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CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

EASY



50 Insider Tips to Keep You Healthy

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN & JAYNE HURLEY

It's tough to change your diet. We are creatures of habit.

Yet we change at the drop of a hat when we find a new cereal, soup, or frozen dinner at the supermarket. And we're perfectly willing to try a new salad, sandwich, or entrée on the restaurant menu.

Maybe that's because it's so easy to do those things. Well, here are 50 changes that we've made. (Okay, some we're still working on.) If any are new to you, why not give them a spin?

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MEMO FROM MFJ

The Fragility of Progress



I was relaxing on the subway on my way home from work last month when I saw the headlines. "Cuts to FDA budget hurt food safety, critics say." "GOP questions rules on healthier eating." I was livid....but not surprised.

Let me back up a little. Just last year, Congress passed legislation that broke new ground to protect the public's health, including:

- *The Child Nutrition Act*, which ordered the U.S. Department of Agriculture to set rules to keep junk foods out of cafeterias, vending machines, and school stores.

- *The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act*, which revamped the food-safety system by focusing on prevention, not detection, of deadly outbreaks.

- *The Affordable Care Act* (the health reform law), which required restaurants, vending machines, and other foodsellers that belong to chains with 20 or more units to list calories on the menu, menu board, or selection button. That law also seeks to cut health-care costs by investing in prevention, which has never been done on a meaningful scale.

But under the guise of cutting costs for business and government, the House Appropriations Committee voted to crimp or cripple those and other programs. One congressional spokesperson castigated the laws as "classic nanny-state overreach." (Previously, his boss, Republican Rep. Jack Kingston of Georgia, had said, "It's absurd how safe our food is.")

So the committee slashed the FDA's budget by 12 percent. That can cripple the agency, because the FDA desperately needs more inspectors here and abroad if it's going to protect the public from contaminated foods. The committee also "urged" the FDA to

exempt from calorie labeling everything from deli counters at supermarkets to popcorn and soft drinks at movie theaters. In appropriations committee lingo, "urge" means "we'll slash your budget next year if you don't do what we want."

The committee also told the USDA to forget about offering more fruits and vegetables in school meals. And it urged the USDA to stop working with other agencies on guidelines to protect children from ads for junk food.

I got even angrier when I saw that the Appropriations Committee voted to cut funding by 10 to 15 percent for the WIC (Women Infants Children) program, agricultural research, rural development, and more...and that it included a measure that would make it harder for the FDA to regulate everything from antibiotics fed to pigs to menthol cigarettes.

Meanwhile, in other committees, House legislators are gunning for the

landmark prevention funds that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has started giving to local and state governments. Much of the money is earmarked for making healthy foods more available and for campaigns against unhealthy foods and beverages. Never mind that obesity is costing the country around \$150 billion a year...and that the costs of heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure are huge.

Clearly, the House is trying to cut expenses in this new era of austerity. But its main motivation may be to block government regulations that reduce industry profits. I deplore wasteful government spending as much as anyone, but investing in healthier diets that curb disease can save money in the long run.

I hope that the Senate agrees.

Mike Jacobson
Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D.
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If Congress slashes the FDA's budget, the agency's safety checks on imported foods, which are already low, will decline further.

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The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is the nonprofit health-advocacy group that publishes **Nutrition Action Healthletter**. CSPI mounts educational programs and presses for changes in government and corporate policies.

EASY

50 Insider Tips to Keep You Healthy

Eat more fruits and vegetables. Cut back on salt, saturated fat, and sugar. Switch to whole grains. Exercise for at least an hour a day.

Many people know all that and more. But how do you translate those broad strokes into the dozens of diet and exercise decisions you make each day? Here are some of our favorite tips to get you started.

AT THE STORE

Buy a bag of cut veggies.

Maybe you shouldn't be too tired (or rushed or distracted) to wash and cut up your own broccoli, carrots, and cauliflower. But you are. Don't sweat it.

Companies like Dole and Mann's are happy to do it for you. And the cost isn't much higher if you consider that there's no waste.



Other options: buy your broccoli, carrots, and other vegetables at the salad bar or buy a bag of frozen (unseasoned) veggies, which come in Asian, Mediterranean, and other blends. Open bag, dump into a skillet or wok, add sauce, and cook (see p. 7). Dinner is served.

Replace processed meats with no-nitrite-added deli meats.

Red and processed meats are a "convincing cause of colorectal cancer," say the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research.¹ Eat no more than about 18 ounces of red meat

(beef, pork, lamb) a week and no processed meats at all, advised the experts.

"Ounce for ounce, consuming processed meat increases risk twice as much as consuming red meat," said their report.

The nitrites that are added to processed meats may make them worse than other red meats. To avoid them—and to dodge some sodium—look for no-nitrite-added, lower-sodium or no-salt-added deli meats by Applegate Farms, Boar's Head, Dietz & Watson, and Wellshire Farms.

Try a veggie burger.

People who eat more red meat have a higher risk of colorectal cancer. Seafood and poultry eaters do not.

But fish and chicken don't taste like burgers. Some veggie burgers do. And soy-based burgers (like Morningstar Farms Grillers) are protein-rich. (Check the label. Grain- or veggie-based burgers, like Gardenburgers, have less than 10 grams of protein.)

Veggie burgers have more salt than ground beef, but at least you don't have to worry about food poisoning from *E. coli*.

Switch to "thins" or light bread.

The landmark OmniHeart study tested diets that were rich in vegetables, fruit, and low-fat dairy foods and low in saturated fat, salt, and sugar.² All of them lowered blood pressure and LDL ("bad") cholesterol.

Each had just four or five servings of grain (preferably whole grain) for someone who needs 2,000 calories a day. Instead, people got most of their carbs from

vegetables, fruit, and beans. A serving of grain was just one slice of bread or a half cup of rice, cereal, or pasta. Uh-oh.



One way to stretch your grains: try thin whole-grain rolls (like Pepperidge Farm Deli Flats or Arnold or Oroweat Sandwich Thins), which have just 100 calories per bun.

Or try light breads (like Arnold or Oroweat Bakery Light or Pepperidge Farm Carb-Style or Very Thin), which have just 40 to 60 calories per slice—about half what you'd get in ordinary whole-grain breads.

Turn spinach into salads.

A 9 oz. bag of spinach makes three three-cup servings, says the Dole label. (In the OmniHeart study, one cup was a serving.)

A three-cup serving has 10 percent of a day's potassium, plus 510 percent of a day's vitamin K, 160 percent of a day's vitamin A, 40 percent of a day's vitamin C and folate, 15 percent of a day's magnesium and iron, and 8 percent of a day's calcium and fiber. All for 20 calories. 20!

Any greens are good greens, but spinach is a superstar. And so easy. (See p. 7 for recipes.)

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Go for a whole-grain version of your favorite cereal.

Kashi 7 Whole Grain Nuggets instead of Post Grape-Nuts, bran flakes instead of corn flakes, and General Mills Total instead of Kellogg's Product 19 (though you don't need the vitamins that are added to either of them if you take a multivitamin).

Buy sliced mango, cantaloupe, pineapple, or other fruit.

You'll still pay less than you would for a fruit salad at a restaurant.

Try a new vegetable.

"People who eat a wider variety of vegetables tend to be thinner," says Susan Roberts, director of the Energy Metabolism Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston.³ That's probably because the vegetables are displacing higher-calorie foods.

"Something like half of all Americans' vegetables are iceberg lettuce, potatoes, onions, and canned tomatoes," says Roberts. "So there's a lot of room for increasing the variety of vegetables."



Buy a set of ramekins.

Look for ramekins (or other bowls) that hold just a half cup (4 oz.) of food. Use them to serve frozen yogurt, ice cream, or other sweets. The serving may look small, but it matches the serving on Nutrition Facts labels. It's a single scoop of ice cream.

Use frozen fruit for smoothies.

Blend unsweetened frozen strawberries or blueberries with milk or plain yogurt to make an instantly cold smoothie. Home-made smoothies trounce the sugar-loaded concoctions sold in restaurants.

Read labels to dodge salt.

You can now find canned tomatoes, tuna, and beans with no salt added. Zip.

Fresh chicken used to have no salt added. Now you have to check to make sure.

Check the Nutrition Facts label to see if a competing brand of any packaged food has less sodium. You'd be surprised.

Make junk food boring.

Trying to cut calories? Don't stock your kitchen with five kinds of cookies, ice cream, pastries, or other sweets.

"If you have a greater variety, you eat more," says Roberts. That also applies to a meal. "In a one-day study, people who were offered pasta in three different shapes ate 600 calories, but people who were offered pasta in one shape ate 500 calories," she notes.⁴

Variety is one reason people eat more food at restaurants, adds Roberts. "You never go out to eat the same thing you have in your fridge."

AT HOME

Eat plain yogurt or mix plain with sweetened yogurt.

Unsweetened yogurt offers the most nutrient bang for your calorie buck. For extra protein, try creamy-even-if-it's-fat-free plain Greek yogurt. If plain yogurt is too tart for you, mix plain and sweetened.

Replace a side of rice, potatoes, or pasta with beans.

Swap that side of rice or pasta or potatoes for a bean or lentil dish (see p. 7). Why?

In the OmniHeart study, the higher-protein diet (and the higher-unsaturated-fat diet) led to lower blood pressure, triglycerides, and LDL ("bad") cholesterol than the higher-carb diet.² And half the protein came from plant foods.

"You can make bean salads and bean soups," says Janis Swain, the dietitian who planned the OmniHeart meals. "Beans are inexpensive, so it's an economical way to get a good protein-vegetable mix."

Eat fish twice a week.

Their omega-3 fats may protect your heart. A fatty fish like salmon or trout is best.

Cover half your plate with vegetables or fruit.

Forget the "side" of veggies. They should occupy more plate real estate than your protein or pasta, rice, or potatoes.



The OmniHeart diets have 11 servings of fruit and vegetables a day. A serving is one piece of fruit, a half cup of cooked vegetables, or one cup of raw vegetable (like lettuce), so it's not that much. Your main-dish salad could easily be four servings.

Check serving sizes. Check serving sizes. Check serving sizes.

Does your cereal have 200 calories per cup or per half cup? Does your can of condensed soup contain one serving or 2½ servings? Does that frozen lasagna, pizza, burrito, pot pie, macaroni and cheese, or stir-fry dinner serve one, two, or more?

Don't check the calories or any other Nutrition Facts until you check the serving size. Even *we* sometimes forget.

Snack tip:

Lay slices of cantaloupe, honeydew, mango, or papaya on a plate, squeeze on fresh lime juice, eat.

Drink (mostly) calorie-free.

"Liquid calories don't register," says Susan Roberts. "If you drink a liquid in the middle of the morning, you eat as much at lunch as if you never drank anything."

That applies not just to sodas, but to fruit juices, energy drinks, and sweetened iced tea or coffee.⁵ (Milk, shakes, and smoothies do register, just not as much as the calories in a solid food.)

"The average American gets 22 percent of their calories from liquids," says Roberts. "That's a huge amount." Switching to calorie-free beverages "ought to be an easy way to get rid of calories."

In one study, people gained weight

after three weeks of drinking about three cans a day of regular soft drinks, but not after drinking that many diet soft drinks.⁶ And soda drinkers are more likely to gain weight than non-drinkers, according to dozens of studies.⁷

“Good grief,” says Roberts. “Why would anyone drink a 12 oz. can of regular soda when you can save 150 calories with a diet soda?”

Better yet, avoid the questionable artificial sweeteners in most diet soft drinks by drinking water instead. Or sweeten your tea or coffee or lemonade (fresh-squeezed lemon plus ice water) with safe Splenda.

Add veggies to boost potassium and lower salt.

Mix a bagged salad kit with a bag of undressed lettuce. Add a pound of steamed broccoli to your favorite Chinese take-out dish. Add fresh or frozen veggies to frozen skillet meals. You can also add unseasoned bulgur, quick-cooking brown rice, or whole wheat couscous or orzo to an equal amount of a prepared seasoned grain.

Each mouthful ends up with more potassium and less salt. Why not give the old blood pressure a break?



Snack tip:

Open a bag of sugar snap peas. Rinse. Eat.

Make your snacks fruit or vegetables.

What better way to tide you over to your next meal than a low-calorie, light-yet-filling orange, half cantaloupe, peach, plum, banana, or a bowl of cherries, berries, or grapes? Try baby carrots, grape tomatoes, or slices of bell pepper or cucumber with a few tablespoons of hummus or bean dip. Yum.

Cook with canola or olive oil.

Replacing saturated fats (in meat and dairy) with unsaturated fats lowers LDL

(“bad”) cholesterol. Most people get plenty of polyunsaturated-rich soybean oil in restaurants and prepared foods (including mayonnaise and salad dressing). So at home, use either extra-virgin olive oil (when you want its flavor) or canola oil. Both are rich in monounsaturated fat.

Switch from tuna to salmon.

Canned salmon has more healthy omega-3 fats than canned tuna, and the salmon is almost always wild. Raincoast Trading and other companies offer unsalted canned salmon.

Squeeze in fruits and veggies.

Add diced bell pepper and halved grape tomatoes to tuna salad. Add grapes and diced apples to chicken salad. Add sautéed mushrooms, bell peppers, and onions to pasta. You’ll feel full on fewer calories.

Try nuts instead of croutons.

Nuts and seeds have some plant protein and polyunsaturated fat, but they’re too calorie dense to eat with abandon.

So sprinkle them on salads instead of croutons (which are usually salty white-flour bread). Or add them to yogurt, cereal, fruit, and vegetable dishes. For extra flavor, toast them first in the oven or a skillet until they *start* to turn brown.

Drink water before meals.

Trying to lose weight? Many people believe that drinking water helps them eat less. Researcher Brenda Davy has evidence that it works.

The associate professor of nutrition at Virginia Tech assigned 48 overweight men and women aged 55 to 75 to eat a low-calorie diet. Half were told to drink roughly two cups of water before each meal.⁸

After 12 weeks, the water drinkers lost about 16 pounds while the others lost 11 pounds. “It’s an easy way to manage hunger and lose weight,” says Davy.

Stick to one *small* cookie or chocolate or other sweet a day.

Sugars raise damaging triglycerides, and most people don’t have space for their empty calories. In the OmniHeart trial, the healthiest diets had room for only one or two teaspoons of added sugars a day. A 6 oz. “fruit” yogurt or half cup of

ice cream has 3 to 5 teaspoons of sugar. Many breakfast cereals have 2 teaspoons in a small (¾-cup) serving.

Still, it may be unrealistic to banish nearly all sweets from your diet. Instead, stick with one piece of chocolate, a frozen fudge bar, or one small cookie a day. A 440-calorie, eight-teaspoons-of-sugar Panera Chocolate Chipper Cookie doesn’t qualify. Sorry.

Snack tip:

Rinse container of blueberries. Eat.

Buy a pedometer.

Okay, you can’t just buy it. You have to wear it. “Get a pedometer and aim for a 10,000-a-day step goal,” says Davy. “That’s about five miles of walking.”



In a review of 26 studies on more than 2,700 people, researchers found that using a pedometer boosted activity by 27 percent.⁹ It helps to have a step goal.

“The nice thing is that the 10,000 steps can be accumulated over the day,” says Davy. “If you know that you need to get your step count up and you’re sitting at a computer, you’re more inclined to get up and walk around.”

Work out to TV.

Watching TV? Why not do some strength training? Crunches, push-ups, biceps curls, lunges, you name it—they may even be easier to get through in front of the tube.

Got a treadmill or stationary bicycle? You know where to park it.

Shoot for 8 to 12 reps.

To build strength, you have to use enough—but not too much—weight. Rule of thumb: if you can do at least 8, but no more than 12, repetitions, you’re using the right weight.¹⁰ Up to 13? It’s time to switch to a heavier weight. (Yay.)



AT A RESTAURANT

Appetizer: order a side salad.

"I wasn't that hungry, so I ordered an appetizer instead of an entrée," we recently overheard a young woman say. Yikes.

At a restaurant like The Cheesecake Factory, appetizers like quesadillas, spinach and cheese dip, nachos, Buffalo wings, and Thai lettuce wraps have 1,000 to 1,600 calories. They're as bad as or worse than an entrée.

Your best bet: order a house or side salad...or just wait for your entrée.

Pack up half your meal.

"Every portion of food at a restaurant is two to three times what you need," says Susan Roberts. "Restaurants are toxic because they condition you to expect large portions. So at home, regular portions seem stingy."

Solution? "Before the food gets to your plate simply tell the server, 'I only want half. Could you put the rest in a container and I'll take it with me?'" she suggests. "It's a really easy thing to do, and it means that the calories aren't sitting in front of you."

No bread or chips, thanks.

Do you need a basket of bread or tortilla chips on your table? Didn't think so.

Asian: veggies, not noodles.

At Asian restaurants, order mixed vegetables with sautéed (not deep-fried and breaded) chicken, tofu, shrimp, or scallops. You'll end up with 600 to 900 calories, but that's still better than the 1,000 to 1,500 calories in noodle dishes like lo mein and pad Thai, or in deep-fried dishes like Orange or Crispy Beef, Sweet & Sour Pork, and General Tso's, Lemon, Honey, and Sesame Chicken.

Pizza: thin, not thick, crust.

Thin crust should save 150 calories (at California Pizza Kitchen) to 800 calories (at Uno Chicago Grill). Also ask for just half the cheese, a whole-grain crust (if available), and veggies instead of meat or multiple cheese toppings.

Mexican: tacos, not a burrito.

Order one or two tacos or one enchilada à la carte with a green (not taco) salad and you have a chance of leaving a Mexican restaurant with fewer than 1,000 calories. Fajitas? Fine, if you share.

Mexican: a bowl, not a burrito.

Even a chicken burrito at Chipotle or Qdoba has 1,000 to 1,300 calories. A burrito bowl has no tortilla, so it trims 300 calories' worth of white flour off your plate. You save another 200 calories if you skip the rice.

Greek: souvlaki, not a gyro.

A gyro (pita sandwich with fatty shaved meat) packs about 800 calories and a day's saturated fat and sodium. Get a chicken souvlaki pita and you'll cut the calories in half.

Steak: sirloin or filet mignon.

With about 400 calories, those leaner cuts beat the 600 to 1,200 calories in fattier cuts like ribeye, Porterhouse, New York strip, T-bone, prime rib, or anything else (except grilled chicken or fish) on a steakhouse menu.



Salad, not sandwich.

Not sure whether to pick a main-dish salad or a sandwich? Go with the salad. Most restaurants offer enough chicken, nuts, beans, and other toppings to fill you up.

Double the veggies.

Instead of potatoes, rice, or pasta, ask for two sides of vegetables or extra salad. For variety, check out the veggies that come with other entrées on the menu.

Think petite.

Look for appetizers, sandwiches, desserts, or other items that the restaurant calls "small," "mini," "demi," or "treat" size. Think of them as normal, and everything else as supersized.

Bagels: make it mini or thin.

Who wants to spend 300 to 400 calories on a (typically) white-flour bagel? And replace the thick layer of cream cheese with a light swipe. At Au Bon Pain, a

serving of plain lite cream cheese still has 120 calories (and almost no protein).

Get salad dressing on the side.

Salad dressings can add 400 to 600 calories to a typical main-dish salad. Order your dressing on the side so you can add less (which works if you toss it well).

Coffeehouse: go light or "skinny."

In a (16 oz.) grande "skinny" latte or Macchiato at Starbucks, the sugar-free syrup and the non-fat milk each cuts 70 calories. A Light Frappuccino saves about 200 calories, thanks to non-fat milk, no whipped cream, and Splenda instead of sugar.

Potato: sour cream, not butter.

Love potatoes? A loaded baked potato (cheese, bacon, sour cream, butter) has 500 calories. A side of mashed has 400. Go with a plain baked potato (300 calories) and just 1 tablespoon of sour cream (25 calories and 1½ grams of saturated fat) rather than butter (100 calories and 7 grams of sat fat).

No cheese, please.

Restaurants squeeze cheese in or on nearly every sandwich, salad, pasta, taco, and burger, and on many kinds of steaks, fries, chicken breasts, vegetables, soups, breads, biscuits, and rolls. At some restaurants, you'll find cheese on pretty much every non-Asian dish on the menu. Who needs the calories and saturated fat?

Ice cream: get "kid" size.

Order the smallest serving (not necessarily a "small") of ice cream or frozen yogurt. Add 25 calories for a cake cone, 60 for a sugar cone, and 160 for a waffle cone. A chocolate-dipped waffle cone adds about 300 calories. Urp.

And beware the Nutrition Facts at your favorite frozen-yogurt shop. The imaginary half-cup serving may be less than even the smallest size the chain offers. 🍷

¹ www.dietandcancerreport.org

² *J. Am. Med. Assoc.* 294: 2455, 2005.

³ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 69: 440, 1999.

⁴ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 42: 932, 1985.

⁵ *Int. J. Obes. Relat. Metab. Disord.* 24: 794, 2000.

⁶ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 51: 963, 1990.

⁷ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 84: 274, 2006.

⁸ *Obesity* 18: 300, 2010.

⁹ *J. Am. Med. Assoc.* 298: 2296, 2007.

¹⁰ www.exrx.net/WeightTraining/Guidelines.html

EASY

In Your Kitchen

BY KATE SHERWOOD

Work more beans and vegetables onto your plate. That's easy for us to say. Now it's easy for you to do. These simple dishes let you go from "I'm hungry" to "Dinner is served" in minutes.



Tomato Avocado Salad

Basic Vinaigrette

Whisk together the ingredients and keep in the fridge for the next time you want a salad.

- 1 Tbs. Dijon mustard**
- 3 Tbs. mayonnaise**
- 2 Tbs. red wine vinegar**
- ½ tsp. salt**
- 1 tsp. honey**
- ⅓ cup canola oil**

Toss ¼ cup of the dressing with any of these combinations:

- ✓ 2 cups lentils + 1 cup shredded carrots + 3 sliced scallions
- ✓ 8 cups salad greens + 1 lb. grilled shrimp + 1 chopped tomato
- ✓ 1½ cups navy beans + 1 pint halved cherry tomatoes + 1 diced avocado
- ✓ 6 cups chopped Romaine + 1 cup sliced bell peppers, red onion, and cucumber + ¼ cup crumbled feta
- ✓ 6 cups mixed salad greens + 1 can tuna + 2 chopped roasted red peppers
- ✓ 1 lb. steamed asparagus (or green beans or snap peas or snow peas) + ¼ cup toasted sliced almonds
- ✓ 2 cups shaved fennel + 2 cups shaved baby zucchini and summer squash + 1 cup shelled edamame

Spicy Stir-Fried Veggies & Tofu

You can use chicken or shrimp instead of tofu. For less heat, cut the red pepper flakes.

- 1.** In a large non-stick skillet, stir-fry ¾ lb. chopped vegetables (try broccoli, snow peas, and carrots) in 1 Tbs. canola oil until tender crisp. Remove from the skillet.
- 2.** Stir-fry 1 package of cubed water-packed tofu in 1 Tbs. canola oil until lightly browned. Push to the side of the skillet.
- 3.** Add 1 Tbs. canola oil and stir-fry 3 Tbs. chopped garlic and 2 tsp. red pepper flakes for 30 seconds.
- 4.** Stir in ½ cup orange juice and ½ cup low-sodium ketchup, ¼ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce, and 1 tsp. pepper. Simmer for 5 minutes.
- 5.** Return vegetables to the skillet and toss to coat with the sauce. Serve with sliced scallions and brown rice.



Spicy Stir-Fried Veggies & Tofu

Roasted Broccoli & Cauliflower

The lemon dressing is also perfect for asparagus, green beans, tomatoes, zucchini, or summer squash.

- 1.** Toss 1½ lbs. broccoli and cauliflower florets in 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil. Roast on a baking tray at 400° F for 20 minutes.
- 2.** Whisk together the zest of ½ lemon, 1 Tbs. lemon juice, 2 Tbs. each extra-virgin olive oil, Parmesan, hot water, and chopped toasted pine nuts. Season with freshly ground black pepper.
- 3.** Toss with the roasted florets.



Roasted Broccoli & Cauliflower



Sundried Tomato & Mushroom Salad

Balsamic Vinaigrette

Shake the ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Store in the fridge so it's always handy.

- ⅓ cup balsamic vinegar**
- 1 clove garlic, minced**
- 1 tsp. dark brown sugar**
- ½ tsp. salt**
- ⅔ cup extra-virgin olive oil**

Toss ¼ cup of the dressing with any of these combinations:

- ✓ 1½ cups cannellini beans + 1 jar drained artichoke hearts + 1 cup sliced celery + shaved Parmesan
- ✓ 6 cups arugula + ½ pint halved cherry tomatoes + 2 oz. fresh mozzarella + fresh basil
- ✓ 8 cups salad greens + ¼ cup oil-packed sundried tomatoes + 4 sliced button mushrooms
- ✓ 1½ cups chickpeas + 2 chopped roasted red peppers + ¼ cup diced red onion
- ✓ 2 cups lentils + 1 diced apple + ¼ cup chopped walnuts
- ✓ 2 lbs. grilled or broiled vegetables (try zucchini, summer squash, eggplant, and peppers)
- ✓ 2 lbs. roasted root vegetables (try butternut squash, parsnips, carrots, turnips, rutabaga, and onion)

Sautéed Greens with Garlic & Chopped Tomatoes

Once you add the greens, cooking time varies from 1 or 2 minutes for spinach or Swiss chard to 5 to 10 minutes for kale leaves, mustard greens, or escarole.

In a large skillet, sauté 6 cloves chopped garlic in 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil until golden. Stir in 2 cups chopped tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in 1 lb. spinach or other greens in small batches and cook until just tender. Serve topped with shaved Parmesan.



Coffee for the Prostate?

Coffee may lower the risk of lethal prostate cancer, says a new study.

Researchers tracked nearly 48,000 men in the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study from 1986 to 2006. Those who drank one to five cups of coffee a day had about a 30 percent lower risk of lethal (fatal or metastatic) prostate cancer than those who consumed no coffee. Men who drank at least six cups a day had a 60 percent lower risk.

It didn't matter if the coffee was regular or decaf.

What to do: One study isn't enough to prove that coffee prevents lethal prostate cancer, but it's good news for coffee lovers.

Six (8 oz.) cups of coffee may sound like a lot, but one grande at Starbucks (16 oz.) puts you a third of the way there. Five percent of the men in the study drank at least six cups a day, and 19 percent drank at least four cups.

J. Natl. Cancer Inst. 103:1, 2011.

HDL Surprise

Taking high doses of niacin to raise HDL ("good") cholesterol levels doesn't lower the risk of heart attacks and may slightly raise the risk of stroke. The findings led the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) to end the AIM-HIGH trial 18 months early.

AIM-HIGH gave a daily dose of Niaspan or a placebo to roughly 3,400 people with a history of heart disease. Niaspan is a slow-release high dose (2,000 milligrams) of the B vitamin niacin. All of the participants had low HDL and high triglycerides and were also taking a statin drug (Zocor) to lower their LDL ("bad") cholesterol.

As expected, niacin raised HDL and lowered triglycerides. However, niacin takers had no lower risk of heart attacks, strokes, angioplasty, coronary bypass surgery, or other cardiovascular events than placebo takers.

What's more, 1.6 percent of the niacin takers—but only 0.7 percent of the placebo takers—had a stroke during the study. "It remains unclear whether this trend in AIM-HIGH arose by chance," said the NHLBI.

What to do: "Patients who were not in the AIM-HIGH trial should not stop taking

high-dose, extended-release niacin without talking to their doctor first," said NHLBI acting director Susan Shurin.

What's more, the findings don't apply to people who aren't on statin drugs. Nor do they apply to the lower doses of niacin found in multivitamins, which are typically only 20 mg (the Daily Value), though some brands have up to 100 mg.

The results stunned some researchers because people with low HDL levels have a higher risk of heart disease. However, two other drugs that raise HDL also failed to protect the heart. Fenofibrate didn't lower the risk of heart attacks in patients with diabetes, and torcetrapib actually increased heart attack risk. (Torcetrapib never reached the market.)

It's not clear what people with low HDL should do. Losing excess weight, getting more exercise, and drinking alcohol (no more than one or two servings a day) can raise HDL, but not markedly. Cutting back on carbs, especially sugars, losing excess weight, and taking fish oil can lower triglycerides.

www.nih.gov/news/health/may2011/nhlbi-26.htm

Flawed Salt Study

Don't be misled by a recent flawed study that found a *higher* risk of dying of heart attack or stroke among people who consumed the least salt.

Researchers used a 24-hour urinary sodium level to assess typical sodium intakes in 3,681 people. Roughly eight years later, they found a 56 percent higher risk of dying of heart attack, stroke, or other cardiovascular event in those who had had the lowest urinary sodium levels.

However, people who consumed the least sodium (about 1,100 milligrams a day) may have been ill, since their intake was so much lower than the average participant's (about 4,000 mg). Illness could explain why they ate less food (and, therefore, less sodium) and why they had a higher risk of dying.

Also, people who exercise more tend to consume more food, yet the researchers didn't adjust for exercise. What's more, with only 84 deaths from cardiovascular causes, the study was too small to reach solid conclusions.

The study did find that systolic blood pressure rose the most in those with the highest sodium intakes, as expected.

What to do: Ignore this study. Cut back on sodium by looking for lower-sodium versions of prepared foods and by preparing your own foods whenever possible.

"Take this study with a huge grain of salt, and then dispose of it properly," advised Walter Willett, chair of the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health.

J. Am. Med. Assoc. 305:1777, 2011.

Stroke & Sausage

Sausages, hot dogs, salami, ham, bologna, and other processed meats may increase the risk of stroke.

Swedish researchers followed more than 40,000 men aged 45 to 79 for 10 years. Those who reported eating the most processed meats (more than two ounces a day) had a 23 percent higher risk of stroke than those who ate the least (less than two-thirds of an ounce a day).

What to do: This study can't prove that processed meats can cause a stroke. But studies have linked them to so many illnesses—diabetes, heart disease, and colon cancer—that it's worth cutting back. 🍖

Am. J. Clin. Nutr. doi:10.3945/ajcn.



DAIRY

BY DAVID SCHARDT

Hero or villain?

For most people, milk, yogurt, and cheese are important sources of calcium, protein, potassium, and (in some cases) vitamin D. But to others, they're "white poison" that hurts humans (abdominal discomfort, broken bones, prostate cancer), dairy cows (inhumane living conditions), and the environment (greenhouse gas emissions, waste buildup).

Is dairy as good for you as its proponents claim? Or as bad as its critics charge? When it comes to human health, the answer lies somewhere in the middle. Here's some of what researchers are finding.

Bones

"Milk is Bad for You and Your Bones," warns saveourbones.com. The Web site, which offers a "revolutionary program that reverses osteoporosis in three easy steps" (yours for just \$67), recommends mushrooms, onions, walnuts, apples, and other foods, but not dairy products, because "milk depletes the calcium from your bones."

"That makes no sense if you look at the scientific evidence," counters bone researcher Katherine Tucker, chair of the department of Health Sciences at Northeastern University in Boston. "Contrary to what some people believe, animal protein does not appear to be harmful to bones."

Tucker and her colleagues are looking at how diet affects bone and fracture risk in the residents of Framingham, Massachusetts. "What we're finding there—and it has also been found in several other studies—is that bone mineral density is actually higher in those eating more protein and lowest in those eating the least protein," she notes.

Milk critics have long insisted that eating animal protein, including dairy protein, creates an acidic environment in the kidneys, which our bodies neutralize by leaching calcium from the bones. "So even though milk contains calcium, it ends up sapping your bones of that crucial mineral," claims saveourbones.com.

Not so, says Jay Cao of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Grand Forks Human Nutrition Research Center in North Dakota. "Urinary calcium excretion does

increase after consuming animal protein, but that calcium comes from increased absorption from food, not from bones."

Cao and his colleagues showed that when they traced radioisotope-labeled calcium in meals eaten by postmenopausal women.¹ Researchers at the University of Connecticut found the same.²

"Women lose calcium as they age, but eating dairy foods does not make this worse," says Tucker.

The Bottom Line: Eating dairy foods does not appear to harm bones.

Colon Cancer

"Milk probably protects against colorectal cancer," concluded a recent panel of experts convened by the World Cancer

Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research.³ (The finding didn't apply to yogurt or cheese.)

When researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health pooled the results of 10 studies that tracked the diets and diseases of more than half a million people in five countries for six to 16 years, they concluded that those who consumed at least one cup of milk a day had a 15 percent lower risk of being diagnosed with colorectal cancer than those who drank less than two cups a week.⁴

"We don't know whether it's the calcium or something else in milk that may be lowering the risk," says researcher John Baron of the University of North Carolina.

Most researchers would probably bet on calcium, which is "the only nutrient that has been shown in randomized clinical trials to prevent the development of neoplasms, or tumors, in the colon," Baron notes.

He and his colleagues studied more than 800 people who had precancerous lesions removed from their colons. Those who were randomly assigned to take 1,200 milligrams of calcium from a supplement every day for four years had a 15 percent lower risk of lesions' coming back than those who were given a placebo.⁵

But that was only true among people whose vitamin D levels were above average. (Baron is currently testing whether 1,000 IU a day of vitamin D by itself prevents lesions from recurring.)

Would milk also help keep colon polyps from returning? "I think it probably would," says Baron. "But that hasn't been tested so we don't know for sure."

The combination of calcium and vitamin D protects against colon cancer in animals.

When researchers at Rutgers University in New Jersey fed laboratory mice a Western-style high-fat, low-fiber diet that was low in calcium, vitamin D, and folic acid, a quarter of them developed colon tumors. But when mice fed the same diet also got calcium and vitamin D beginning early in life, none got tumors.⁶

Scientists don't know how calcium



No bones about it. Dairy foods supply 70% of our calcium, 18% of our protein and vitamin B-12, and 16% of our vitamin A and potassium.





Protecting prostates. To play it safe, men shouldn't get more than the recommended amount of calcium from food and supplements combined.

protects the colon. Among the theories: It may bind bile acids that are made in the liver to digest the fats in foods, preventing the acids from inflaming the mucosal lining. Or calcium-sensing receptors in the colon may keep precancerous lesions from proliferating.

The Bottom Line: Milk probably protects against colon cancer.

Prostate Cancer

"There is limited evidence suggesting that milk and dairy products are a cause of prostate cancer," a panel of experts from the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research concluded recently.³ "Limited" means that the evidence falls short of "probable" or "convincing."

"The evidence is inconsistent, and that makes it difficult to make recommendations to men about what to do," says epidemiologist June Chan of the University of California at San Francisco.

How might dairy affect the prostate?

Milk increases the levels of insulin-like growth factor-1 in the body, and higher levels of IGF-1 may raise prostate cancer risk.⁷ (IGF-1 also promotes bone and muscle growth.)

Or it could be the calcium.

The panel of cancer experts concluded that diets high in calcium (around 1,500 mg a day or more) are a "probable cause of prostate cancer."³

However, it's reassuring that calcium didn't promote tumors in a clinical trial. Men who were randomly assigned to take 1,200 mg of calcium every day (in addition to the 900 mg they got from their food) for four years had no greater risk of prostate cancer over a 10-year period than placebo takers.⁸

What should men do? To play it safe,

shoot for no more than the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for calcium, which is 1,000 mg a day—from food and supplements combined—for men up to age 70 and 1,200 mg a day after 70.

Typical daily calcium intakes from food alone are about 1,000 mg for men up to age 70 and 800 mg for men over 70.⁹

The Bottom Line: High intakes of dairy foods are linked to a higher risk of prostate cancer in some studies, but not in others. There are too few studies to draw firm conclusions.

Blood Pressure

"Dairy products have a consistent, modest blood-pressure-lowering effect," says Penny Kris-Etherton of Pennsylvania State University. Kris-Etherton served on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines committee that raised the government's recommendation from two servings of dairy products a day to three.

"The effect is seen especially in people with prehypertension and in African-Americans," she says. About a third of adults in the United States have prehypertension, which is blood pressure between 120 over 80 and 139 over 89.

What's the evidence for dairy?

The fruit-and-vegetable-rich DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet reduced systolic blood pressure (the higher of the two numbers) by an average of 7 points in people with hypertension.

However, adding two servings a day of low-fat dairy foods (and cutting saturated fat) lowered blood pressure by an extra 4 points. And the DASH-plus-dairy diet trimmed blood pressure in those with prehypertension by an average of 4 points.¹⁰

"This modest effect of dairy foods might be valuable in preventing people from progressing from prehypertension to full-blown hypertension," says Kris-Etherton.

And, in fact, in the Women's Health Study, which followed more than 28,000 middle-aged and older women for 10 years, those who averaged at least two servings of low-fat dairy foods a day had about a 10 percent lower risk of developing high blood pressure than those who averaged two or fewer servings a week. Women who ate high-fat dairy foods or who got their calcium from supplements had no lower risk.¹¹

The Bottom Line: A diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low-fat dairy and low in saturated fat lowers blood pressure in people with hypertension or prehypertension.

Weight Loss

"Milk-cheese-yogurt. Burn more fat, lose weight," the dairy industry's TV and magazine ads used to say. That was before 2007, when the government pulled the plug on the campaign after critics charged that the evidence was inconclusive. Still, the question lingers: If you include dairy foods in a weight-loss diet, will you lose more pounds or fat than if you just cut calories? No, concludes a new trial funded by industry but conducted by government scientists.

"It was not what industry was expecting," says Marta Van Loan, who led the study with her fellow researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Western Nutrition Research Center at the University of California at Davis.

Van Loan's team fed 71 overweight or obese men and women diets that contained 500 fewer calories a day than they needed to maintain their current weight. Roughly half were assigned diets that included three or four servings a day of dairy foods, while the other half got diets with less than one serving a day of dairy.

After 12 weeks of dieting, the high-dairy group had lost the same amount of weight (14 pounds), the same amount of fat (11 pounds), and the same amount of belly fat as the low-dairy group.

"So it was all about cutting calories, not whether they ate dairy foods," Van Loan concludes. The results have been presented at scientific conferences but haven't yet been published.

Still, the dairy eaters did benefit.

"In the low-dairy group, we saw a loss of bone mineral in the hip as well as

No Milk? No Problem.

Don't drink cow's milk? Most soy, rice, and almond milks are fortified with at least as much calcium and vitamin D as cow's milk, and none of them contain lactose. Some also have as much vitamin A, vitamin B-12, and potassium as cow's milk.

Our advice: stick to soy milk because it has almost as much protein (6 to 9 grams in an 8 oz. glass) as cow's milk (8 to 11 grams). Almond and rice milk have only 1 gram.

Just avoid chocolate-flavored soy milk, which contains around 20 grams (5 teaspoons) of added sugar.

markers of increased bone turnover and bone loss," says Van Loan. "We didn't see that in the high-dairy group."

What's more, when all of the dieters were offered two buffet dinners near the end of the study where they could eat all they wanted, the high-dairy group ate about 100 fewer calories at each meal than the low-dairy group.

"So, while dairy foods may not help you lose weight, they might have a slight satiating effect that can help you eat less to keep lost weight off," says Van Loan.

Of course, it would take more research to know if dairy curbs appetite over the long haul.

The Bottom Line: Eating more dairy foods while you're cutting calories won't help you lose more weight or more fat.

Lactose Intolerance

"Fifty million Americans experience intestinal discomfort after consuming milk, cheese, or ice cream," claims Robert Cohen, who runs the anti-dairy Web site notmilk.com. "Symptoms include stomach pain, gas, and diarrhea."

That number is likely an exaggeration, counters Purdue University's Dennis Savaiano, who has been studying lactose intolerance for 30 years. (Some of his work has been funded by the dairy industry.)

"Among those who think they're lactose intolerant, the research shows that a significant portion—anywhere between a third and three-fourths depending on the group being studied—are really not," says Savaiano.

"When you give them lactose disguised in a beverage so they don't know what they're getting, they don't show the signs of lactose intolerance.¹² For whatever reason, they've come to believe that they can't eat dairy foods, but in fact they can."

Lactose intolerance is the inability to adequately digest lactose, the sugar in milk. Infants and children have lactase enzymes in their small intestine that break lactose down into the simple sugars glucose and galactose, which are then absorbed into the bloodstream.

If lactose isn't digested in the small intestine, it passes into the large intestine, where it can draw fluid and produce gas, causing bloating and other discomfort.

But even if you're an adult without lactase enzymes, the bacteria in your large intestine may still be able to digest lactose for you, says Savaiano.

"If you consume lactose regularly for a

Milking Dairy

In several of the studies below, dairy foods were linked to an increased or reduced risk of disease. But the studies couldn't say whether dairy—or something else about dairy eaters—was responsible.

■ **Diabetes.** In four studies that followed more than 200,000 middle-aged U.S. men and women for up to 20 years, those who consumed an average of three to five servings of dairy foods a day had a 14 percent lower risk of being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes than those who consumed an average of fewer than 1½ servings a day.¹

■ **Breast cancer.** In eight studies that tracked more than 350,000 women in the United States, Canada, Sweden, and the Netherlands during the 1980s and 1990s, those who consumed the most dairy foods were no more or less likely to be diagnosed with pre- or postmenopausal breast cancer than those who consumed the least.²

■ **Ovarian cancer.** Among more than half a million North American and European women who were followed for 7 to 22 years, consumption of milk, cheese, yogurt, and ice cream wasn't linked to the risk of ovarian cancer.³ The researchers found an increased risk only when they looked at women who consumed at least 30 grams of lactose a day from all sources. (That's the amount in 2½ cups of milk.) However, the link was "weak" and "marginally significant." There was insufficient data for the World Cancer Research Foundation and the American Institute for Cancer Research to reach any conclusion.

¹ *J. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab.* 92: 2017, 2007.

² *Int. J. Epidemiol.* 31: 78, 2002.

³ *Cancer Epidemiol. Biomarkers Prev.* 15: 364, 2006.

few weeks, a different metabolic capacity will develop in your colon as the microflora bacteria there adapt to digesting lactose," he notes.¹³

People who are truly lactose intolerant may be able to include dairy foods in their diet without symptoms, according to Savaiano, if they follow a few simple rules:

■ Limit lactose to no more than 12 grams (the amount in 8 oz. of milk) at a time.



Would your grandma try to poison you? Many people who are lactose intolerant can probably include dairy foods in their diet.

■ Consume lactose with other foods to slow down the transit of the sugar through your intestines and give it more time to be digested.

■ Eat dairy foods regularly so that your intestinal bacteria remain adapted to digesting lactose.

Yogurt has about 10 grams of lactose per cup (the yogurt's bacteria help digest the lactose). A serving of hard cheese or cream cheese has a gram or less, while a half cup of cottage cheese or ice cream has 4 to 5 grams.

Why try to work dairy into your diet? "People who avoid dairy foods usually don't compensate by consuming other sources of dietary calcium," says Savaiano.

The Bottom Line: Many people who believe they are lactose intolerant can adjust to consuming dairy foods without digestive discomfort. 🍌

¹ *J. Nutr.* 141: 391, 2011.

² *J. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab.* 90: 26, 2005.

³ www.dietandcancerreport.org/downloads/Second_Expert_Report.pdf

⁴ *J. Natl. Cancer Inst.* 96: 1015, 2004.

⁵ *J. Natl. Cancer Inst.* 95: 1765, 2003.

⁶ *Carcinogenesis* 30: 88, 2009.

⁷ *Ann. Intern. Med.* 149: 461, 2008.

⁸ *Cancer Epidemiol. Biomarkers Prev.* 14: 586, 2005.

⁹ *J. Nutr.* 140: 817, 2010.

¹⁰ *N. Engl. J. Med.* 336: 1117, 1997.

¹¹ *Hypertension* 51: 1073, 2008.

¹² *N. Engl. J. Med.* 333: 1, 1995.

¹³ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 64: 232, 1996.



Cool Foods

BY KATE SHERWOOD

The secret to simple dishes like these is to use the freshest vegetables you can find. Time to hit your local farmers market. 🌱

Got a question or suggestion? Write to Kate at healthycook@cspinet.org.

Tomato & Chickpea Salad



This salad is the perfect excuse to treat yourself to some heirloom tomatoes. I love the zebra stripe ones, with their beautiful deep color and tart-sweet flavor.

- 1 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 lbs. tomatoes, chopped
- 1 15 oz. can no-salt-added chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 20 fresh basil leaves, chopped
- ¼ cup crumbled feta
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

In a large bowl, whisk together the thyme, garlic, vinegar, salt, and oil. Toss with the remaining ingredients and season with black pepper. Serves 6.

PER SERVING (1½ cups)

Calories: 180 Sodium: 170 mg
 Total Fat: 9 g Cholesterol: 5 mg
 Sat Fat: 2 g Carbohydrates: 19 g
 Protein: 6 g Fiber: 5 g



Photos: Jorge Bach.



Snap Peas with Mustard Vinaigrette



You can also make this simple-but-satisfying dish with green beans, wax beans, snow peas, or asparagus.

- 1 large egg
- 1½ lbs. snap peas
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 Tbs. whole-grain Dijon mustard
- ⅛ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

In a medium pot, bring the egg and enough water to cover to a boil. Cook for 8 minutes. Remove the egg with a spoon and immerse in cold water until cooled. Peel and finely chop the egg, then set it aside.

In the same pot, steam or boil the snap peas until tender, about 3 minutes. Rinse under cold water to cool, then drain well.

In a large bowl, whisk together the remaining ingredients. Add the snap peas and toss to coat. Garnish with the egg. Serves 6.

PER SERVING (1 cup)

Calories: 110 Sodium: 125 mg
 Total Fat: 5 g Cholesterol: 30 mg
 Sat Fat: 1 g Carbohydrates: 10 g
 Protein: 4 g Fiber: 3 g

Grilled Corn & Red Onion Salad



No grill? Broil the vegetables on high on a lightly oiled baking sheet.

- 5 ears corn
- 1 red onion, cut in half-inch slices
- 1 green pepper, quartered lengthwise
- 1 red pepper, quartered lengthwise
- 2 jalapeños (optional)
- ½ cup low-fat sour cream
- 2 Tbs. lime juice
- 1 small bunch cilantro
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 avocado, diced
- 1 head butter lettuce, washed and dried

Grill the corn, onion, peppers, and jalapeños over a hot grill until lightly charred, turning once. When cool enough to handle, cut the corn from the cobs, chop the onion and peppers, and remove the stems and seeds from the jalapeños.

Purée the jalapeños with the sour cream, lime juice, cilantro, and salt in a food processor until smooth. Toss with the corn, onion, peppers, and avocado. Serve on the lettuce. Serves 6.

PER SERVING (2 cups)

Calories: 150 Sodium: 190 mg
 Total Fat: 7 g Cholesterol: 5 mg
 Sat Fat: 1.5 g Carbohydrates: 22 g
 Protein: 5 g Fiber: 6 g





TREME EATING 2011

Big eats...big Americans

BY JAYNE HURLEY & BONNIE LIEBMAN

Let's get one thing clear: Restaurants have nothing to do with the nation's obesity epidemic. It's not their fault that two out of three adults and one out of three children are either overweight or obese.

True, a typical restaurant entrée (without an appetizer or dessert) has 1,000 calories. And doozies like these dishes range from 1,200 to 2,500 calories, according to the chains' own numbers. But no one's forcing us to order them.

Look at it this way: Some diners may *want* to put on extra weight, boost their blood pressure, and bump up their LDL ("bad") cholesterol. Restaurants are just there to help.

Information compiled by Melissa Pryputniewicz.



Code Red

Remember when a slice of cheesecake was a modest wedge about an inch-or-so high? **The Cheesecake Factory Ultimate Red Velvet Cake Cheesecake** has one of those wedges. In fact, it has *two*. They alternate with two wedges of red velvet cake, each of which probably contains a cupcake's worth of cake.

So now you're up to two slices of cheesecake plus two cupcakes...plus cream cheese frosting plus white chocolate shavings plus a small silo of whipped cream. Plus sizes are just a step away!

Each hefty slice (the ones we bought averaged close to three-quarters of a pound) brings 1,540 calories and 59 grams of saturated fat (three days' worth) to your dessert plate. That's impressive, even for The Cheesecake Factory. Only the Reese's Peanut Butter Chocolate Cake Cheesecake has more calories (1,610), though its sat fat falls 18 grams short of the Ultimate's.

It would take two servings of the restaurant's generous Original Cheesecake to equal one Ultimate Red Velvet. An entire tub (1½ quarts) of Breyers All Natural Homemade Vanilla ice cream has 1,680 calories and 60 grams of sat fat, for heaven's sake.

Whose fat cells have room for 1,540 calories *after* dinner? They oughta rename the place The Cheesecake Fattory.

Built-In Bacon

"Hickory-smoked bacon is blended right into the beef to make our burgers juicy and delicious with bacon flavor in every bite." That's how **IHOP** describes its new line of Bacon 'N Beef Burgers.

Finally. A chain has figured out how to help its patrons eat more food with less chewing. Why bother slapping bacon slabs *on top* of your burger, when you can grind them right *into* the meat? Makes 'em go down nice and smooth.

And that makes it easier for you to swallow the **Monster Bacon 'N Beef Cheeseburger**, which delivers not one, but "two thick, juicy, Bacon 'N Beef burger patties smothered with American and Provolone cheeses on a Romano-Parmesan bun." How thoughtful. *One* thick, juicy, bacon-infused burger would almost certainly leave you hungry in a few hours.

The tab: 1,250 calories and two days' worth of saturated fat (42 grams), with a bonus 1,590 milligrams of sodium (a day's supply, thanks in part to the bacon). And don't forget the sides, which range from fresh fruit (80 calories) to onion rings (620 calories). That leaves seasoned fries (300 calories) somewhere in the middle, which is where your Monster Bacon 'N Beef Burger will likely make its future home.





Meltdown

“Four fried mozzarella sticks and melted American cheese grilled between two slices of sourdough bread.” That’s how **Denny’s** menu describes its **Fried Cheese Melt**, which is “served with wavy-cut French fries and a side of marinara sauce.”

It’s “grilled cheese with a twist,” says Denny’s. Sure sounds like “the same old cheese and bread repackaged into a new sandwich” to us. What’s next? A Cheese Nachos sandwich? A Cheese Fries Melt? (A fries melt might be a tough sell with a side of fries, but you never know.)

There’s a simple elegance to a dish like the Fried Cheese Melt: mozzarella cheese sticks coated with breading, embedded in melted cheese, and served between two slices of white bread toast with tomato sauce on the side.

It’s as elegant as 1,260 calories (mostly from the fries and the refined carbs in the bread and breading), plus enough cheese to supply 21 grams of saturated fat (a day’s worth). And don’t forget the two days’ sodium (3,010 milligrams).

All for just \$4. “The possibilities are wide open,” says Denny’s Web site. They’re wide, all right.

Belly Burger

It’s not easy to make your burger stand out these days. Adding cheese, onion rings, or an extra burger are old tricks.

You’ve got to be creative, like **The Cheesecake Factory**. Its **Farmhouse Cheeseburger** is “topped with grilled smoked pork belly, cheddar cheese, onions, lettuce, tomato, mayo and a fried egg.” (Get it? You’d find the egg in a farmhouse and the big-bellied pig in a pen nearby.)

The Cheesecake Factory isn’t the first chain to slap an egg on a burger. Red Robin calls its Royal Red Robin Burger “the aristocrat of all burgers because we crown it with a fresh fried egg.” IHOP’s Bacon ‘N Beef Bacon & Egg Cheeseburger includes “one egg over medium.” And you can get Denny’s Bacon Slamburger with an “egg cooked to order.”

But the pork belly—thick slabs of bacon—helps make those bacon burgers look skimpy. The Farmhouse brings 1,530 calories and 36 grams of saturated fat seasoned with 3,210 milligrams of sodium to your insides. And that’s without the 460 calories and 1,460 mg of sodium in the fries.

Suggested tag line: From our pork belly to yours.



Shakedown

“Your Health—Just as Important as Taste,” says the hard-to-find “Nutritional Information & Ingredients” page on the **Cold Stone Creamery** Web site.

That’s a comfort, since the chain is all about the “Ultimate Ice Cream Experience.” It’s “the place to indulge your ice cream dreams.”

Take the Founder’s Favorite Signature Creation—ice cream, pecans, brownie, fudge, and caramel. A large (“Gotta Have It”) in a chocolate-dipped waffle cone or bowl has 1,590 calories and 42 grams of saturated fat.

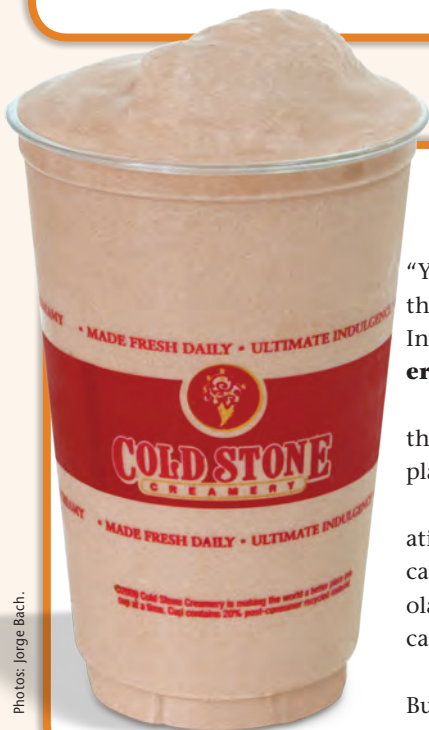
Clearly, health is Cold Stone’s No. 1 priority. But the chain’s ice cream shakes take health to

a new level. A “Gotta Have It” **PB&C Shake** (peanut butter, chocolate, and milk), for example, squeezes a full day’s calories (2,010) and 3½ days’ worth of sat fat (68 grams) into each 24 fl. oz. plastic cup.

Granted, that doesn’t sound so healthy, what with so many adults and children either overweight or obese. But what about those who *aren’t*? Their fat cells and artery linings may not yet be packed solid. And don’t forget the underweight.

Don’t worry. Cold Stone’s got them covered. Even a 16 fl. oz. small (“Like It”) PB&C Shake has 1,280 calories.

See? Cold Stone cares.





Getting Stuffed

“Provolone cheese-stuffed meatballs braised in a rich marinara sauce with a hint of crushed red pepper, layered over tender fettuccine pasta lightly blended with Parmesan cream sauce,” croons **Applebee’s** menu.

Lightly? The menu shouldn’t print that word within a six-inch radius of the chain’s **Provolone-Stuffed Meatballs With Fettuccine**.

Each serving of pasta (four cups at the Applebee’s we visited) plus garlic bread harbors 1,520 calories and 43 grams of saturated fat (two days’ worth), with a side of 1½ teaspoons

of sodium (3,700 milligrams). It’s like eating two of Applebee’s 12 oz. Ribeye Steaks plus a side of Garlic Mashed Potatoes. Yum.

Your waistline and arteries may want to know why pasta needs both a marinara *and* a Parmesan cream sauce. Way back in the pre-obesity-epidemic 1970s, pasta came dressed with a single sauce. And meatballs needed no cheese stuffing.

But that was before the dairy industry started a campaign to get restaurants to work more cheese into their menus. Whether the dairy pushers urged Applebee’s to stuff its meatballs with cheese, we don’t know. But once customers get used to seeing cheese on sandwiches, salads, soups, and pastas, restaurants may not need any prompting to cheese-up even more dishes.

At some Applebee’s, for example, you can get the provolone-stuffed meatballs in a Stuffed Meatball Sandwich (1,090 calories, 28 grams of sat fat, 3,540 mg of sodium). And you can add chili cheese fries on the side for an extra dollar or two (plus an extra 550 calories, 11 grams of sat fat, and 1,500 mg of sodium).

Nice.



King Wrong

According to **Great Steak**, an extra-large order of Great Fries weighs roughly 1½ pounds and delivers 930 calories and 2,490 milligrams of sodium to hips, bellies, and blood vessels that probably have too much of both.

But that’s not enough for the Great Steak folks. Not when they can sell Great Fries topped with Philly Cheese (Cheese Fries), or with Philly Cheese and chili (Coney Island Fries), or with Philly Cheese and jalapeño peppers (Nacho Fries), or, last but nowhere near least, with Philly Whiz, chopped bacon, and sour cream & chives (**King Fries**).

An extra-large King Fries (which isn’t available at all locations) dispatches 1,500 calories to your overcrowded fat depots and 4,980 mg of sodium (more than three days’ worth) to your rapidly aging blood vessels. And all that cheese, bacon, and sour cream makes sure that the saturated fat reaches 33 grams. It’s like eating three McDonald’s Quarter Pounders with Cheese sprinkled with two-thirds of a teaspoon of salt.

Nothing like a light snack at the mall.

Steak Out

Nothing about **Morton’s** (“The Steakhouse”) looks extreme. It’s a staid, pricey venue for a business lunch or special dinner.

But Morton’s menu is a minefield of extremes. Take the **Porterhouse Steak**, a classic hunk of aged prime beef that weighs 24 ounces before cooking. It’s a 1,390-calorie addition to your mainframe that comes with 36 grams of saturated fat seasoned with 1,200 milligrams of sodium, but no sides. (What do you expect for just \$55 or \$60?)

A side of, say, **Mashed Potatoes** adds 850 calories, 34 grams of sat fat, and 1,300 mg of sodium. And half of Morton’s renowned **Creamed Spinach**—the side serves two—tosses in 330 calories plus 15 grams of sat fat and 460 mg of sodium.

Your grand total: 2,570 calories, 85 grams of sat fat, and 2,980 mg of sodium...not counting the complimentary bread and butter. That’s the calories of eight pieces of Original Recipe chicken plus mashed potatoes and gravy, coleslaw, and four biscuits at KFC, with an extra 1½ days’ sat fat on the side.

That’s giving *you* the business. 🍴



The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), founded in 1971, is an independent nonprofit consumer health group. CSPI advocates honest food labeling and advertising and safer and more nutritious foods. CSPI's work is supported by *Nutrition Action Healthletter* subscribers and foundation grants. CSPI accepts no government or industry funding. *Nutrition Action Healthletter*, first published in 1974, accepts no advertising.

For information about CSPI's national Food Day, October 24, go to www.FoodDay.org

RIGHT STUFF

FOOD PORN

COOL SLAW



Cole slaw is a classic. It goes with just about anything that comes off the barbecue. That mix of cool, crunchy, and creamy is the perfect foil for something hot and smoky or spicy.

But cole slaw, which comes from the Dutch word “koolsla” (cabbage salad), doesn't need all that kool. Just ask **Dole**, **Mann's**, and other salad-in-a-bag makers.

The broccoli stalks that go into **Broccoli Slaw** (Mann's calls it **Broccoli Cole Slaw**) aren't quite as nutrient-packed as the florets, but they're an excellent source of vitamins A and C, folate, potassium, and fiber, all for just 25 calories in each quarter-bag (1-cup) serving.

Preparation couldn't be easier: dump into a bowl and pick a dressing. Half a cup of almost any ranch, poppyseed, thousand island, or slaw dressing by Marie's, Cindy's, or Annie's should be enough for the whole bag. Or make your own dressing. For a classic flavor, mix ½ cup mayo, 1 Tbs. mustard, 1 Tbs. cider vinegar, and ½ tsp. celery seed. Or try ¼ cup mayo, 1 Tbs. reduced-sodium teriyaki sauce, and 1 Tbs. cider vinegar for an Asian twist.

Or stir-fry the slaw in 1 Tbs. peanut oil in a very hot skillet until well browned. Remove the slaw and stir-fry some cubes of extra-firm tofu or chicken in 1 Tbs. peanut oil until lightly browned. Stir in ¼ cup SoyVay Veri Veri Teriyaki or your own favorite lower-sodium stir-fry sauce. Return the slaw to the pan and serve with brown rice.

It's veggie easy.

Dole: (800) 356-3111

dish OF THE MONTH

60-Second Salad Dressing

Whisk 2 Tbs. regular mayonnaise with 1 tsp. balsamic vinegar, 1 Tbs. orange juice, and ½ tsp. salt. Toss with 8 cups of salad greens and top with 2 cups of chopped vegetables—try bell pepper, carrot, celery, cucumber, tomato, and avocado.

330 MAGNUM



Magnum is the world's top-selling ice cream bar. But until April, it wasn't available in the world's biggest ice cream market.

Consumer-products giant Unilever (which also owns Ben & Jerry's, Breyers, Good Humor, Klondike, and Popsicle) is pulling out the big guns—starting with a \$10 million ad campaign—to let us know that, “At long last—Magnum, the international ice cream sensation made with thick Belgian chocolate, has arrived in the U.S.”

Just in time. Because Americans could really use a new line of six premium ice cream bars whose chocolate coating is “so incredibly thick it cracks when you bite.”

Take the **Magnum Double Caramel**, which manages to affix 330 calories and 14 grams of saturated fat to a stick. How? By covering vanilla bean ice cream with a “chocolatey coating” (mostly coconut oil and sugar) and a caramel sauce (mostly water, sugar, corn syrup, skim milk powder, and coconut oil), before coating the bar with a thick Belgian milk chocolate shell.

Unilever isn't trying to steal customers away from Dove and Häagen-Dazs, the company told *The Wall Street Journal*. Magnum's entry should “at least double the size of the market for super-premium ice cream novelties,” noted a company spokesperson.

If Magnum bars take off here, the market won't be the only thing whose size you can expect to double.

Unilever: (800) 634-7532