to think about sugar, she says, is to “imagine a little packet of sugar—that’s about 4 g of added sugar. So when you look at a product that has 48 g of added sugar, it can be helpful to consider that you’d be consuming about 12 packets.” But, she adds, “don’t get crazy thinking that every little gram of sugar is going to do you in, because you have to have an overall balance.” If you love dessert, try having a small portion. “Sit down, slow down, and enjoy every bite in a mindful way,” Huggins says. “This can help you learn that you can have a smaller amount and enjoy it rather than have a giant dessert and remember only the first couple of bites.”

### ■ RETHINK YOUR DRINKS.

We’re talking about not only soda and

sugary coffee drinks, but energy drinks and commercial protein shakes too. Cutting back is not just a simple way to take in fewer calories overall: Drinking calories rather than eating them is less satisfying and doesn’t lead to the same feeling of fullness, research shows. (Note that this doesn’t mean to turn to diet sodas instead—several studies have linked them to weight gain.) Water is a terrific option, of course, but if you find that boring, Huggins says, “try cucumber-mint water. Or pineapple water—just put the fruit in there without squeezing it. It adds a nice essence and gives it a little sweetness, not the intense sweet taste you’d get from a nonnutritive sweetener.”

## Consider **HOW YOU EAT**

While food choices certainly matter, there are also smart ways to improve your relationship with food. These ideas will help keep eating pleasurable:

### ■ HONE IN ON PORTIONS.

When you’re eating at home, serve yourself food using smaller plates and bowls. “It makes a huge difference,” says Poirier. This may trick your brain into thinking you’re chowing down on more than you actually are, and you’ll likely take in fewer calories, with less chance of feeling deprived. Eating out can be a tougher challenge given the gigantic serving sizes in restaurants, so before you go, think about how you’ll handle it. You can order

an appetizer and a salad instead of an appetizer and a main dish; you can split a dish with a friend; or you can ask for a to-go box right up front and stash half your meal before you dig in.

## ■ SLOW DOWN AND LISTEN TO YOUR BODY.

“I think we’ve been disconnected from our hunger,” says Poirier. “It’s important to get back to listening to our bodies. *What does hunger feel like for me? What is it I want right now—what will satisfy me? How full do I want to feel? How full is uncomfortable for me?* Also, we tend to eat so fast that our brains don’t get a chance to register that we’re full. It takes about 20 minutes for leptin, the hormone that tells us we’ve eaten enough, to signal your brain that you’re getting full. So if you’ve finished your meal in 15 minutes, you may realize 10 minutes later that you’ve eaten beyond a comfortable level of fullness.” It makes sense to pump the brakes a bit while you’re noshing and let your brain catch up with your mouth.

## TRY THESE AT HOME!

### **MORE WAYS TO MAKE HEALTHY EATING SECOND NATURE:**

#### **ADD GREENS TO SMOOTHIES**

Huggins suggests starting with unsweetened plant milk or cow’s milk, adding some frozen strawberries and half a frozen banana, then tossing in some fresh spinach. To make it easy, buy a bag of prewashed spinach leaves, separate them into resealable bags, and stash these in the freezer with the fruit.

#### **WITH VEGGIES, THINK BEYOND DINNER**

“Work them in in other places,” says Huggins—like breakfast! “Consider zucchini bread or an omelet with artichoke and a little feta.”

#### **PREP YOUR SNACKS**

Nuts, healthy whole-grain crackers, precut

veggies and fruits—whatever your favorite

snacks are, portion them into mini containers when you bring them home from the store. Then you’ve made it easy to grab one when you’re feeling snacky.

#### **ADD TO YOUR GROCERY LIST**

##### ▶ **Greek yogurt:**

Put it into smoothies or overnight oats, or replace the mayo in a chicken or tofu salad. Protein!

##### ▶ **Sweet potatoes:**

Bake a few in the oven, put them in the fridge, then heat up after work.

##### ▶ **Canned beans:**

Look for low-sodium ones; mix into soups and stews, or even blend white beans into smoothies!

##### ▶ **Whole grains like farro and barley:**

Prep in advance; top with a protein and roasted veggies in a bowl, or mix into soup for added texture.

Try these suggestions from Poirier:

- ▶ Eat with your nondominant hand—it'll automatically slow you down.
- ▶ After a few bites, put your fork down and take a sip of water.
- ▶ In your mind, divide your meal in two; when you're halfway through, take a break, drink some water, take some deep breaths, chat with whomever you're with. And before you go into the second half of your meal, take note of how full your body feels.

### ■ EAT MORE MINDFULLY.

Another part of slowing down, Poirier points out, is to eat with fewer distractions. Studies have shown that when we're distracted, we tend to eat more. "And it's more satisfying when we're paying attention," says

Poirier, "because we're noticing what we're eating, we're noticing the taste, and our brains are getting satisfied too. We're more satisfied with the eating experience." So stash your phone, turn off the TV, and focus on the food.

### ■ BE PREPARED.

"Set up your environment for success," says Poirier. "What foods can you prep and have ready to eat in your environment? Can you prep some little bags of food with fruit, veggies, or some cheese? Also ask yourself, *What foods might not be good to have in my house?* I'm not saying these foods should be off-limits—it's just if you want that particular food, you'd need to go out and get it." Says Huggins: "Make it easier to eat healthfully. Make sure that certain kitchen gadgets, like a small blender for smoothies, are easy to get to. Don't put the healthy foods you want to eat more of on a bottom



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FOOD  
IS MORE  
SATISFYING  
WHEN WE'RE  
PAYING  
ATTENTION.



shelf where you'll have to rummage around and search for them."

### ■ LOOK AT YOUR PATTERNS.

"Study after study has shown that writing down what you eat is one of the most effective weight-loss tools out there," says Ansel. "You can do that in a journal, using the notes app on your phone, or on a wellness app."

## THINK BEYOND your meals

Whole-body wellness contributes to healthy weight loss in very practical ways. Here's how to make sure you're doing the most you can for yourself:

### ■ PRIORITIZE SLEEP.

Sleep deprivation can lead to weight gain, and it comes down to hormones: Sleep-deprived people produce more ghrelin, an appetite-stimulating hormone, and less leptin, the hormone that tells you you've eaten enough. There's also evidence that the overly sleepy eat more calories and more comfort-food carbs. And when you're exhausted, your impulse control can take a dive.

### ■ BREATHE.

When you're stressed, your levels of the hormone cortisol spike (it's that fight-or-flight response). "The rise in cortisol can trigger an increase in ghrelin," says Poirier. "It also slows down insulin production, which may impact the cells' signal for more energy." To avoid that

chain reaction—and to protect your health in so many other ways—take time each day to do something to lower your stress level, whether it's meditation, exercise, or getting immersed in a book.

### ■ REASSESS THE SCALE.

Important: Consider how you feel about weighing yourself, says Poirier. "If the scale isn't moving the way you want it to, there may be a tendency to just say 'It doesn't matter anyway' and give up," she adds. "If stepping on the scale alters your mood, if your behaviors change due to the weight on the scale, look at other success measures instead: How do your clothes feel? Are your joints less achy? Are you sleeping better? Are you moving more, and more easily? How are your numbers, like your cholesterol and blood sugar?" There are emotional signals of success too: "You are happier and laugh more. You're more alert and less irritable, less moody. You feel better about exercising."

Looking at your successes beyond the scale, at other payoffs of healthy eating, can be very empowering, says Poirier. "We don't have as much control over the weight on the scale as we do about our behaviors. It's really about *How am I eating, what am I eating, what's my relationship with food? How am I feeling about my body?* You can't hate yourself into healthy behavior. It's so important to be more compassionate with ourselves while we're on a journey to better our health."

PREVENTION

# HEALTH

## WHAT'S UP WITH... **PINS AND NEEDLES**

That prickly, tingly feeling can be so annoying—here's what to do.

BY KAYLA BLANTON

42 PREVENTION.COM • JUNE 2023

GETTY IMAGES.

**IT CAN HAPPEN** when you fall asleep on your hand, sit cross-legged on the floor, or spend too much time doomscrolling on the toilet (hey, no judgment!). Your hand, arm, foot, or leg becomes numb, then starts tingling or itching. The medical term for this sensation is paresthesia, but since it can feel as if you're being jabbed with tiny sewing implements, it's better known as pins and needles.

### WHAT CAUSES THE TINGLING?

One of the most common reasons limbs "fall asleep" is that pressure on specific parts of the arms or legs causes compression of the nerves, explains Fred Pescatore, M.D., a family physician in New York City. "When our nerves or blood vessels are compressed, it can compromise the ability of the nerve to transmit impulses back to the central nervous system," he says. Sitting in one position for a while can also decrease your blood flow.

In response, the brain raises red flags in the form of pain and discomfort. "The brain interprets these abnormal signals as the pins-and-needles sensation we feel," says Dr. Pescatore.

### How do you get rid of pins and needles?

"Changing positions can usually restore normal feeling as the nerves start sending messages to the brain and spinal cord again," explains Dr. Pescatore. A few other ways to help "wake up" a sleepy body part:

- ▶ Stand up and shake your arms or legs. "That may initially magnify the pins-and-needles sensation, but it gets better from there," Dr. Pescatore says.
- ▶ If the feeling is in your feet or hands, wiggle your toes or spread your fingers out and pull them in.
- ▶ If the sensation persists, try putting a warm compress over the area to promote circulation.

### WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

Persistent tingling may be due to a chronic nerve issue such as carpal tunnel syndrome or sciatica; in some cases, it might be connected to an underlying condition such as diabetes or multiple sclerosis. If you're concerned, check in with your doctor. But if you get pins and needles just now and then when you've been sitting or lying in one position for too long, no need to worry—it's simply your body telling you to move.



THE DOCTOR IS IN

# Make Your Next Gyno Exam Easier

Skimpy gowns! Ouchy procedures! Here's how the whole thing can be less painful.

BY LAUREN STREICHER, M.D.

Every year millions of women trek to their gynecologist or other health care provider and reluctantly climb into the stirrups. Though no one particularly likes it, most women put up with the brief discomfort to make sure all is well.

Many women, however, skip a gynecologic exam, even if they have a problem they know should be addressed. There are many reasons for this, but in one survey of over 2,000 women, one-third skipped a gynecologic exam because they were embarrassed. Of these women, 35% were ashamed of their body shape, 34% were embarrassed by the appearance of their vulva, and 38% had concerns about odor. And that doesn't include women who avoid an exam because they find it painful or traumatic.

I've performed over 200,000 gynecological exams in my career—here are tips to make the most common issues I see a lot less stressful.

## BODY IMAGE CONCERNS

Many women feel they'd rather suffer from a gynecologic problem than put on a skimpy paper gown that barely covers their breasts and belly. I always provided roomy cloth gowns for my patients, and I honestly think that's a big reason they kept coming back. It would be nice if every office did this, but there's no rule that says you can't bring your own exam gown. A wraparound robe or a loose dress with a front zipper is fine. Or check out [getjan.es.com](http://getjan.es.com), which sells comfortable examination gowns and also donates some of its profits



**Dr. Streicher** is a clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine and the author of *Slip Sliding Away: Turning Back the Clock on Your Vagina*.



SEAN LOCKE PHOTOGRAPHY/STOCKSY—  
STOCK.ADOBE.COM.

to help women get mammograms. Another option: Tell the medical assistant that you are on the modest side (or cold!) and would like an extra gown or cloth.

For some women, it's a weight issue. They may be embarrassed about their body, but also just tired of a doctor being so focused on weight that their real concerns don't get addressed. I had one patient tell me that she'd left her gynecologist because by the time he finished telling her she was at risk

of dropping dead from a heart attack unless diabetes got her first, it just didn't seem appropriate to bring up her lack of libido.

The best solution if you want to avoid a discussion about your weight? Start by saying, "I bet you'll want to talk about my weight, but since we have a limited amount of time, I'd prefer to discuss other health concerns today." Then whip out your list and go for it. That way, the things that are important to you will be addressed as priorities.

Also, I know some women avoid their annual exam because they don't want to

get weighed. Remember: It's not the Army. No one is going to force you to do anything. It's much better to get everything you need done other than being weighed rather than not to come at all. If someone declines to be weighed, I'll generally ask for a ballpark figure. You also have the option of getting weighed "backward"—we'll see your weight, but you won't. Exceptions to taking a pass on getting weighed? Pregnancy, certain medications, and surgery, all of which require an accurate weight. >>

## WORRIED ABOUT GENITAL ODOR

If this is your concern, it could be one of two scenarios. One is that there actually is no odor other than the normal healthy scent present in all vaginas—and if that's the case, you need someone to let you know that. The second: There is a foul odor, perhaps from bacterial vaginosis or a forgotten tampon (that happens more often than you think!), in which case you need to eliminate the reason for the odor. These odors are never because of a lack of hygiene, and there will be no judgment on the part of your gynecologist!

## CONCERNED ABOUT PAIN

For many women, avoiding the gynecologist is about the pain of a speculum.

A typical gynecologic exam includes a visual inspection of the external genitalia, a speculum exam to look inside the vagina, and then a bimanual exam in which the physician places one or two fingers in the vagina and the other hand on the abdomen. The external inspection checks for growths or abnormal skin changes on the vulva. The speculum exam allows the gynecologist to do a Pap test and check for abnormal discharge, abnormal growths on the cervix, or changes in the vagina such as thinning and/or dryness

of the vaginal walls. The bimanual exam lets the doctor evaluate the uterus and ovaries and check for any pelvic masses.

Depending on the reason for your visit, you may not need a speculum exam. Bleeding, cervical cancer screening, and vaginal discharge do require that someone take a peek inside, but if your main concern is a sore on your vulva, bladder leakage, or a loss of

libido, a speculum exam isn't always necessary.

If you do require one, don't be shy about telling your clinician that the speculum often hurts—and then say something if the exam goes beyond “a little pressure” and pinches, bites, or causes pain. Sometimes a minor readjustment or changing instruments can make a world of difference. Specula are not “one size fits all,” and yes,

sometimes it's just a matter of using a smaller one to ensure that the exam is not agonizing. Believe it or not, most gynecologists routinely use the smallest one possible. No one wants to hurt you! My choice of speculum is dependent not only on the size of the vaginal opening but also on the length of the vagina, the elasticity of the vaginal walls, the position of the uterus, and what I need to accomplish. For example, the amount of exposure I need to swab vaginal discharge is different from what

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I need to do a Pap test, a uterine sampling, or a major procedure. The speculum I use for a 16-year-old virgin is a completely different instrument than the one I would use for a 40-year-old woman with three kids or a 70-year-old who is well into menopause.

If you're not an easy fit, you're probably better off seeing a gynecologist as opposed to an internist or a family medicine doctor. Gynecologists are the most experienced at inserting specula, and they have multiple sizes that vary in length, width, and how far they open. Non-gynecologists typically have only one or two sizes to choose from.

## **PAST TRAUMA OR VAGINISMUS**

And then there are women who avoid an exam because of vaginismus, or a history of sexual abuse or medical trauma. Most gynecologists, if they know that to be the case, will facilitate an exam by slowing down the process, asking permission every step of the way, and telling you exactly what they are doing so you're in control. Using a mirror so you can see what's happening is also sometimes helpful. Some doctors specialize in trauma-informed care, but unfortunately there's no standardized way to find such a clinician. Sometimes the best ways to find one are by word of mouth and via trauma centers and therapists.

Can a woman get anesthesia to have an exam? Absolutely. If you know from past experience that an exam without it is truly out of the question, or if the

exam is going to be prolonged or likely to be painful because of an IUD placement or some other procedure, you can—and should—request anesthesia.

## **6 MORE STEPS TO A BETTER EXAM**

- An empty bladder will take a lot of the pressure off the speculum, so pee before your Pap!
- Most gynecologists keep the speculum in a warming drawer, but if yours doesn't, request that they run it under warm water.
- During the exam, try deep breathing or talking to your gynecologist about something unrelated. I had one patient who talked to her sister on her phone during her Pap test to take her mind off what I was doing.
- Lubricant is not automatically used, since it can affect Pap test results, but in a non-Pap exam it can make a big difference.
- Your clinician can apply some anesthetic gel to the opening of the vagina prior to your exam.
- An antianxiety pill can help make things easier. Request a prescription in advance, take it about 30 minutes before your appointment, and make sure someone else is driving you.

## SOLUTIONS

# Get More Energy, Fast

Expert-backed tricks to give yourself a bump when you need it

BY ALYSSA JUNG



**P**icture this: It's 3 p.m. and you need a jolt to power you through the rest of the day. You know that vending machine cookies or a third cup of coffee might not be the smartest option (hello, sugar/caffeine rush, then crash!), but when you're desperate you'll try anything, right?

Before we let you in on one of the healthiest ways to get a quick boost of oomph, check to see if your lifestyle is set up to support long-lasting energy. That

means prioritizing shut-eye and keeping to a sleep-wake schedule seven days a week, exercising regularly, and eating meals that feature an energy-supporting combo of proteins, fruits and veggies, whole grains, and healthy fats. Not keeping up with these good-for-you habits can make you feel more than just tired. "Constantly pushing through fatigue means you're running on fight-or-flight hormones, which puts you in a state of chronic stress," explains Darria Long, M.D., an emergency physician and a clinical assistant professor at University of Tennessee School of Medicine. "You may have a racing heart, heartburn, or GI issues; get sick more often; or have headaches, mood swings, and difficulty focusing."

Even when you do your best to check off these fatigue-fighting to-do's, some days you'll just have less gas in the tank. Follow the chart to refuel.

# NEXT TIME YOU'RE DRAGGING, TRY THIS THREE-STEP SOLUTION FOR MORE ZIP.

**WHEN YOU START TO SLUMP...**

**BOOST IT**

Once the tea brews, mix in a little cold water to make it lukewarm. Then try to drink it all within five minutes or so. "Drinking it quickly lets your body receive those energizing benefits faster than sipping it over a longer period of time," says Dr. Long. It's fine to add a small amount of a natural sweetener like honey if that's how you like it.

**FINISH WITH THIS...**

**Go on a power walk.** But not in silence—listen to music or a podcast or call a friend for a quick catch-up. "Walking improves blood flow and releases endorphins that make you feel lively, and giving your brain and body a break from your environment is a mini reset," says Dr. Long. "The added layer of a good playlist or chat can deliver dopamine too, which further combats tiredness."

**Brew a cup of green tea.** "Green tea provides a smooth energy boost because it has caffeine, but only about half of what you'll find in coffee," says Dawn Jackson Blatner, R.D.N., author of *The Superfood Swap*. "It also has a compound called L-theanine, which gives you 'focused' energy instead of the jittery kind."

**Down a cup of water, aiming to finish it within a few minutes.** "It will counteract any dehydrating effects (which can make you snoozy) from the caffeine jolt, and it also helps you cover your bases in case dehydration was causing your fatigue in the first place," says Dr. Long. "We lose fluid all day in ways we aren't even aware of, such as through sweating, when we go to the bathroom, and even just breathing."

**NEXT, DO THIS...**

**BOOST IT**

**Add electrolytes like sodium and potassium to your H<sub>2</sub>O to maximize hydration—it helps water enter your cells.** "Mix coconut water with a pinch of sea salt, or mix plain water with ¼ cup of orange or pomegranate juice and a pinch of sea salt," says Blatner.

**BOOST IT**

**Turn your brisk stroll into walking snack time.** Blatner suggests a combo of fiber-filled produce and a protein. Try an apple and almonds; grapes and string cheese; or snap peas and a hard-boiled egg.







# unlocking

# mental

# health care

As crucial as it is for people to get help when they need it, the **TRUTH** is that it's a **FRUSTRATING**, **CONFUSING**, and **EXPENSIVE** undertaking.

Here, how **THE SYSTEM** ends up **WORKING AGAINST** those who need it most—and resources that can help you find your way.

**BY LORA SHINN**

**PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN GOLDSTEIN**

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Maybe you can only imagine the scenario, or perhaps you've experienced it. At night in bed, you hope sleep will obliterate the despairing emptiness that's been looming all day. Or that you'll finally escape the disembodied whispers saying no one loves you and you don't deserve to live.

In the morning, a sick swirl of anxiety descends, and your chest tightens after yet another night plagued by racing thoughts. Placing one foot on the floor seems improbable. Calling a list of therapists feels impossible.

But in the U.S.—despite pressing hopelessness, spiraling anxiety, or other tangled symptoms of a mental health crisis—you're required to figure out how to get help. Whom do you call within a system that's complex and scattershot, low on providers and high in cost?

This situation may be familiar to you or someone you love, because legions struggle with mental health issues, especially since COVID-19. The numbers show in stark relief how the pandemic upended America's mental health and increased pressure on stressed systems: In 2019, fewer than one in 10 adults reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorders; during the pandemic, that number increased to three in 10, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

And the situation doesn't seem to be improving: In December 2022, a survey by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) showed that the percentage of Americans who rated their mental health as only "fair" or "poor" increased to 37% from 31% the previous year.

Navigating a path toward support and help is, at best, a challenge. "It feels like the mental health care system by design is meant to be confusing," says Theresa Nguyen, a licensed clinical social worker for 20 years and now chief research officer at Mental Health America (MHA).

The biggest issue in the U.S. may not even be the system but a lack of one, according to Jennifer Snow, national director of Government Relations, Policy and Advocacy at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). She points to a patchwork of individual providers, systems, and approaches that vary by state or county. "People with mental health conditions get the short end of the stick," she says. Compared with those with physical conditions, she adds, "it takes longer to get care, and people have to pay more to get care, with fewer choices of providers. It's a sad state of mental health care in America."

### **Recent research highlights the struggle:**

■ In 2021, 35% of adults who needed and didn't receive mental health services said it was because they didn't know where to go, according to a large Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) survey.





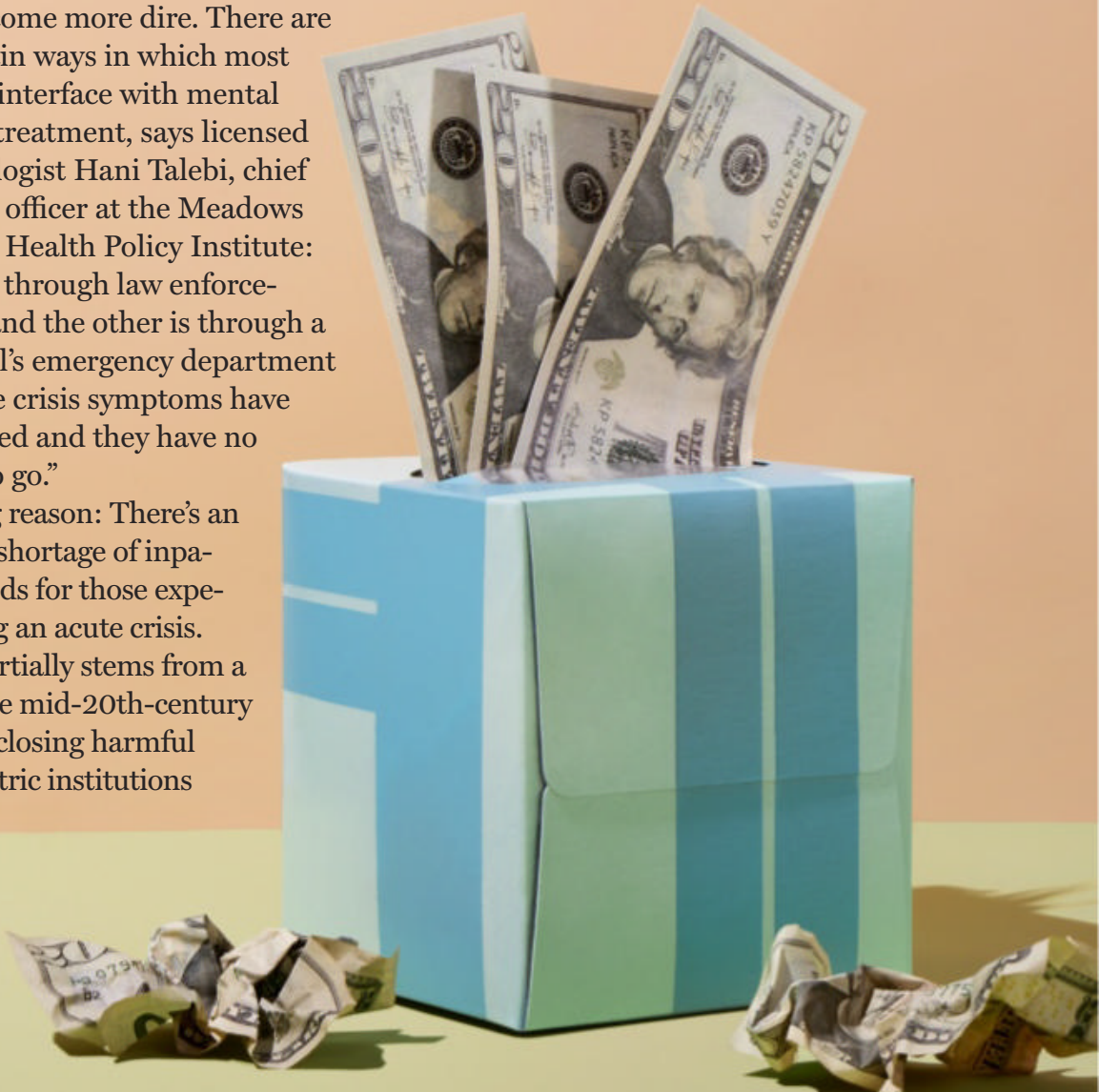
■ In 2022, a Kaiser Family Foundation survey found that 50% of women surveyed (ages 18 to 64) needed mental health services in the previous two years—but only half made an appointment. Among those who tried to get an appointment but were unable, a third said they couldn’t find a provider accepting new patients, and another third said they couldn’t afford the care.

When a person’s crisis hits a stage needing inpatient treatment, things can become more dire. There are two main ways in which most people interface with mental health treatment, says licensed psychologist Hani Talebi, chief clinical officer at the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute: “One is through law enforcement, and the other is through a hospital’s emergency department because crisis symptoms have worsened and they have no place to go.”

A big reason: There’s an overall shortage of inpatient beds for those experiencing an acute crisis. This partially stems from a laudable mid-20th-century goal of closing harmful psychiatric institutions

and instead opening more community-centered facilities. The problem is, the latter never really happened.

Those same mid-century requirements mean Medicaid coverage for low-income Americans won’t pay for psychiatric care at a facility with more than 16 beds, and Medicare limits



inpatient psychiatric stays to 190 days over a person's entire lifetime. "There's no similar prohibition on any other type of health care facility for medically necessary care," Snow points out. "Can you imagine something similar for cancer?"

We all pay the price at the societal

level—inadequately treated or lifelong mental illness can lead to increased homelessness, incarceration, and premature death, according to a 2022 White House brief. The brief notes that nearly one-third of those who receive Social Security Disability Insurance fall

## There Is Help

Some resources that can help people experiencing a mental health issue:

■ **988** is the new number for the national Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, and it's one of the fastest ways to get 24/7 help. Calls are routed to the nearest crisis call center based on the caller's area code, and the caller is connected with local resources.

■ **NAMI's HelpLine** (800-950-6264) is a free peer-support service available by phone, text, or chat. It's not a crisis line: Callers are given empathy, respect, support, and referrals to resources

and local services. NAMI's website ([nami.org](http://nami.org)) also provides a wealth of mental health support and treatment information, and the organization has free peer-led support groups (many of them virtual).

■ **Mental Health America** ([mhanational.org](http://mhanational.org)) offers screening tools for symptoms of a wide range of mental health conditions. The site includes a run-down of treatments including medication, psychotherapy, and support groups.

■ **SAMHSA's National Helpline** (800-662-4357), available 24/7, is an information resource as well as a place to get referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.

■ **Open Path Psychotherapy Collective** is a nonprofit offering connections to affordable online or in-person counseling, searchable by zip code. The health care providers who are part of the collective have agreed to provide sessions costing \$40 to \$70 to those without health insurance or whose insurance doesn't provide adequate mental health benefits.

within the “mental disorder” category. That’s more than the number of people who are unable to work due to injuries, cancer, and diseases of the circulatory and nervous systems combined.

The COVID pandemic was a double-edged sword: Job loss and social isolation amplified existing problems but also led to an unprecedented increase in mental health awareness campaigns, says Elizabeth Hancq, research director at the Treatment Advocacy Center.

“There has been increased funding and attention, and we have celebrities and senators being public about inpatient mental health treatment. But we still have a long way to go,” she says. And that’s particularly true regarding two key barriers people face when trying to get the mental health care they need: too few health care providers, and costs that are too high for too many people.

## the provider shortage

Two-thirds of Americans feel that it’s harder to find a mental health care provider than to find a physical health care provider, according to a 2022 survey by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing (NCMW). But why?

In 2016, a NAMI survey of more than 3,000 people looked at the issue (and one can only assume the situation has

since worsened, given the pandemic).

Nearly a third of the survey respondents had

looked for a mental health care provider in the past year, and the top barrier they reported was the fact that psychiatrists and therapists were not accepting new patients. Other difficulties were not having their insurance accepted and getting no response to their inquiries.

Mental health providers agree that this is a serious problem. The American Psychological Association surveyed psychologists in late 2022 and found that six in 10 reported they no longer had openings for new patients, almost half couldn’t meet the demand for treatment, and nearly three-quarters had longer wait lists than before the pandemic. On average, the psychologists said that more than 15 hopeful new patients contacted them each month.

There’s a universal reason for this problem: Around half of all Americans live in areas where there’s a shortage of mental health professionals, according to federal data. There just aren’t enough providers overall, but the shortage is worse in some states and regions, including in rural America. Most states have fewer than 40% of the mental health professionals needed, and more than half of U.S. counties have no practicing psychiatrists—not a single one.

Nguyen calls these areas “mental





health deserts,” large parts of the country with no available mental health provider for over 50 miles. Even in urban areas, a family could find themselves on a psychiatrist’s three-month waiting list—even after a dire event such as a child’s suicide attempt. “Finding a culturally responsive provider, one who can speak a shared language or shares a common cultural or ethnic background, is even harder,” Nguyen says.

“We just haven’t trained enough doctors in the past 20 years to keep up with an aging and growing population,” says Atul Grover, M.D., Ph.D., executive director of the AAMC Research and Action Institute. About a third of specialist physicians (including psychiatrists) are over 55, he says, and there is

no pipeline of replacements in the U.S. for those who retire. Burnout may also be contributing to the problem: One survey of over 2,000 psychiatrists (done before the pandemic) found that nearly 80% reported burnout, and the researchers concluded that this could lead to their retiring earlier, among other effects. The situation may well have worsened during the early time of COVID.

With the specialist supply in dire shape, it’s no wonder that many people turn to primary care providers. But when it comes to dealing with potential mental health issues in a primary care office, complex issues may be hard to spot and address, especially during a quick appointment. If you visit your PCP for sleep difficulties, for instance, your



restless nights could stem from a physical problem like a thyroid issue, which the doctor can test for and treat. But they could also be a symptom of depression, and testing and monitoring for that is often more challenging.

Also, whether a particular doctor is knowledgeable about mental health issues may be hit or miss. Many physicians were trained to be medical doctors rather than holistic practitioners addressing both physical and mental health, Talebi notes. “In essence, historical med school training removed the head from the body, unless it was about the brain as an organ as in neurology,” he says. “As a result, front-line practitioners felt ill-equipped to manage mental and behavioral health disorders. PCPs were underwater before the pandemic started.” Though physicians managed successfully for years, Talebi adds, “many have finally passed a threshold where the sheer volume of patients with mental health challenges has surpassed their capacity to manage.”

Many PCPs have admirably and honorably attempted to address the mental health crisis over the past few years, but again, burnout is an issue. “And self-reporting by patients is infamously poor,” Talebi says. Someone may tell a doctor they’re OK when they’re actually struggling, so doctors may have to rely on other signs—for example, says Talebi, “chronic pain is often a red flag for us.”

Merritt Hawkins, a physician-recruitment firm, issued a white paper in 2018 about the shortage of psychiatrists,

pointing out that “mental illnesses generally cannot be addressed through medical procedures, but only made manageable through long-term treatment with drugs and/or therapy. Hospitals and clinics tend to be procedure oriented...where the appropriate surgery/intervention is performed and the next patient is addressed.”

That point is important, especially given the fact that if a person in a crisis situation can’t find help, they may well go to a hospital that is ill-equipped to help them. The report continues: “Psychiatry...is not a profit center for most hospitals (psychiatric services are not covered by some insurance companies), so such services sometimes are not given a high priority....[M]ental health problems in the United States, their causes, cures, and those who suffer from them, tend to be swept under the carpet.”



## the high cost of care

Overwhelmingly, the top barrier to accessing care for people experiencing any sort of mental health issue is an inability to afford that care. When SAMHSA surveyed people with mental illness across all racial/ethnic groups,

respondents most frequently cited the cost of service and the lack of insurance coverage as their reasons for not using mental health services.

In the NCMW's 2022 survey, fewer than half of those who had received mental health care over the previous year said that their insurance covered their care in full—and this is directly connected to the provider shortage. With so few mental health providers, Snow says, there's little incentive for them to join a network. "It's basic economics: If your services are in demand and you can fill a whole day with people who can pay cash, why would you voluntarily go into an insurance system and get paid less?" she says. "Supply and demand creates inequities in the system."

Experts agree that insurance often doesn't pay enough or cover enough mental health services. "We have underinvested in mental health care for a century, and insurance did not historically cover mental health care or cover it well," Nguyen says.

Adding to the problem is the fact that future mental health providers who study subspecialties can end up with significant student debt—as well as limited earning potential. That's because despite their high level of training, mental and behavioral health providers are paid relatively poorly compared with other health providers, Talebi says. And this, in turn, may contribute to the scarcity of providers as well as push them to

avoid accepting insurance altogether.

The classic U.S. model of health insurance carved out different coverage or policies for dental, vision, hearing, and mental health, Dr. Grover says. Federal law now requires insurers to provide mental health coverage with "parity," or equivalence to physical health coverage—but in reality, a 2022 report to Congress found that many insurers still treated mental health conditions differently and a confusing mix of federal and state agencies were tasked with enforcing insurance parity. This has led to what Dr. Grover calls "ghost networks": outdated lists of therapists whom people phone, only to discover that they don't accept their insurance, are no longer in practice, or aren't taking new patients.

Insurers can throw up questionable financial barriers by requiring a higher copay for mental health specialists than for other specialists or otherwise not covering medical and mental treatments equally. For example, one agency found two large New York plans that were covering nutritional counseling for medical conditions like diabetes, but not for mental health conditions like anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder. So it's no surprise that many patients receive a large proportion of their mental health services out of network, according to one study—that is, when they can locate a provider in their area who is accepting new patients, has expertise in their particular mental health issue, and with whom they can connect and work well.



# looking forward

The issue of mental health care in America has touched so many, and the opinion that it needs fixing is widely held: In a 2022 poll by the APA, 79% of adults said that the state of mental health in the U.S. was a public health emergency that deserved more of lawmakers' attention. Some politicians are stepping up: The 2023 federal spending package increased funding for mental health services, including significant funding for Lifeline, the national 988 suicide and crisis hotline. Since the launch of the new 988 number in mid-July 2022, Lifeline has received more than 1.43 million calls, over 416,000 chat requests, and more than 281,000 texts. And more medical schools are heeding the call for improved mental health care training for future physicians, Talebi notes.

That offers reason for hope, but this fact remains: In essence, America's mental health care relies on a depressed and stressed consumer to navigate disastrously complicated paperwork and policies amid a practitioner shortage—and to pay a lot for it too. Yes, it can be disheartening and overwhelming, and yet every day providers, advocates, and others wake up and attempt to address the causes and effects of a broken and sometimes nonexistent mental health care system.

“There is great honor and virtue in knowing that the work can

prove impactful in micro and macro ways to positively alter the lives of compromised people,” Talebi says. “Is there anything that can bring more meaning and purpose to our lives than offering a hand to those struggling? In the end, maybe it's what we were meant to do as a social species.”



## ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF— AND OTHERS

➔ Beyond the 2023 spending package, Congress is considering other bills that address mental health needs, including mental health parity enforcement (treating mental health like physical health) for insurance, incentives to offset professional workforce shortages, and boosting the crisis response structure.

Want to find ways you can make some noise yourself? Discover how to become a mental health advocate at the federal or state level on NAMI's site ([nami.quorum.us](http://nami.quorum.us)).

# SCIENCE

## 5 Myths About Gun Safety

Many people's ideas about lowering rates of injury and death from firearms are actually off target. Arm yourself—with knowledge.

BY KATE ROCKWOOD

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDREA DE SANTIS

### MYTH #1

**You're better off if you have a gun at home to protect yourself.**

**MYTHBUSTER** Having a gun in the house steeply raises the risk of murders, suicides, and unintentional shootings, says Cassandra Crifasi, Ph.D., codirector of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. "People kind of presume violence will be caused by a stranger versus the reality that it's much more likely to be caused by someone they know," she says. A study of 17.6 million people found that living with someone who owns a gun more than doubles your risk of being murdered; women who live with an abusive gun-owning partner face five times the risk. Kids face particular danger: Between 2015 and 2020, more than 2,000 children shot themselves or someone else, and about 90% of youth gun suicides involve a gun from their home or that of a relative. To reduce these risks, guns should be kept unloaded and locked in a safe, separate from ammunition.

## MYTH #2

### Localities with more guns have less violence.

**MYTHBUSTER** The opposite is true. The five states with the highest homicide rates—Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Missouri, and Arkansas—also have some of the highest rates of gun ownership. The gun murder rate in the United States overall is 25 times that of other high-income countries where guns are much less common. With all gun deaths factored in, including suicides and unintentional shootings, the top five states are Mississippi, Louisiana, Wyoming, Missouri, and Alabama, the CDC reports. Quite simply, “where there are more guns, there are more gun deaths,” says Daniel Semenza, Ph.D.,

an assistant professor at Rutgers University and the director of interpersonal violence research at the

New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center. He adds that this is true for homicides, accidental deaths, and suicides in and outside of the home. “Easier access to firearms is a major risk factor for firearm injury and death,” he says.





### MYTH #3

#### Teaching kids to use and respect guns keeps them protected.

**MYTHBUSTER** It's not enough. Research shows that even when kids are trained in firearm safety, they often don't abide by that training in unsupervised settings. "I personally am a gun owner. I teach my kids what they can and can't do. But kids are curious. They get into things sometimes despite our best efforts," Crifasi says. "That's why guns are the number one cause of death for youths ages 1 to 19, including murders, suicides, and accidental deaths." Crifasi emphasizes safe storage, which means keeping guns unloaded and locked up, she says, ideally in a gun safe or a lockbox with a biometric or combination lock. A *JAMA Pediatrics* study estimates that if every parent locked up their gun, it could cut child and teen deaths by a third.

### MYTH #4

#### Stricter gun laws don't work because criminals don't obey the law.

**MYTHBUSTER** Whether criminals obey the law or not, gun laws make it harder for them to get guns. "People with felony records can't shop at gun stores. They may still be able to obtain a gun on the street or from a personal connection or from their gang, but those are far less convenient and reliable as sources," says Philip J. Cook, Ph.D., professor emeritus of public policy and economics at Duke University. Federal background checks, which apply only to sales by licensed gun dealers, have stopped more than 3.5 million illegal gun sales. States' extreme risk protection orders (a.k.a. "red flag laws") and comprehensive background checks, paired with strong handgun purchaser licensing laws, are especially useful in keeping guns out of the hands of people who may use them to commit crimes, Semenza says.



## MYTH #5

### If gun laws worked, there wouldn't be gun violence in states with strict laws.

**MYTHBUSTER** Gun laws work—they just don't work as well in states that are near other states with lax gun laws. "Since guns can easily cross state borders, it's necessary to have strong gun laws in as many places as possible. Any state's firearm policies are only as strong as its neighbors' policies," Semenza says. Take Chicago: Sixty percent of the guns used to commit crimes in the city come from out of state, 21% from neighboring Indiana alone. "Underground [gun] trafficking undercuts the effect of state and city regulations," Cook says. But he points out that this doesn't mean gun laws are useless: "The fact that rates of gun violence in Chicago are high does not mean the regulations are completely ineffective. The homicide rate would be higher without them. A comparison with St. Louis or Memphis or New Orleans helps make the case." (All three cities have higher murder rates per capita than Chicago.)



## FACE YOUR FEAR

## Flying

If nerves are keeping you grounded, here's help.

BY BETH HOWARD

**"From my late teens to my early 20s, I was deathly afraid of flying. I love to travel, but I couldn't sleep the night before any trip, I was so consumed by fear." —Cristy R.**



**THE RISK OF DYING IN A CRASH ON A COMMERCIAL FLIGHT IS CLOSE TO ZERO, per the National Safety Council—making it FAR SAFER THAN TRAVELING BY CAR.**

**L**ike Cristy, as many as 40% of people feel some degree of anxiety related to flying, from preflight jitters to full-blown panic attacks. In some cases people may turn down jobs or promotions that involve travel or drive hundreds of miles for a vacation—or skip trips altogether—to avoid getting on a plane.

Called aerophobia, the fear of flying is actually a number of specific phobias that are triggered during the flight experience, says Reid Wilson, Ph.D., director of the Anxiety Disorders Treatment Center in Chapel Hill, NC. "Some people don't

believe flying is safe and fear what they perceive as the physical dangers of air flight—takeoffs, turbulence, crashing," he says. "Others fear their own physical and psychological symptoms, like feeling trapped or claustrophobic or having a panic attack or a heart attack in flight."

To keep your fear from holding you back, experts suggest these tactics:

### IF SAFETY IS YOUR CONCERN...

Bone up on the track record of air flight and the airline industry. Crashes are extremely rare, says Brenda Wiederhold, Ph.D., cofounder of the Virtual Reality Medical Center of Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla, CA, who specializes in aerophobia. She often sends patients to the local flight museum. "Learning about the plane and talking to pilots reinforces what a commonplace and safe thing it is to fly," she says.

### IN PREPARATION FOR FLIGHT...

Experts advise booking a seat located over the wings, near





the center of the plane's mass, which allows for a smoother ride. Noise-canceling earphones and an eye mask can help you block triggering stimuli. Cristy says she brings a book and focuses so deeply on it that she becomes distracted from her fear. Wiederhold also suggests asking your doctor if they recommend meds to have on hand in case your anxiety soars.

### **ON FLIGHT DAY...**

One surprisingly effective tactic: "As you board the plane, greet the captain and consider mentioning to the crew that you sometimes get afraid on flights," Wilson suggests. Often

flight attendants will check in with and reassure you during the flight. You can also ask them about specific sounds or sensations that bother you, Wilson says.

### **WHEN THE FEAR DOESN'T BUDGE...**

Consider exposure therapy using virtual reality: With the help of VR technology, patients go on realistic simulated flights to help them overcome their fears gradually. Research shows that the treatment is highly effective in bringing flying anxiety back to earth, especially when combined with bio-feedback techniques that allow people to control their physiological responses.



IS IT  
JUST  
A

# BRAIN BLIP

OR SOMETHING  
ELSE?

There are plenty of reasons you may randomly forget a name or where you left your phone. Brain experts explain the lifestyle factors that could bring on those foggy moments—and when they could signal a more serious issue.

BY MARISA COHEN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
DAN SAELINGER





**HAT'S THE NAME OF THAT ACTRESS?** You know, the wacky blonde who's in that show at the fancy hotel? Julia, Jane, Joan..."

If you're in the stage we delicately call "midlife," you may be nodding in recognition. Scientists sometimes refer to this—when you can't quite remember a name or word that used to be easy to retrieve—as the "tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon." As you

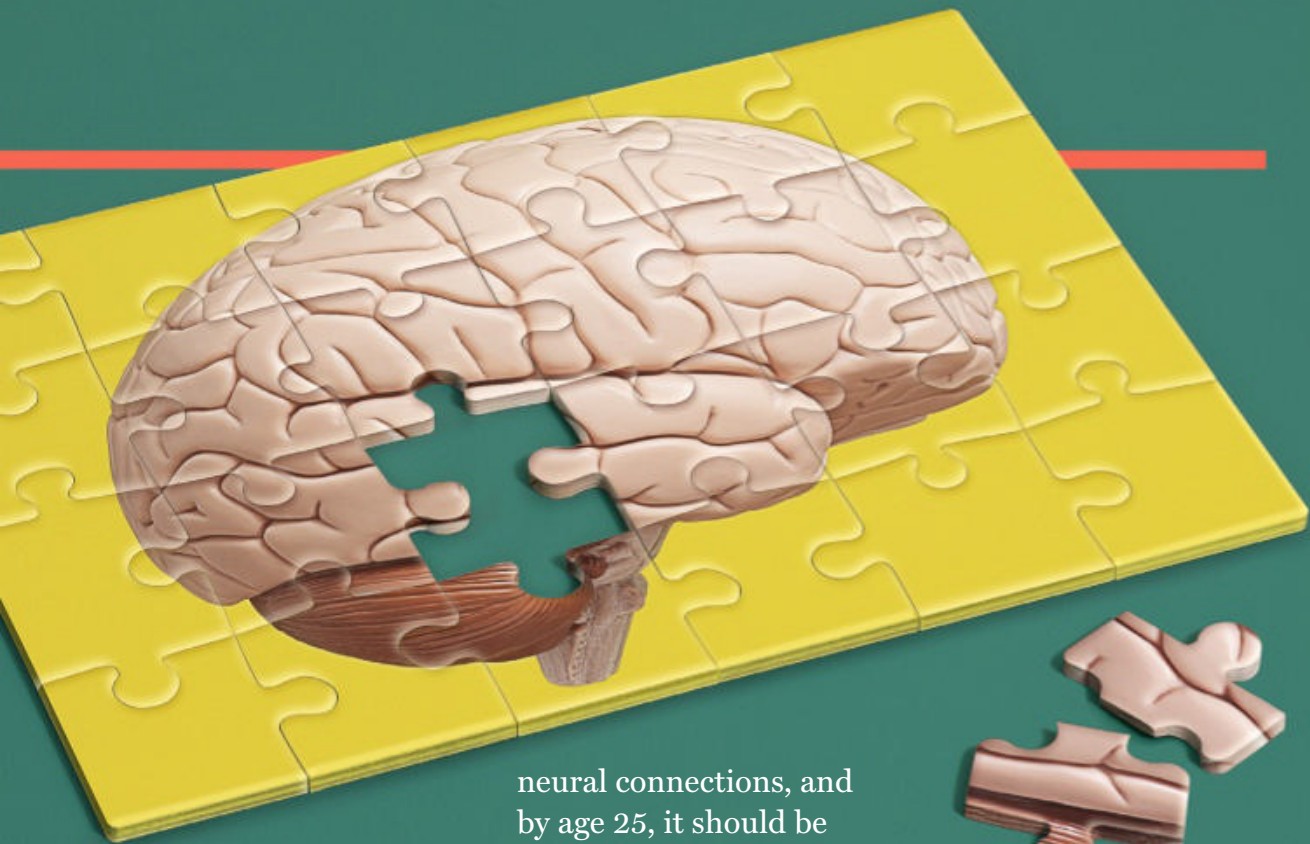
get older, these brain blips can happen more and more often, along with things like misplacing your phone three times in one day and opening the pantry door only to completely forget what you needed. (By the way, the answers to the above mysteries are Jennifer Coolidge, on the shelf next to the toilet, and paprika.)

We jokingly call these blips "senior moments," but behind the self-deprecating humor there may be a slight shiver of dread: Is this normal aging, or is it an early sign of dementia? With more than 6 million Americans currently living with Alzheimer's (a number that's expected to nearly double in the next few decades as the population ages), this is not an unreasonable fear, and in a large national poll by the University of Michigan, 44% of people between ages 50 and 64 admitted that they were worried about developing dementia.

But—deep breath—most of these slips are perfectly harmless, and in fact there are many things other than dementia (things you can actually change and improve!) that could be putting a damper on your memory. Here's what's likely going on and what you can do about it.

## THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING BRAIN

**FIRST, LET'S MAKE IT CLEAR**—if Jennifer Coolidge used to be your favorite actress but now her name doesn't ring a bell, that would be reason for concern. But if you remembered the name as soon as you read it, or if another name you couldn't



come up with suddenly pops into your head as you're brushing your teeth an hour later, you're probably just fine.

Here's why: After growing at a furious pace for the first couple of decades of your life, your brain reverses course and starts to shrink when you hit your 30s and 40s, says Elise Caccappolo, Ph.D., a neuropsychologist at Columbia University Irving Medical Center in New York City. "When you're a child, your brain is constantly creating new

neural connections, and by age 25, it should be fully developed," she says. About a decade after that, in a very natural process, it slowly starts to lose volume and brain cells start dying off.

The first part of the brain to start shrinking is the frontal lobe. "This is where we house our short-term or working memory, sort of a scratch pad for the brain," says Murali Doraiswamy, M.D., a brain health researcher and an adviser to Souvenaid. Newly learned names, dates we haven't yet put on the calendar, and the location of our keys all

get temporarily deposited here before being transferred to long-term memory. "You're less likely to have age-related memory loss for well-rehearsed information such as directions to familiar places, how to use familiar gadgets, or the name of a school you went to," Dr. Doraiswamy adds.

Caccappolo explains that this volume loss also affects processing speed. "This is why it may take a minute longer to come up with a name or a word, or it may take



longer to solve a problem,” she says, stressing that you still *can* do these things—you just do them at a slower pace.

Another reason your brain may not be quite as quick when you’re in your 50s or 60s: You have a lot going on as you balance young-adult children, aging parents, work, and home life, says Thomas Holland, M.D., a physician scientist at the Rush Institute for Healthy Aging. “I have misplaced or lost a fair number of sunglasses throughout my life just because

I have been distracted,” he notes. “That being said, from a normal cognitive age perspective, we are generally going to see a bit of decline in our cognitive abilities as we get into our older years.”

The flip side of slower processing and weaker short-term memory is that as you age you develop a larger reserve of wisdom, says Brenna Renn, Ph.D., an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. “The longer you live, the more facts you’ve built up, and

that sort of intelligence tends to stay pretty well preserved and actually improves with age.”

It’s still important to know which kinds of memory changes are in fact worrisome signs (see “When Memory Loss Is Cause for Concern,” page 73). But the key thing to recognize about the normal shifts that come with aging is that “you can live your life as you always have, you can function independently, and it doesn’t affect what you do on a daily basis,” Caccappolo explains.

## 6 MEMORY-ZAPPING LIFESTYLE ISSUES

The brain is part of a vast, interconnected system of organs, and the way you treat your body is reflected in how well your brain works. If you’re concerned about memory, your first step should be a head-to-toe wellness check. Infections such as UTIs can cause brain fog, especially in elderly people; plus, whatever is good for the heart is good for the brain. Keeping blood vessels clear and

blood flowing freely helps maximize the oxygen and nutrients flowing to and nourishing the brain. Exercising, quitting smoking, maintaining a stable weight, and working with your health team to manage chronic conditions such as diabetes will keep your brain healthier too.

Ask yourself these six questions to see if your lifestyle may be causing foggy moments:



## WHAT MEDICATIONS AM I ON?

**IT'S CRUCIAL TO GO OVER** your list of meds with your doctor, since many common drugs can affect cognition and memory; if you take several, they may be interacting with one another. “Tell your provider everything you take, even if it’s over-the-counter or a supplement you think is harmless,” advises Renn. Your doctor may be able to suggest alternatives, or the two of you can weigh the importance of certain drugs against how the side effects change your quality of life. Some drugs that may affect memory include:

■ **BENZODIAZEPINES:** Prescribed for anxiety and seizure disorders, meds such as Xanax, Klonopin, and Valium can affect memory transfer from short-term to long-term storage.

■ **STATINS:** Used to help control cholesterol levels, these may also reduce the brain’s levels of lipids, which are necessary for the creation of synapses that allow brain cells to communicate with one another.

■ **ANTISEIZURE MEDICATIONS:** These include gabapentin (which is often prescribed for pain management), Lyrica, and Depakote. They limit seizures by dampening the flow of signals in the central nervous system.

■ **BETA BLOCKERS:** These slow heart rate and lower blood pressure and are prescribed for several heart conditions. But they may also block chemical messengers in the brain.

■ **TRICYCLIC ANTIDEPRESSANTS:** Though these have mainly been replaced by SSRIs, they are still around and can block the action of neurotransmitters that are important for memory.

■ **OPIOIDS:** Many risks of taking narcotics such as OxyContin are well established; using them long-term can also interfere with memory.

■ **SLEEPING PILLS:** A certain class of sleep aids, including Ambien and Lunesta, can have side effects similar to those from benzodiazepines.

## AM I DEPRESSED OR ANXIOUS?

**DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY** are the biggest culprits in forgetfulness for people in their 40s, 50s, and 60s, says Caccappolo. “Depression takes up a lot of real estate in your brain,” she explains. “When you’re depressed, your brain is not working at 100%. It’s not paying attention to things as well as it usually does, and the memory areas are not doing what they usually do, such as encoding and consolidating information.”

Dr. Holland adds that stress itself is a low-level chronic inflammatory state. “If you’re constantly under stress, your body is always in a state of readiness, dumping hormones into your blood that can keep you on edge,” he says. In the long term, unregulated inflammation can cause cellular damage across the body, he says, “and if that’s happening in the brain, we’re potentially going to



see declines in cognitive function.”

According to a report by researchers at Harvard Medical School, people who are depressed typically experience more brain shrinkage, have worse recollection, and are better than nondepressed people at retrieving bad memories but worse at retrieving good ones. And feeling as if your memory is slipping can make you feel *more* depressed or anxious, perpetuating the cycle.

If mental health and mood may be responsible for your brain blips, speak with a professional about talk therapy and/or medication, which may help improve your attention, concentration, and other thinking abilities, says Renn.

## AM I EATING A HEALTHY DIET?

**WHAT YOU EAT** can have a big influence on your brain, says Dr. Holland. “If you’re eating foods that provide the appropriate nutrients and bioactives, they can help prevent damage to the neurons,” he says. In a study Dr. Holland and his colleagues published in *Neurology*, they found that a diet filled with foods rich in flavonols (such as dark leafy greens, tea, and tomatoes) was associated with slower rates of cognitive decline.

A plant-forward diet can also reduce the buildup of plaque in blood vessels,



## WHEN MEMORY LOSS IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN

**While it's comforting to know that blips are usually nothing to be worried about,**

we have to face the fact that as we age, our risk of dementia does increase. One in 20 adults ages 65 to 74 has Alzheimer's; by age 85, that number is one in three.

And then there's the gray area known as mild cognitive impairment (MCI). A special report published last year by the Alzheimer's Association estimates that 12% to 18% of people 60 or older are living with MCI, which is when someone has more cognitive issues than is typical for their age but has not yet developed dementia. "Not everybody with MCI will go on to have dementia, but

some people will," says Renn. "MCI is often a warning sign that there might be some changes that are a bit more insidious." The Alzheimer's Association report calculated that about a third of people with MCI develop Alzheimer's disease within five years, but it also noted that some people with MCI revert to normal cognition or at least stabilize and don't get any worse.

"We start to be concerned about MCI when you can't retain new memories," says Caccappolo. This might mean forgetting something someone told you 10 minutes ago or asking the same question over and over again.

Additional signs of MCI include:

- ▶ **Having trouble following directions**
- ▶ **Forgetting how to do something you've done many times before, like make coffee**
- ▶ **Getting lost going to a familiar place**

Dr. Holland says that "stepwise" memory loss is also a red flag: "If you're always losing your keys, that's less concerning than if you always lose your keys but now you also can't remember how to get home," he says. The experts point out that it is often a partner, a close friend, or a relative who notices these changes before a person with MCI does.

which is crucial because when blood vessels are clogged, your risk of small strokes increases, and over time those can lead to vascular dementia. "A brain-healthy diet, such as the Medi-

terranean diet or an Indian vegetarian curry diet, can reduce the risk for blockages of blood vessels, thus ensuring healthy brain circulation," says Dr. Doraiswamy, who also points out



the importance of a diet rich in B vitamins, phospholipid precursors for synapse support, and antioxidants to protect membranes from damage.

## AM I GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP?

**IN MIDLIFE**, you could be missing out on restorative sleep for a number of reasons, including menopause symptoms or the stress of dealing with young-adult children, elderly parents, or your job. Exhaustion can deplete your resources, including your ability to remember or learn new things.

For men especially, untreated obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) can be a major contributor to brain issues, says Caccappolo. “They are having

multiple hypoxic events each night when they’re not getting oxygen to the brain, which can lead to memory problems.” A review in *Sleep Medicine* found that attention, working memory, episodic memory, and executive function were decreased in people with OSA.

If you’re having trouble sleeping, first try improving your sleep habits by cutting out caffeine later in the day, eating lighter meals in the evening, and keeping your bedroom dark and cool. If these changes don’t work, check with your health care provider or a sleep specialist to assess whether you have OSA—treatment could help restore your sleep and your memory. For sleep disturbances due to symptoms of menopause, ask your doctor if hormone-replacement therapy is right for you.

## WHAT’S NORMAL... AND WHAT’S NOT?

### NORMAL AGING

- ▶ Forgetting to pay a bill
- ▶ Forgetting a name but remembering it later
- ▶ Slipping over a word or two
- ▶ Misplacing your keys or your phone
- ▶ Getting lost but finding your way via a map or GPS

### REASON FOR CONCERN

- ▶ Forgetting to pay many bills each month
- ▶ Forgetting that you know someone
- ▶ Difficulty following a conversation
- ▶ Losing things and being unable to track them down
- ▶ Entirely forgetting how to get home



## DO I NEED A HEARING AID?

**AN INTRIGUING NEW LINE** of research has shown a connection between hearing loss and brain health. Hearing loss may interfere with cognition because it means the brain has to use many of its resources just to understand speech; hearing aids can help by making the information clearer as it enters the brain. “Having properly working hearing aids can go a long way toward boosting and preserving someone’s cognition,” says Renn. In a recent review from Singapore, the use of hearing aids was associated with a 19% decrease in the risk of long-term cognitive decline. If you notice (or family members comment) that your hearing is not what it used to be, consult with an audiologist.

## AM I TRYING TO DO EVERYTHING ALL AT ONCE?

**RECENT RESEARCH SUGGESTS** that multitasking—say, trying to straighten up the living room while taking a work call—could be detrimental to memory. A study in *Nature* found that media multitasking in particular (using several devices at once) was associated with attention lapses and decreased the ability to encode new memories. And that was in *young* people. For older people, multitasking may be even more detrimental, says Caccappolo. “As

our processing speed gets slower, we’re slower overall when it comes to both thinking and moving,” she adds. “If you’re trying to do two or three things at the same time, you’re going to be a little bit slower at each one.”

If you’re concerned about your memory, consider getting tested: The Alzheimer’s Foundation of America provides free, confidential virtual screenings (go to [alzfdn.org](http://alzfdn.org)). “When people have brain blips, they may automatically worry that it’s Alzheimer’s, but there are many reasons for these changes that can be addressed,” says Audette Rackley, assistant director of strength-based programs at the Center for Brain Health at the University of Texas at Dallas. “It’s so important to ask, ‘How can I be creating more brain-healthy rhythms in my life?’ Just a small shift in the right direction can make an impact over time.”

### MORE BRAIN HELP



Get science-backed tools and advice in our special 128-page publication *Stay Sharp for Life*, which is available exclusively to members of

Prevention Premium at [prevention.com/stay-sharp-guide](http://prevention.com/stay-sharp-guide).

▶ **JOIN FOR FULL ACCESS**  
[prevention.com/join](http://prevention.com/join)



## FOOD

# Stay Well Throughout Menopause

The delicious way food can help you during this stage of life

BY ALYSSA JUNG

RECIPES BY KRISTINA KUREK

**W**e focus on eating right for a strong heart, a sharp mind, or more energy, but menopause also deserves some dietary attention. “Diet during menopause—and perimenopause, when estrogen starts to dip—can promote better quality of life,” says Jessica Shepherd, M.D., an ob/gyn and founder of Sanctum Med + Wellness in Dallas. “Also focus on good sleep, stress relief, and exercise.” Hormonal fluctuations, particularly lower estrogen levels, trigger signature symptoms such as hot flashes and mood issues and can affect heart and bone health over time. Getting enough of certain nutrients may ease symptoms and protect your health, says Laura Lu, R.D., a certified intuitive eating counselor in New York City. Enjoy more of these yummy helpers.

## WARM FARRO SALAD WITH WALNUTS AND GOAT CHEESE

ACTIVE 35 MIN.

TOTAL 50 MIN.

SERVES 4 to 6

Bring large pot of **water** to a boil; stir in 1¼ cups **pearled farro** (rinsed) and simmer until almost tender, 27 to 30 min. Add 8 oz **haricots verts** (cut into 1-in. pieces on bias), increase heat, and cook until farro is tender and haricots verts are crisp-tender, 3 to 4 min. Drain and transfer to large bowl. Add 3 Tbsp **olive oil**, 4 tsp **sherry vinegar**, 2 medium **shallots** (finely chopped), ½ cup each **flat-leaf parsley** and **toasted walnuts** (both chopped), ¾ tsp **kosher salt**, and ¼ tsp **pepper**; toss to combine, then gently fold in 2 oz **fresh goat cheese** (crumbled).

*PER SERVING* About 356 cal, 19.5 g fat (3.5 g sat), 14 mg chol, 351 mg sodium, 37 g carb, 7 g fiber, 3 g sugar (0 g added sugar), 11 g pro

### FARRO



**Women often experience fatigue and mood swings during menopause. Whole grains contain nutrients that play a role in mood regulation and help prevent blood sugar fluctuations that can take energy levels on a wild ride, Dr. Shepherd says.**







## **CRISPY ROASTED BROCCOLI WITH TAMARI-LIME SAUCE**

ACTIVE 25 MIN.  
TOTAL 40 MIN.  
SERVES 4

Place rimmed baking sheet in oven and heat oven to 500°F. In large bowl, whisk 2 large **egg whites** until frothy, then whisk in 2 Tbsp **rice flour** and 2½ tsp **cornstarch**. Add 1½ lbs

**broccoli** (cut into large spears) and 2 Tbsp **toasted sesame seeds**; toss to coat. Carefully coat hot baking sheet with 2 Tbsp **toasted sesame oil**, add dredged broccoli, and roast until browned and beginning

to crisp, 10 to 12 min. Meanwhile, in small bowl, combine 2 Tbsp each **reduced-sodium tamari or soy sauce** and **pure maple syrup**, 1 Tbsp **fresh lime juice**, 1 tsp grated **garlic**, and 1 Tbsp sliced **Fresno chile**; serve with broccoli.

**PER SERVING** About 208 cal, 10 g fat (1 g sat), 0 mg chol, 431 mg sodium, 23 g carb, 5 g fiber, 9 g sugar (6 g added sugar), 9 g pro

### **BROCCOLI**



The cruciferous veggie contains phytoestrogens, plant compounds that may help ease hot flashes, says Lu, and it's a source

of bone-healthy calcium. Broccoli is also high in the antioxidant vitamin C, which helps maintain heart health by reducing inflammation.





## **SALMON SALAD TARTINES**

ACTIVE 15 MIN.  
TOTAL 35 MIN.  
PLUS COOLING  
SERVES 4

Heat oven to 400°F. On small foil-lined rimmed baking sheet, season two 10-oz **skin-on salmon fillets** (each about 1¼ in. thick) with ¼ tsp **kosher salt**; roast until nearly opaque throughout, 16 to 18 min. Transfer salmon

to plate, discarding skin; refrigerate until chilled, 20 to 30 min. Meanwhile, soak ½ small **Vidalia onion** (thinly sliced on mandoline) in ice water for 10 min. Drain, squeeze dry, and toss in medium bowl with ½ bulb **fennel** (cored and thinly sliced), ½ cup **flat-leaf parsley** (chopped), 2 Tbsp each **capers** (drained and chopped) and **olive oil**, 1 tsp **lemon zest**, ½ Tbsp **lemon juice**, and ¼ tsp each salt and **black pepper**. Fold in salmon and serve on four ¼-in.-thick slices **sourdough bread** (toasted).

**PER SERVING** About 335 cal, 13 g fat (2.5 g sat), 66 mg chol, 620 mg sodium, 22 g carb, 2 g fiber, 4.5 g sugar (0.5 g added sugar), 33 g pro

### **SALMON**




“Preserving muscle mass is hard as we age, and eating protein-rich foods can help,” lu says.

Salmon is a great choice—it delivers lean protein as well as heart-friendly omega-3 fatty acids and bone-building vitamin D.



## LENTILS

 Lentils and beans supply fiber and an array of vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients that support healthy blood pressure and

cholesterol levels, says Dr. Shepherd. It's important to keep tabs on these two heart disease risk factors, especially during menopause and beyond.

### RED PEPPER LENTIL SOUP WITH FETA

ACTIVE 30 MIN.

TOTAL 30 MIN.

SERVES 4

Heat 2 Tbsp **olive oil** in medium saucepan on medium-low. Add ½ large **onion** (chopped) and 3 cloves **garlic** (finely

chopped); cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, 3 min. Add one 12-oz jar **roasted red peppers** (drained and chopped), ¾ cup **red lentils**, 3 Tbsp **tomato paste**, 2 tsp **vegetable bouillon base** (we used BetterThan Bouillon), and 5 cups **water** and

bring to a simmer. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until lentils are tender, 10 to 12 min. Transfer two-thirds of soup to blender, add 1 oz **feta**, and puree until smooth. Return to saucepan with remaining soup and stir in 1 tsp **oregano leaves** (chopped). Ladle soup into bowls. Top with 1 Tbsp olive oil, 1 oz feta (crumbled), and small oregano leaves, dividing among bowls. Sprinkle with cracked **black pepper**.

**PER SERVING** About 302 cal, 14 g fat (3.5 g sat), 13 mg chol, 637 mg sodium, 33 g carb, 7 g fiber, 3 g sugar (0 g added sugar), 12 g pro







## How to get hydrated when you have hypertension

It's widely known that dehydration can have a negative effect on those with high blood pressure<sup>1</sup>. But for those folks, hydration is tricky.

Water goes right through you, and most hydration drinks contain way too much sodium (salt) making things worse.

Proper hydration (intracellular) happens when the cells of your body receive the fluid and electrolytes (potassium, magnesium, chloride, and calcium) they need to function properly. They should be delivered to the cells via a highly absorptive transport agent. And there should be osmolality between 190 and 245 (World Health Organization recommendation).

**Neither water nor hydration drinks provide cellular hydration**

### The problem with water

Drinking 8-10 glasses of water per day has become embedded in our consciousness. As a source for cellular hydration, water does not work<sup>2</sup>. It has very low osmolality (0-10) which means it goes right through the cells, and your body. It contains no electrolytes.

Too much water can cause hyponatremia (dilution of electrolyte minerals in your body). And worst of all, the water coming from your tap can contain harmful impurities like chlorine, lead, arsenic, PFAS and many more. Even bottled water can contain contaminants.

When it comes to hydration, it's not what you take in that matters... it's what you keep in. Water doesn't stick around long enough to do much good.



## The problem with hydration drinks

Popular hydration drinks have one thing in common... sodium (salt), and plenty of it (160-240 mg). Many also contain plenty of sugar (9-21 grams). This creates a “Catch 22.” In order to transport electrolytes to the cells they use sodium and sugar. But this combination makes the osmolality too high (300+) so the electrolytes can’t easily enter the cells. You usually get enough sodium from food. You don’t need more.

**Get 12 cans of True Hydration, a \$34.80 value, FREE!**



## True Hydration™ Drink – a breakthrough hydration technology!

True Hydration™ meets all the objectives of proper hydration.

- Made with ultrapure water (Nothing but H<sub>2</sub>O – zero contaminants). It transports the electrolytes into the cells for proper hydration. Other hydration drinks use sodium and sugar
- Electrolyte blend of potassium, magnesium, calcium and chloride
- Contains zero sodium and zero sugar, making it a great choice
- WHO-recommended osmolality of 200 for fast absorption and rapid intracellular hydration

We are confident that after trying it for one week you’ll want more!

Just pay \$9.50 (our actual cost) for shipping. No handling costs. One per household. Offer expires 07/31/2023.

Visit [www.TrueHy.com](http://www.TrueHy.com)

<sup>1</sup> Mohammedin A S, AlSaid A H, Almalki A M, et al. (August 05, 2022) Assessment of Hydration Status and Blood Pressure in a Tertiary Care Hospital at Al-Khobar. Cureus 14(8): e27706. DOI 10.7759/cureus.27706

<sup>2</sup> Leiper J.B. Fate of ingested fluids: Factors affecting gastric emptying and intestinal absorption of beverages in humans. Nutr. Rev. 2015;73 Suppl. 2:57–72. doi: 10.1093/nutrit/nuv032



## BREAKFAST

# Spinach and Artichoke Frittata

Start your day with a happy gut, thanks to prebiotic-rich artichokes.

ACTIVE 40 MIN.

TOTAL 40 MIN.

SERVES 8

- 10 large eggs**
- $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp grated nutmeg**
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup grated Parmesan, divided**
- Kosher salt and pepper**
- 2 Tbsp olive oil, divided**
- 1 12-oz pkg. frozen quartered artichoke hearts, thawed and patted dry**
- 4 scallions, thinly sliced**
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- 5 oz baby spinach**

1. Heat oven to 400°F. In bowl, whisk eggs until no streaks remain, then whisk in nutmeg, half of cheese, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp each salt and pepper.

2. Heat  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Tbsp oil in 10-in. cast-iron skillet on medium. Add artichokes and  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt and cook, turning occasionally and adjusting heat if necessary, until golden brown, 7 to 8 min.; transfer to plate.

3. Add remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  Tbsp oil to skillet along with scallions and cook, stirring, 30 sec.; stir in garlic, then add spinach and cover until beginning to wilt, 1 min. Uncover and cook, stirring, until

completely wilted, 1 min.  
4. Stir in egg mixture to coat vegetables, then cook until edges begin to set, 2 min. Arrange artichokes on top and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake until golden brown and fully set, 12 min. Let rest 10 min.

**PER SERVING** About 179 cal, 11.5 g fat (3.5 g sat), 238 mg chol, 438 mg sodium, 7 g carb, 4 g fiber, 1 g sugar (0 g added sugar), 11 g pro

## MAKE IT AHEAD

Wrap individual wedges and freeze for up to 2 months. To reheat, unwrap each, then wrap in a damp paper towel and microwave until warmed, about 3 min.





# Is dehydration causing your leg cramps?



Dehydration is a leading cause of leg cramps<sup>1</sup> (and 8-10 glasses of water per day isn't going to help<sup>2</sup>). Proper hydration (intracellular) happens when the cells of your body receive the fluid and electrolytes (potassium, magnesium, chloride, and calcium) they need to function properly. These electrolytes should be delivered to the cells via a highly absorptive transport agent. And there should be osmolality between 190 and 245 (World Health Organization recommendation). **Neither water, nor hydration drinks meet these objectives.**

## Why water is inefficient

Drinking 8-10 glasses of water per day sounds good until you realize that water is an inefficient source of hydration. Just look how fast it shoots through you. Water's low osmolality (0-10) means that H<sub>2</sub>O molecules move in and out of your cells freely without sticking around long enough to properly hydrate.

## Hydration drinks are loaded with salt and sugar

Popular hydration drinks have one thing in common... sodium (salt), and plenty of it (160-240 mg). Many also contain plenty of sugar (9-21 grams). This creates a "Catch 22." In order to transport electrolytes to the cells they use sodium and sugar. But this combination makes the osmolality too high (300+) so the electrolytes can't easily enter the cells.

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<sup>1</sup> Miller KC, McDermott BP, Yeargin SW, Fiol A, Schweltnus MP. An Evidence-Based Review of the Pathophysiology, Treatment, and Prevention of Exercise-Associated Muscle Cramps. *J Athl Train.* 2022 Jan 1;57(1):5-15. doi: 10.4085/1062-6050-0696.20. PMID: 34185846; PMCID: PMC8775277.

<sup>2</sup> Lau WY, Kato H, Nosaka K. Water intake after dehydration makes muscles more susceptible to cramp but electrolytes reverse that effect. *BMJ Open Sport Exerc Med.* 2019 Mar 5;5(1):e000478. doi: 10.1136/bmjsem-2018-000478. Erratum in: *BMJ Open Sport Exerc Med.* 2019 Apr 11;5(1):e000478corr1. PMID: 30899546; PMCID: PMC6407543.



# easy & elegant

The secret to a memorable meal without a mountain of dishes: parchment paper. Simply fold all your ingredients into a neat packet, toss it in the oven, and prepare to be impressed by your own cooking!

**PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
ERIK BERNSTEIN**

**RECIPES BY  
KRISTINA KUREK**





**SALMON AND  
ASPARAGUS WITH  
SNAP PEASALAD**

recipe, p. 92



**green  
machine**

The vibrant vegetables in this dish boast a combo of vitamins C and K, key for immunity and bone health.



# building blocks

Cooking food in parchment paper is called “en papillote.” Here are the secrets to getting the technique just right:

## 1 MAKE A GOOD MATCH

Pick proteins and veggies that cook at similar temps for around the same amount of time. Lean, tender proteins (chicken breasts, fish, tofu) are your best bets. Got grains? Rely on quicker-cooking options like bulgur and couscous, which will be ready when your protein is.

## 2 LAYER PROPERLY

Start by placing

your base of grains or veggies on the bottom of the packet, then add your protein. Top that with the quickest-cooking ingredients; these will be the tender ones, like corn and snap peas.

## 3 KICK UP THE FLAVOR

Before folding your packet, add seasonings and aromatics, and try a splash of broth, lemon juice, or olive oil. The additional liquid helps steam the ingredients and boosts the flavor of the dish.

## FINISH IT OFF

Since these require little hands-on cooking, spend some time prepping delicious toppings—quick sauces, crunchy garnishes—while the packets are in the oven.

## no-fuss folding & opening



### TO FOLD

1. Place ingredients on half of a parchment sheet,  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. away from center. Fold other half over ingredients.



2. Starting at 1 end of folded side, make small overlapping folds to create half-moon shape and completely seal open sides; fold final corner underneath.

### TO OPEN

Carefully tease out the folded corner, keeping your hands out of steam's way. Or, snip a cross in the center with kitchen shears and carefully pull the cut ends.



**PONZU TOFU AND  
BABY BOK CHOY**

recipe, p. 92

**soy  
goodness**

Shelf-stable firm silken tofu is protein-rich and tender, but sturdy enough to maintain its shape.

FOOD STYLING: MICHELLE GATTON. PROP STYLING: PAIGE HICKS.





## great grain

Not only is bulgur a good source of fiber, but it also contains 5 g of protein per serving.



## ■ CHICKEN AND BULGUR WITH HARISSA-CUMIN CARROTS

ACTIVE 15 MIN.

TOTAL 35 MIN.

SERVES 4

- ½ small red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 14.5-oz can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup bulgur (we used Arrowhead Mills)
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 4 6-oz boneless, skinless chicken breasts, each pounded to ¾ in. thick at thickest part
- Kosher salt
- 2 Tbsp lime juice, plus lime wedges for serving
- 2 Tbsp mild harissa (we used New York Shuk; use less if using a spicy brand)
- 2 tsp honey
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 to 3 large carrots (about 1 lb), cut into matchsticks (4 cups)
- ⅓ cup mint leaves, roughly chopped, plus small leaves for serving

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Place onion in bowl of ice water and set aside. Fold four 13- by 16-in. sheets of parchment in half crosswise, then unfold.
2. In medium bowl, stir

together tomatoes, bulgur, ¼ cup water, and oil. Divide among sheets, arranging alongside crease of each into roughly 5- by 7-in. oval. Nestle chicken breasts into bulgur and season each with a big pinch of salt.

3. In separate medium bowl, whisk together lime juice, harissa, honey, cumin, and a big pinch of salt; add carrots and toss. Pile carrots on top of chicken breasts. Fold according to directions on page 86. Bake on 2 rimmed baking sheets until chicken is cooked through and bulgur is tender, 18 to 23 min.; remove from oven and let rest 3 min., then open carefully to avoid steam (see page 86).

4. Using fork, mix chopped mint into carrots. Drain onion, blot dry, and scatter over chicken and bulgur along with mint leaves. Serve with lime wedges.

**PER SERVING** About 449 cal, 8.5 g fat (1.5 g sat), 124 mg chol, 596 mg sodium, 48 g carb, 9 g fiber, 11.5 g sugar (3.5 g added sugar), 45 g pro



**SMOKY SHRIMP  
AND CORN**

recipe, p. 93

**kernel  
wisdom**

Whether fresh or frozen, corn is packed with gut-friendly fiber.





## nature's candy

Fruit gives this dish all-natural sweetness as well as potassium, a mineral that helps regulate blood pressure and heart rate.

### ■ LAVENDER-HONEY PEACHES AND STRAWBERRIES

ACTIVE 10 MIN.  
TOTAL 40 MIN.  
SERVES 4

- 4 peaches, halved and pitted
- 1 qt strawberries, hulled and halved
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- Kosher salt
- 4 small sprigs dried lavender

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Fold four 13- by 16-in. sheets of parchment in half crosswise and unfold.

Divide peaches and strawberries, cut sides up, among sheets, arranging alongside each crease into roughly 5- by 7-in. rectangle. In small bowl, stir together honey and vanilla, then drizzle over fruit; sprinkle with a very small pinch of salt. Top each parcel with 1 lavender sprig.

2. Fold according to directions on page 86. Bake on 2 rimmed baking

sheets until fruit is tender and saucy, 22 to 27 min., rotating positions of baking sheets halfway through. Open parchment packages, being very careful to avoid steam (see page 86).

**PER SERVING** About 171 cal, 1 g fat (0 g sat), 0 mg chol, 63 mg sodium, 43 g carb, 5 g fiber, 36.5 g sugar (17.5 g added sugar), 2 g pro





## SALMON AND ASPARAGUS WITH SNAP PEA SALAD

ACTIVE 10 MIN.  
TOTAL 25 MIN.  
SERVES 4

- 1 bunch asparagus, trimmed on bias into 6-in. spears
- 4 Tbsp olive oil, divided, plus more for brushing
- Kosher salt and pepper
- 4 6-oz skinless salmon fillets, each  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. to 1 in. thick
- 3 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 6 Tbsp sliced chives, divided
- 6 oz sugar snap peas, thinly sliced on bias
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup roasted salted pistachios, roughly chopped
- 1 to 2 Tbsp tarragon leaves, chopped
- 1 tsp lemon zest plus 3 Tbsp lemon juice

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Fold four 13- by 16-in. sheets of parchment in half crosswise and unfold. Divide asparagus spears

among sheets, piling on half of each sheet alongside crease. Drizzle piles with 1 Tbsp oil and season with  $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp salt and a big pinch of pepper.

2. Spread bottoms of salmon with half of mustard and place on top of asparagus. Spread tops with remaining mustard and sprinkle with  $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp salt. Scatter tops with 3 Tbsp chives. Brush empty half of parchment with oil and fold parchment over fish. Fold according to directions on page 86.

3. Bake on 2 rimmed baking sheets, 10 to 11 min. for medium and 13 to 14 min. for well-done.

4. Meanwhile, in medium bowl, toss snap peas with pistachios, tarragon, lemon zest and juice,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt,  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp pepper, remaining 3 Tbsp chives, and remaining 3 Tbsp oil.

5. Open parchment packages, being very careful to avoid steam (see page 86). Spoon snap pea salad on top of and around fish.

*PER SERVING* About 481 cal, 30.5 g fat (5 g sat), 77 mg chol, 750 mg sodium, 10 g carb, 4 g fiber, 4 g sugar (0 g added sugar), 42 g pro



## PONZU TOFU AND BABY BOK CHOY

ACTIVE 15 MIN.  
TOTAL 30 MIN.  
SERVES 4

- 2 12-oz pkgs. extra-firm silken tofu, patted dry with paper towels
- 4 heads baby bok choy (12 oz), cut lengthwise into sixths
- 6 oz small shiitake mushrooms, stemmed
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup mirin
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup ponzu sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. piece ginger, peeled and cut into fine matchsticks (2 Tbsp)
- 4 scallions, thinly sliced on bias, dark greens separated from white and pale green parts
- 4 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 4 small radishes, cut into fine matchsticks
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp shichimi togarashi

1. Heat oven to 425°F.  
2. Fold four 13- by 16-in. sheets of parchment in

half crosswise and unfold. Using hands, gently break each block of tofu into large pieces. Divide tofu among sheets, arranging near crease on 1 side of each sheet. Arrange bok choy and mushrooms around tofu.

**3.** In small bowl, stir together mirin, ponzu, garlic, ginger, and scallion whites and pale green parts; spoon two-thirds over tofu and vegetables, then drizzle with sesame oil.

**4.** Fold parchment over tofu. Fold according to directions on page 86. Bake on 2 rimmed baking sheets until vegetables are just tender, 10 to 15 min.

**5.** Open parchment packages, being very careful to avoid steam (see page 86). Spoon remaining ponzu mixture on top. In small bowl, toss radishes with lemon juice and scatter over tofu along with scallion greens and togarashi.

**PER SERVING** About 221 cal, 8 g fat (1 g sat), 0 mg chol, 529 mg sodium, 22 g carb, 3 g fiber, 15.5 g sugar (2 g added sugar), 15 g pro



## ■ **SMOKY SHRIMP AND CORN**

ACTIVE **10 MIN.**  
TOTAL **25 MIN.**  
SERVES **4**

- 3 cups fresh corn kernels (from 4 ears) or frozen fire-roasted whole-kernel corn (thawed)**
- 2 small poblano peppers, seeded and thinly sliced into rings**
- ½ cup cilantro stems, finely chopped, plus ¼ cup cilantro leaves for serving**
- 3 Tbsp olive oil, divided**
- Kosher salt**
- 2 tsp grated garlic (from 4 cloves)**
- 1½ tsp smoked paprika**
- 1¼ lbs tail-on peeled and deveined extra-jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 ct per lb)**
- ¾ tsp coriander seeds, crushed**
- 1 avocado, sliced**
- Lime wedges, for serving**

**1.** Heat oven to 400°F. In medium bowl, toss corn with poblanos, cilantro

stems, 1 Tbsp oil, and ½ tsp salt. Fold four 13- by 16-in. sheets of parchment in half crosswise and unfold. Divide corn mixture among sheets, arranging on half of each sheet alongside crease into roughly 5- by 7-in. rectangle.

**2.** In large bowl, whisk together garlic, paprika, and remaining 2 Tbsp oil. Add shrimp and toss to coat; season with ¼ tsp salt. Arrange shrimp on top of corn. Fold parchment over shrimp. Fold according to directions on page 86.

**3.** Bake on 2 rimmed baking sheets until shrimp is just cooked through, 13 min. Open parchment packages, being very careful to avoid steam (see page 86). Sprinkle shrimp and corn with cilantro leaves and coriander seeds and serve with avocado and lime wedges.

**PER SERVING** About 369 cal, 19 g fat (3 g sat), 190 mg chol, 1,005 mg sodium, 29 g carb, 7 g fiber, 8 g sugar (0 g added sugar), 25 g pro



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**Printed in the U.S.A.** Published at  
300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019.

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Prevention (ISSN 0032-8006), Vol. 75, No. 6, is published monthly by Hearst, 300 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019, USA. Steven R. Swartz, President & Chief Executive Officer; William R. Hearst III, Chairman; Frank A. Bennack, Jr., Executive Vice Chairman. Hearst Magazines, Inc.: Debi Chirichella, President; Regina Buckley, Chief Financial and Strategy Officer, Treasurer; Catherine A. Bostron, Secretary. Copyright 2023 by Hearst Magazines, Inc. All rights reserved. *Prevention* is a registered trademark of Hearst Magazines, Inc. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS. (See DMM 507.1.5.2); NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: Send address corrections to PREVENTION, PO Box 6000, Harlan, IA 51593-1500. In Canada: Postage paid at Gateway, Mississauga, Ontario; Canada Post Publication Mail Agreement Number 40012499. GST #R122988611. Mailing Lists: From time to time we make our subscriber list available to companies that sell goods and services by mail that we believe would interest our readers. If you would rather not receive such mailings by postal mail, please send your current mailing label or exact copy to: Prevention, Mail Preference Center, PO Box 6000, Harlan, IA 51593-1500.

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# Stay Sharp

Fun ways to give your brain a little workout

## MISSING LETTERS

What single three-letter word will fit into the spaces to create other words?

\_\_\_ \_ \_ Y

CH \_\_\_ \_ \_

F \_\_\_ \_ \_ ER

H \_\_\_ \_ \_ ONY

## COLORFUL MATH

What number does each color represent?

$$\text{Blue Circle} + \text{Purple Circle} + \text{Green Circle} = 17$$

$$\text{Purple Circle} + \text{Purple Circle} + \text{Green Circle} = 15$$

$$\text{Blue Circle} + \text{Blue Circle} + \text{Blue Circle} = 18$$

$$\text{Green Circle} + \text{Blue Circle} + \text{Green Circle} = 20$$

# CODED MESSAGE

Use the coordinates to fill in an insight from Mark Twain.

**A:** c4, d3

**B:** d6

**D:** d4, e5

**E:** c2, d5, f6

**G:** b2, d2

**I:** a6, b3, b6, c6

**K:** c1

**L:** b5

**N:** b1, d1, f1

**O:** a2, e3, e6, f4

**P:** c3

**R:** a3, a4

**S:** b4

**T:** e1, f3

**U:** e4

**W:** a1, f5

**Y:** a5, c5, e2

**':** f2

	1	2	3	4	5	6
a						
b						
c						
d						
e						
f						

**ANSWERS: Missing Letters:** ARM. **Colorful Math:** Lavender = 4, Blue = 6, Green = 7. **Coded Message:** Worrying is like paying a debt you don't owe.



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