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**HEALTH LETTER™**  
 CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

## CarboLOADING

*Do You Overdo Refined Grains?*

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN

Eat less sugar. Check.  
 Eat more whole grains.  
 Check. Eat less refined  
 grain. Check.

Or maybe not. Many people would be surprised to know just how much refined grain they consume.

An adult who eats 2,000 calories a day should swallow no more refined grain than you'd get in three small slices of bread, says the U.S. Department of Agriculture. (And there's good evidence that less is even better.)

Yet you'd get at least double that day's worth in a single restaurant serving of pasta, pancakes, pizza, pad Thai, or virtually any dish served with rice or noodles at a Chinese restaurant.

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# The Food Agenda — 2011



Last year was extraordinarily productive. It started in March with passage of the health-reform law, which mandated calorie labeling on menus and menu boards at chain restaurants and provided roughly \$1 billion per

year to promote healthy eating and physical activity.

The year ended in rousing fashion when, in the final nail-biting weeks, Congress passed two laws: one that will get junk foods out of schools (we've been rooting for that since the late 1970s) and one that gives the Food and Drug Administration the power to prevent foodborne illnesses instead of just patching things up after people get sick. That law constitutes the biggest improvement in the FDA's ability to protect the public's health since 1938!

Now we need to ensure that those gains aren't rolled back.

On food safety, for instance, consider the views of Representative Jack Kingston of Georgia, the incoming chair of the House Appropriations subcommittee that funds the FDA. Kingston is vowing to withhold funding for the new FDA inspectors.

"This is big government, nanny-state overreach," he said recently. "Our food is 99.99 percent safe. It's absurd how safe our food is."

What's absurd is that food plants are inspected only about once every ten years while several thousand people die unnecessarily every year.

According to the *Washington Post*, the House may also try to cut travel budgets for federal employees. That would prevent food-safety inspectors from visiting factories.

And Sarah Palin says that she is outraged that First Lady Michelle Obama is urging

families to exercise more and eat healthier. While Congress was debating the law to get junk foods out of schools, Palin told her Twitter followers, "I'll intro kids 2 beauty of laissez-faire via serving them cookies amidst school cookie ban debate; Nanny state run amok!"

Then there's the House Republicans' vow to repeal the entire health-reform law (which won't get past the Senate or President Obama).

The irony in all those attacks is that conservative Republicans are just as susceptible

as liberal Democrats to deadly pathogens, high sodium levels, trans fat in food, and dishonest labels.

As important as it is to prevent back-sliding, we will try to move ahead on other fronts this year.

For example, the FDA should:

- ban partially hydrogenated oil to get rid of most trans fat;
- restrict sodium levels

in our over-salted food supply, as the Institute of Medicine recommended last year; and

- ban artificial food dyes, which are used mainly to trick consumers into thinking that foods have more fruit or other real ingredients, and which may pose risks of cancer, allergic reactions, and hyperactivity.

We also will be celebrating this year. The Center for Science in the Public Interest, *Nutrition Action's* publisher, has declared October 24<sup>th</sup> national Food Day. It will be a time for everything from delicious potluck dinners to conferences at universities to initiatives by local health departments to encourage people to eat healthier. To learn more, write to me at [foodday@cspinet.org](mailto:foodday@cspinet.org).



If the House withholds funding for new FDA food inspectors, Americans will be less safe.

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# CarboLOADING

## Do You Overdo Refined Grains?

**W**e're eating about 45 percent more calories from grains—mostly refined—than we did in 1970. So what?

The extra shows up in our spare tires. And it displaces the vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, and whole grains that could help lower blood pressure and possibly the risk of heart disease.

Here's how and why to keep refined grains from sneaking into your diet.

In 1970, the average American consumed about 430 calories a day from grains (wheat, rice, corn, oats, etc.), according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

By 2008, we were up to 625 calories a day, a huge bump (see "Grains on the Rise"). And roughly 90 percent of the grain we eat is refined, not whole. Only one other category—fats and oils, which includes butter, oils, margarine, and shortening—supplies that many calories. (So much for the popular notion that we've been on a low-fat diet.) Added sugars also climbed, though less so. They're up by about 60 calories a day since 1970.

How does so much refined grain creep into our diets? Restaurants pile on the pasta, rice, pancakes, breads, and other cheap carbs (see "Step Away from the Carbs," p. 5).

"If you go to a Mexican restaurant and get a burrito, if you go to a Chinese restaurant and get rice, if you get a huge plate of pasta and huge pieces of bread, you're eating well over the amount that's recommended all day," says Penny Kris-Etherton, Distinguished Professor of Nutrition at Pennsylvania State University.

Many restaurants combine multiple carbs into one meal. That burrito stuffs rice into a tortilla. And that's after you dive into the free basket of

tortilla chips or polish off a cheese quesadilla appetizer.

Like many Italian restaurants, Olive Garden offers unlimited bread with your pasta. That often follows an appetizer

tiramisu for dessert.

It's not just restaurant food. We're eating bigger bagels, muffins, doughnuts, scones, ice cream cones, pretzels, cookies, wraps, and slices of bread (most of which are made with white flour).

"People see bread labels that say '15 different grains,'" says Kris-Etherton. "They think, 'Wow, this is super.'" They don't notice that each slice has 100 to 120 calories. And a bagel can easily have 300 calories.

"But if you look at a thin slice of bread, which has 70 calories, that's what we used to eat before," notes Kris-Etherton. Now 70-calorie slices are called "small."

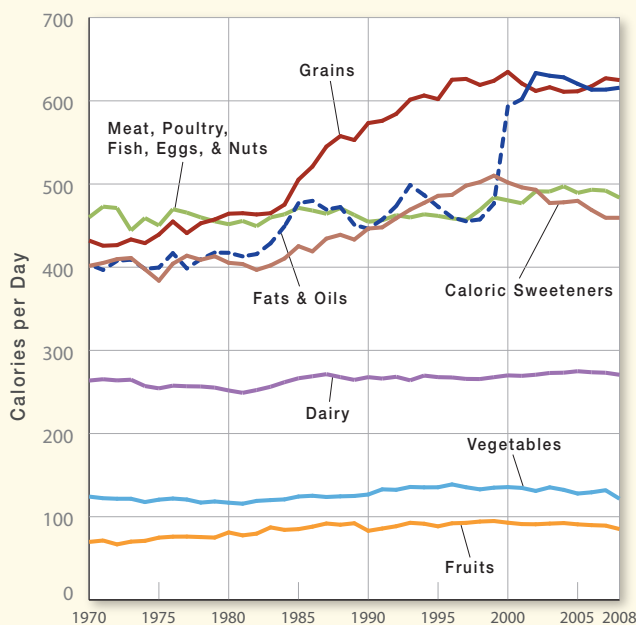
Why are we eating oversized breads, bagels, burritos, and rice bowls? In part, it's because flour and rice are cheap. Restaurants look generous when they pile them on our plates, and we eat what's there. After a while, the servings don't look oversized anymore.

And our alarms don't seem to go off, as they might for sweets or fried foods.

"The danger is that some people are assuming they can't get fat from carbs like bagels, pretzels, and spaghetti,"

>>>>

## Grains on the Rise



Calories from grains (wheat, corn, oats, rice, etc.) have jumped by 45 percent since 1970. (We use a dashed line for fats & oils before 2000 because the number of firms reporting oil production rose in that year, making the increase in consumption look steeper than it probably was.)

says Alice Lichtenstein, director of the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at the Jean Mayer U.S. Department of Agriculture Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston.

Perhaps we're more focused on avoiding saturated fats and added sugars. Both steps are crucial. Saturated

(and trans) fat raises the risk of heart disease. Added sugars are empty calories that may promote obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and gout (see "Sugar Overload," Jan./Feb. 2010).

"Roughly 35 percent of our calories are coming from SoFAS—solid fats and added sugars," says Kris-Etherton. "We're eating way too many added sugars. But we also have to be mindful of the amount of refined grains we're eating."

Here's why.

### 1. Too many carbs can raise triglycerides and lower HDL ("good") cholesterol.

For some people, too many carbohydrates of *any* kind may threaten the heart.

"Toward the end of the 1990s, we realized that some people on very-high-carb diets were developing dyslipidemia," says Lichtenstein. Those carbs were mostly coming from added sugars and refined grain.

The "dyslipidemia" was a mix of high triglycerides (at least 150 mg/dL) and low HDL (under 50 for women or under 40 for men). "Both are associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease," notes Lichtenstein. "They move in lock-step."

Genes make some people more susceptible to having high triglycerides and low HDL, but the obesity epidemic has made the problem worse. "You're more likely to develop dyslipidemia if you're overweight," says Lichtenstein. "And we certainly aren't getting slimmer."

High triglycerides, low HDL, and a large waist (over 40 inches in men or 35 inches in women) are three of the five signs of the "metabolic syndrome." The other



A typical restaurant panini, wrap, or other sandwich has 300 to 500 calories' worth of bread. That's equivalent to four to six small slices.

two are elevated blood pressure (at least 130 over 85) and elevated blood sugar (at least 100 mg/dL).<sup>1</sup>

"Approximately 47 million Americans have the metabolic syndrome," says Kris-Etherton. That's one out of every four adults.<sup>2</sup>

"It may soon surpass cigarette smoking as the number-one risk factor for

cardiovascular disease," she notes.

People with the metabolic syndrome also have a higher risk of diabetes.<sup>1</sup>

Extra carbs may matter even if you don't have the metabolic syndrome. (You need three of the five signs to have it.)

"People who have either high or average triglyceride levels experience an effect of carbohydrates," says Frank Sacks, professor of cardiovascular disease prevention at the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston.

"When we tested overweight or obese people, carbohydrates raised their triglycerides unless their triglycerides were really low." (He's talking about levels under 100 mg/dL.)

Do some carbs raise triglycerides more than others? Sugars appear to raise them the most.<sup>3</sup> Beyond that, it's not clear whether refined grains raise triglycerides more than whole grains.

"Is the amount or the type of carbohydrate the most important thing?" asks Sacks. "That's a critical question."

So far, the evidence is skimpy. For example, the British WHOLEHeart Study found no difference in triglycerides (or HDL) when roughly 300 overweight men and women were told to eat two to four ounces a day of whole grains instead of refined grains for several months.<sup>4</sup>

And when Stanford researchers assigned 120 adults

to eat more whole grains, beans, and vegetables instead of refined grains and sugar, they saw no difference in triglycerides (or HDL).<sup>5</sup>

"Do whole grain and refined grains have equal effects?" asks Sacks. "That's what our current research is trying to find out."

### 2. Limiting refined grains can help lower blood pressure.

If you don't have high blood pressure now, odds are that you will. More than half of people over 60 have hypertension, one of the key causes of strokes and heart attacks.

And cutting back on salt isn't the only way to keep a lid on blood pressure.

In 1997, the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) study essentially replaced much of the saturated fat and added sugar in a typical American diet with fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy foods.<sup>6</sup> With 10 servings a day of fruits and vegetables, a typical 2,000-calorie DASH diet had room for only seven (small) servings of grain.

The results were stunning: Systolic blood pressure (the higher number) fell by 5.5 points overall after eight weeks on the DASH diet. Among those with high blood pressure, it plummeted by 11.4 points. "The DASH diet was a real breakthrough for lowering blood pressure," says Sacks.

What's more, the DASH diet slashed LDL ("bad") cholesterol by more than 10 points.<sup>7</sup> And "triglycerides didn't go up, even though it was higher in carbs than the typical American control diet," he adds.

In the follow-up OmniHeart Trial, Sacks and colleagues tweaked the DASH diet to

replace some of its carbs (mostly the added sugars) with either extra unsaturated fat (mostly from oils) or extra protein (more than half of it from beans, nuts, seeds, and tofu).<sup>8</sup> Each OmniHeart diet had room for only four or five small servings of grain a day (see "Safe at the Plate," p. 6).

"The unsaturated



A serving of chow fun (shown here), lo mein, pad Thai, or other noodles can pack an entire day's worth of grains (and 700 to 1,500 calories).

fat and protein diets were superior,” notes Sacks. But that’s fine-tuning, he adds. “If people could just switch to a regular DASH diet, that would make a huge difference.” (See [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/h\\_eating/h\\_eating.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hbp/prevent/h_eating/h_eating.htm).)

Do refined grains raise blood pressure more than whole grains? DASH and OmniHeart both included whole grains, but weren’t designed to answer the question. So far, only one study—which needs to be replicated—has tried to.

When Scottish researchers gave people three servings a day of whole-grain breads and cereals for three months, the participants had markedly lower blood pressure than those who got three servings a day of refined grains.<sup>9</sup>

The drop—5 to 6 points in systolic pressure—is what you’d expect to see with drugs used to treat hypertension, say the authors, and “could result in decreases of the incidence of coronary artery disease and stroke by 15 percent and 25 percent, respectively.”

### 3. Whole grains are healthier than refined grains.

There’s no shortage of reasons to eat whole grains instead of refined grains:

■ **Obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.** In study after study, people who eat more whole grains have a lower risk of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes than those who eat fewer whole grains.<sup>10-12</sup>

But whole-grain eaters are also less likely to smoke and more likely to exercise and eat a healthier diet.<sup>13</sup>

## Step Away from the Carbs

Here’s a sampling of typical high-carb foods and a few lower-carb ones. Each serves just one person, according to the menus. If you eat 2,000 calories a day, shoot for about 80 grams of carbs from grains (preferably whole). “Carbs” in this chart include added and naturally occurring sugars, so it may be easier to count servings of grains (see “Safe at the Plate,” p. 6).

Food	Calories	Carbs (g)*
P.F. Chang’s Cantonese Chow Fun with Beef	1,490	188
P.F. Chang’s Sesame Chicken Rice Bowl	1,070	152
Chili’s Molten Chocolate Cake	1,020	144
Olive Garden Capellini Pomodoro	840	141
Cinnabon Classic Roll	880	127
California Pizza Kitchen Traditional Cheese Pizza	1,000	122
Olive Garden Five-Cheese Ziti al Forno	1,050	112
Uno Chicago Grill Cheese and Tomato Deep Dish Pizza	1,740	117
Noodles & Company Asian Bowls Pad Thai (regular)	700	117
IHOP Original Buttermilk Pancakes (5) with pancake syrup (¼ cup)	770	115
Olive Garden Spaghetti & Meatballs	1,110	103
Au Bon Pain Pecan Roll	810	99
Chipotle Chicken Burrito	970	96
Panera Tomato & Mozzarella Panini on Ciabatta (full)	770	96
Dunkin’ Donuts Chocolate Chip Muffin	590	92
California Pizza Kitchen Red Velvet Cake	740	91
Outback Steakhouse Carrot Cake	450	86
Chili’s California Club Sandwich	1,100	85
Au Bon Pain Crumb Cake	720	85
Olive Garden Cheese Ravioli with Marinara Sauce	660	84
Dunkin’ Donuts Blueberry Crumb Donut	500	84
Au Bon Pain Ham & Swiss on Baguette	650	81
Panera Signature Mac & Cheese (large)	980	75
Au Bon Pain Blueberry Muffin	490	74
Starbucks Cinnamon Chip Scone	480	70
Outback Steakhouse Baked Potato (with butter)	520	65
Panera Tuna Salad Sandwich on Honey Wheat (full)	470	65
Auntie Anne’s Original Pretzel	340	63
Starbucks Multigrain Bagel	320	62
Au Bon Pain Chicken Caesar Asiago Wrap	610	61
Panera Chocolate Chipper Cookie	440	59
Panera Oatmeal Raisin Cookie	370	57
White rice, cooked (1 cup)	240	53
Au Bon Pain Double Chocolate Cupcake	320	49
McDonald’s French Fries (medium)	380	48
Brown rice, cooked (1 cup)	220	46
Spaghetti, cooked (1 cup)	220	43
Pepperidge Farm Farmhouse 12 Grain Bread (1 slice)	120	21
Pepperidge Farm Small Slice 100% Whole Wheat Bread (1 slice)	70	13

\*Carb numbers include added and naturally occurring sugars. Source: company information. Chart compiled by Zahra Hassanali. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.

Researchers “adjust” for those and other known differences, but it’s possible that something the researchers *don’t* know about whole-grain eaters lowers their risks.

“Most of the data suggests that unrefined grains are better than refined,” says Lichtenstein. “But if you look at those data, they’re mostly association studies that can’t prove cause-and-effect. So it’s not clear.”

On the other hand, by eating whole grains, you can’t lose.

“It’s important to stress whole grains because they have benefits beyond those associated with blood lipids and blood pressure,” adds Lichtenstein. For example, “their fiber creates a feeling of fullness that can help curb your appetite.”

■ **Regularity.** “The bran in whole grains is an excellent source of fiber that can help keep you regular,” says Lichtenstein.<sup>14</sup> “Most people don’t get enough of it.”

■ **Vitamins & minerals.** Refined grains are lower in vitamins (like B-6 and E) and minerals (like copper, magnesium, potassium, selenium, and zinc) than whole grains.

The potassium may lower blood pressure, and the magnesium may protect against diabetes. Why miss out on those and other nutrients that are stripped away in refined grains?

### 4. The healthiest diets don’t have much room for refined grains.

If you’re shooting for 2,000 calories a day, there’s not much room for a:

■ 400-calorie Chocolate Chip cookie from Panera,

■ 500-calorie muffin from Au Bon Pain or Dunkin’ Donuts,

>>>>>



## A DAY'S FOOD

### VEGETABLES & FRUIT

11 servings per day

#### What's 1 serving?

- ½ cup cooked vegetables
- ½ cup raw vegetables
- 1 cup salad greens
- 1 piece fruit
- ½ cup fresh fruit
- ¼ cup dried fruit

### GRAINS

4 servings per day

#### What's 1 serving?

- 1 slice bread
- ½ cup cereal, pasta, or rice

### LOW-FAT DAIRY

2 servings per day

#### What's 1 serving?

- 1 cup milk or yogurt
- 1½ oz. cheese

### LEGUMES & NUTS

2 servings per day

#### What's 1 serving?

- ¼ cup nuts
- ½ cup cooked beans

### POULTRY, FISH, & MEAT

1 serving per day

#### What's 1 serving?

- ¼ lb. cooked

### DESSERTS & SWEETS

2 servings per day

#### What's 1 serving?

- 1 small cookie
- 1 tsp. sugar

### OILS & FATS

2 servings per day

#### What's 1 serving?

- 1 Tbs. oil
- 1 Tbs. margarine or mayo

### WILD CARD

1 serving per day of

POULTRY, FISH, & MEAT or  
DESSERTS & SWEETS or  
OILS & FATS or GRAINS

# Safe at the Plate

In the OmniHeart study, two diets—one higher in unsaturated fat and one higher in protein—cut heart disease risk the most. Here's a day's worth of food in a hybrid of the two diets. It has roughly 2,000 calories (which may look skimpy if you typically eat more). The four servings of grains may also seem skimpy (one serving is just ½ cup of rice or pasta or 1 thin slice of bread). Grains are limited because most of OmniHeart's carbs come from fruits, vegetables, and beans.



**BREAKFAST.** You can polish off 2 servings of fruit (1 orange and ¼ cup of golden raisins) at breakfast. The raisins (and ¼ cup of almonds) help round out the small serving (½ cup) of cereal.

**LUNCH & AFTERNOON SNACK.** You get 3 fruit-or-vegetable servings from the grapes, sandwich fixins', and veggies for dipping into hummus.

This menu uses its "wild card" for one of two servings of fish (the tuna in the sandwich), which can help lower triglycerides. (For other wild card options, see "A Day's Food.")



**DINNER & EVENING SNACK.** Dinner racks up 4 servings of vegetables from the generous serving of spinach salad (2 cups) and the broccoli (1 cup). Rule of thumb: Fill at least half your plate with veggies (or fruit). The fresh fruit (1 cup) that tops the snack's plain yogurt adds 2 more fruit servings. Dessert is petite.

- 1,000-calorie plate of Tomato Basil Spaghetti from California Pizza Kitchen, or
- 1,500-calorie serving of Chow Fun with Beef from P.F. Chang's.

Pasta packs 200 calories a cup without sauce, and restaurants typically serve at least three cups. "Many people still think it's okay to eat a huge plate of pasta," says Kris-Etherton. "That's not the right message anymore."

The bottom line: "Most Americans need to be concerned about excess carbs because they're overweight," notes Lichtenstein. And it's wise to spend your carbs on healthy foods.

"The message isn't that all carbs are bad so get them down as much as you can," explains Sacks. "The central message is to get carbs from vegetables, fruit, and whole grains rather than from sugars, fruit juice, and refined grains." 🍌

- 1 [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/ms/ms\\_all.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/ms/ms_all.html).
- 2 [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/ms/ms\\_what.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/ms/ms_what.html).
- 3 *J. Clin. Invest.* 119: 1322, 2009.
- 4 *Br. J. Nutr.* 104: 125, 2010.
- 5 *Ann. Intern. Med.* 142: 725, 2005.
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- 14 *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 88: 1256, 2008.



## Move More for Memory

**A**erobic exercise can expand the hippocampus, the brain's memory center, counteracting the shrinkage—about 1 to 2 percent a year—that occurs in older adults.

Researchers randomly assigned 120 sedentary adults aged 55 to 80 to either an aerobic walking exercise group or a stretching group. None of the participants had dementia. Each group exercised for 40 minutes per session three times a week.

After one year, the hippocampus of the average stretcher had shrunk by 1.4 percent, while that of the average walker had increased by 2 percent,

reversing one to two years' worth of shrinkage.

The walkers performed no better than the stretchers on a test of spatial memory. However, among the walkers, those who had the biggest boost in hippocampus size also had the biggest boost in test scores. And the study was largely designed to look at the hippocampus, not test scores.

"The loss of hippocampal volume in late adulthood is not inevitable and can be reversed with moderate-intensity exercise," conclude the authors.

**What to do:** Get on your walking shoes.

[www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1015950108](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1015950108).

## All Clear for Grapefruit

**G**ood news for grapefruit lovers: Two follow-up studies failed to confirm a 2007 study reporting that grapefruit eaters have a higher risk of breast cancer.

In 2007, the Hawaii–Los Angeles Multiethnic Cohort Study—which tracked more than 46,000 postmenopausal women from five racial or ethnic groups for six to nine years—found a 30 percent higher risk of breast cancer in those who averaged about a quarter of a grapefruit a day than in those who ate none. The link seemed plausible because of evidence that grapefruit might increase blood estrogen levels by inhibiting an intestinal enzyme that metabolizes estrogens.

However, the Nurses' Health Study, which monitored more than 77,000 women for 18 years, found no link between breast cancer and grapefruit when researchers looked at all of the women. What's more, among

women who had never taken postmenopausal hormones, those who ate an average of at least a quarter of a grapefruit a day had a 22 percent *lower* risk of breast cancer.

And the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC), which tracked nearly 115,000 women for 10 years, also found no overall link between grapefruit and breast cancer.

**What to do:** Enjoy your grapefruit, unless it interferes with any medications you're taking.

*Brit. J. Cancer* 97: 440, 2007 and 98: 240, 2008.  
*Cancer Causes Control* 20: 803, 2009.



## Less Sugar, More Fruit

**W**ant your kids—or other family members—to eat more fruit for breakfast? Make sure their cereal is low in sugar.

Researchers randomly assigned 91 children aged 5 to 12 to choose one of three low-sugar cereals (Cheerios, Corn Flakes, or Rice Krispies) or one of three high-sugar cereals (Cocoa Puffs, Froot Loops, or Frosted Flakes). The kids also had unlimited access to low-fat milk, orange juice, bananas, strawberries, and packets of sugar.

Roughly half (54 percent) of the children who got a low-sugar cereal—but only 8 percent of those who got a high-sugar cereal—put fresh fruit on top.

And those who ate a high-sugar cereal ended up downing twice as much added sugar per breakfast than those who ate a low-sugar cereal, even when researchers added in the sugar that the kids got from any sugar packets they used.

Children who ate a high-sugar cereal also ended up eating more cereal (about two servings, vs. slightly more than one serving for children who ate a low-sugar cereal).

**What to do:** For healthier breakfasts, stick with low-sugar cereals.

*Pediatrics* 127: 71, 2011.

## Less LUTS

**L**ower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS)—like urgency, frequency, or an intermittent, weak urine stream—are common in older men and may be signs of an enlarged prostate. The supplements men take could affect their risk.

The Boston Area Community Health Survey found moderate-to-severe LUTS in 19 percent of the roughly 1,500 men aged 30 to 79 who participated. Those who took supplements with high doses of vitamin C (at least 250 milligrams a day) were 83 percent more likely to have LUTS than those who took no vitamin C supplements.

**What to do:** If you have LUTS and take a daily multivitamin or other supplement with at least 250 mg of vitamin C, see if your symptoms improve without it. The vitamin could increase urgency by making urine more acidic, suggest the authors. 🍋

*J. Nutr.* 141: 267, 2011.



# Achoo!

## How to avoid catching a cold

BY DAVID SCHARDT



“**T**he viruses that cause colds are around us all year long,” says Ronald Turner, an infectious-diseases expert at the University of Virginia Medical School. “But not everyone who encounters one of them gets sick.”

Who’s more likely to come down with a cold? Researchers are uncovering some tantalizing clues. Here’s the latest.

Cold viruses grow mainly in the nose.

They can get into *your* nose if an infected person coughs or sneezes near you, or if your contaminated fingers (from, say, touching a door knob) touch your nose or eyes. (The virus can travel down your tear ducts into your nose.)

Once the virus gets into the nose, most people will develop an infection.

“When we intentionally expose healthy people to cold viruses in nasal drops, about 85 to 90 percent of them will become infected,” says Ronald Turner.

That means that the virus starts to reproduce in the infected person’s nose. But it doesn’t mean that the person will get sick.

“Only a little more than half of the people exposed in this way experience cold symptoms,” notes Turner.

It turns out that married couples spread their colds to each other only 30 to 40 percent of the time.<sup>1</sup> And sharing living quarters for 36 hours with someone who has a cold spreads the cold less than 10 percent of the time.<sup>2</sup>

Why doesn’t everybody who’s exposed to the cold virus get sick? Because cold symptoms aren’t caused directly by the virus, notes Turner, but by the response of the infected person’s immune system.

“Colds are sometimes called cytokine diseases,” says Sheldon Cohen of Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. Cohen has spent 30 years studying who gets colds and who doesn’t. “Cytokines are protein molecules that the immune system produces when you’re infected by a cold virus.”

Cytokines travel to the site of the infection, where they direct the immune

response to the virus. “These proinflammatory cytokines are the primary cause of the symptoms that you experience when you have a cold,” explains Cohen.

“What you would like to happen,” he adds, “is for your immune system to respond and release proinflammatory cytokines that will start the immune response and orchestrate it. But you don’t want to produce too many cytokines.”

Keep that in mind the next time you see a claim that some pill can “enhance your immune system.” That may be the last thing you want.

Some people seem to be genetically programmed to have a more robust inflammatory response, says Turner. “But that’s not the whole story, because such individuals may get a cold one time but not another when they’re exposed to the virus.”

Nor does your overall health make you less or more likely to get a cold. “A weak immune system has nothing to do with getting a cold,” Turner explains. “Perfectly healthy people can get colds if they’re exposed to cold viruses.”

Other less obvious factors can affect the odds, researchers have discovered.

■ **Having an upbeat personality.** “The most reliable finding in my research is that people who express more positive emotions all the time, who are upbeat, are much less likely to develop colds when we expose them to cold viruses,” says Cohen.

Cohen and his colleagues tracked 193 healthy people for two weeks, interviewing them by phone at night to ask if they felt lively, happy, cheerful, calm, at ease, sad, unhappy,

tense, on edge, angry, or hostile that day.<sup>3</sup>

“We averaged their responses over the entire two weeks so that we measured a more stable emotional style rather than the ups and downs that occur in any day for most people,” explains Cohen.

Then the researchers quarantined the volunteers, gave them nasal drops containing either a cold or flu virus, and monitored them for symptoms over the next few days.

“The people who expressed more positive emotions overall were much less likely to become sick with a cold or the flu than those who expressed fewer positive emotions,” says Cohen.

“And when they did get sick, they reported milder symptoms.” An earlier study found the same pattern.<sup>4</sup>

■ **Avoiding long-term stress.** “People are as much as five times more likely to develop colds if they’re experiencing significant stress in their lives, such as unemployment, marital problems, or conflicts with friends,” says Cohen. The stress has to last a month or more before it has a significant impact, he adds. “Short-term stresses during a day don’t seem to matter.”

■ **Sleeping well.** “People who sleep more than seven hours a night or who are more sleep-efficient are much less likely to develop colds,” notes Cohen. (Sleep efficiency is the percentage of time in bed spent asleep.)



## Treating Symptoms

Ultimately, it's your immune system that cures your cold. In most cases, symptoms clear up within four to seven days "with or without treatment," according to the Common Cold Centre at Cardiff University in Wales, which has been putting cold remedies to the test in clinical trials for more than 20 years.

If you want to help move things along, begin treating your cold as soon as you feel symptoms coming on, say the cold experts from the University of Virginia School of Medicine who run the Web site [commoncold.org](http://commoncold.org). Their advice:

■ Take a **sustained-release first-generation antihistamine** like brompheniramine (Lodrane 24) or clemastine (Tavist Allergy 12-Hour Relief Tablets). In recent clinical trials, their effectiveness against sneezing, runny nose, and possibly cough has been impressive.

■ At the same time, take a **nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID)** like ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve). NSAIDs are effective for general cold symptoms like feverishness, headache, and not feeling well. They may also help control coughs.

■ Continue with the antihistamine and NSAID treatment every 12 hours until symptoms clear. The combination should relieve most cold symptoms.

■ If your nose is still stuffed up or you're still coughing, add an **oral decongestant** like pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) or a **cough suppressant** like dextromethorphan (Vicks 44 Cough Relief). Decongestants open the nasal passages by shrinking blood vessels in the mucous membrane of the nose. Cough suppressants act on the brain to depress the cough reflex center.

—*Decongestant nose drops and sprays* act quickly and powerfully to relieve nasal obstruction. But when the decongestant effect of the drug wears off, nasal obstruction rapidly returns. Nasal decongestants also burn and irritate the throat.

—*Decongestants taken by mouth* are less powerful than nasal decongestants and don't kick in as quickly, but they're also less likely to cause recurring nasal obstruction. Oral decongestants may produce rapid heart rate and a rise in blood pressure. But when taken in recommended doses, they are safe, even in people being treated for hypertension.

—*Cough suppressants* are effective against chronic coughs in clinical trials, but there is little published information on how well they suppress coughs due to colds.

If your stuffy nose, facial pressure, and cough are no better—or are worse—after seven to ten days, consider contacting your physician to see if you need treatment for a bacterial infection.

What about **chicken soup**? Hot liquid is a demulcent, explains Cardiff's Common Cold Centre, which means it forms a soothing film over mucous membranes. So *any* hot drink or soup—especially one with a slightly bitter flavor (from lemon, lime, or citric acid, for example)—will help relieve sore throat or cough symptoms. And spicy foods and spicy hot soups promote airway secretions that have a calming action on an inflamed throat.

Source: [www.commoncold.org](http://www.commoncold.org) and [cardiff.ac.uk/biosi/subsites/cold/medication.html](http://cardiff.ac.uk/biosi/subsites/cold/medication.html).

"We followed healthy volunteers for a couple of weeks to measure their typical sleep patterns, and then we brought them into the lab and gave them nasal drops that contained a cold virus. We tracked them for five or six days to see who devel-

oped a cold and who didn't."

People who averaged less than seven hours of sleep a night were three times more likely to develop a cold than those who averaged eight hours a night.

And participants with a sleep efficiency

of less than 92 percent were 5½ times more likely to catch colds than those with a sleep efficiency of 98 percent or more.<sup>5</sup> (If you're in bed for eight hours and have a 92 percent sleep efficiency, it means you spend 38 minutes trying to fall asleep or go back to sleep.)

■ **Doing moderate exercise.** When exercise and immunity expert David Nieman of Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, and his colleagues analyzed data on the physical activity of 1,002 men and women, they found that the more the participants exercised during the fall and winter, the fewer sore throats, headaches, fevers, and other ailments they suffered.<sup>6</sup>

Those who engaged in aerobic activities like brisk walking at least five times a week spent 43 percent fewer days with upper respiratory infections than those who exercised less than once a week. And when the exercisers did get sick, their illnesses were milder.

"It takes getting out most days of the week to see an actual benefit," explains Nieman.

Two studies have assigned volunteers to exercise or not exercise and then recorded who caught colds or the flu.

In one, "sick days were reduced by half in women who walked briskly for 35 to 45 minutes a day five days a week for 15 weeks," says Nieman.<sup>7</sup>

In the other, 115 overweight or obese sedentary postmenopausal women were randomly assigned to about 40 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise, usually brisk walking, four days a week, or to once-a-week stretching exercises for one year.

From month nine through month 12, the walkers recorded one-third fewer colds than the stretchers.<sup>8</sup>

Too much strenuous exercise can make people *more* susceptible to respiratory infections, though. People running a marathon, for example, are six times more likely to get sick in the days following a race than equally fit runners who didn't run the race.

After 90 minutes of intense exertion, Nieman notes, stress hormones climb, muscle breaks down, and inflammation sets in. 🍌

<sup>1</sup> *J. Infect. Dis.* 133: 28, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> *J. Infect. Dis.* 150: 189, 1984.

<sup>3</sup> *Psychosomatic Medicine* 68: 809, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> *Psychosomatic Medicine* 65: 652, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> *Arch. Intern. Med.* 169: 62, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> *Br. J. Sports Med.* doi:10.1136/bjism.2010.077875.

<sup>7</sup> *Int. J. Sports Med.* 11: 467, 1990.

<sup>8</sup> *Amer. J. Med.* 119: 937, 2006.



# In from the Cold

Last December, in settling a complaint by the Federal Trade Commission, Dannon agreed to stop its “false and misleading” ads implying that people who drink DanActive probiotic beverage are less likely to catch a cold or the flu. (Never mind that a product that enhanced your immune system could make cold symptoms worse.)

But that probably won’t make a dent in the millions of dollars consumers will shell out this year on cold and flu remedies. Are they wasting their money? Here’s the evidence behind some popular products.



## Cold-Eeze

**Claim:** “Clinically proven to shorten colds by nearly one-half.”

**What’s in it:** 13.3 milligrams of zinc gluconate per lozenge.

**Cost:** \$2.40 a day for the maximum dose.

**The facts:** Can Cold-Eeze really shorten the duration of colds? (The manufacturer can make that bold claim because Cold-Eeze is a “homeopathic” medicine—see “Wherefore Art Thou Homeo?”)

“In our studies, we saw about a one-day reduction in the duration of colds, but no change in the severity, when we induced colds in volunteers with nasal drops,” says the University of Virginia’s Ronald Turner. “But we didn’t see any effect in volunteers who caught colds on their own.”

**Bottom line:** In some studies, zinc gluconate lozenges shorten—by a day or two—the duration of colds. In other studies, they don’t.



## Echinacea

**Claim:** “Can be recommended as part of a regimen for Winter Wellness,” says NatureMade.

**What’s in it:** Purple coneflowers.

**Cost:** 30 to 40 cents a day.

**The facts:** Since 2000, U.S. and Canadian researchers have published nine studies that tested the *purpurea* strain of Echinacea against colds.

Three of the studies looked at whether taking Echinacea every day could prevent colds. It didn’t. The other six looked at whether taking Echinacea every day at the first hint of a cold could lessen its symptoms or shorten its duration. In four of them, Echinacea was no more helpful than a placebo. In the other two, Echinacea takers reported slightly milder symptoms than placebo takers.

“There are so many different products available that are not standardized,” says cold expert Ronald Turner. “It’s impossible for consumers to figure out which of them might possibly have a small benefit.”

**Bottom line:** Echinacea doesn’t prevent colds. In most studies, it also doesn’t lessen cold symptoms.



## EpiCor

**Claim:** “Clinically shown to help activate and guard your immune function.”

**What’s in it:** Fermented brewers yeast.

**Cost:** \$20 a month.

**The facts:** Two studies have given EpiCor or a placebo to a total of 232 people for three months and waited to

see who got sick.

In the more recent one, the EpiCor takers had 13 cases of cold or flu for every 15 cases in the placebo takers, but their illnesses were just as nasty and lasted just as long.<sup>1</sup> In the other study, for every seven colds in the EpiCor group, there were eight colds in the placebo group. And the EpiCor takers were sick for an average of one day less.<sup>2</sup>

**Bottom line:** If larger trials confirm these modest results, taking EpiCor every day could mean one less cold roughly every three years.

<sup>1</sup> *J. Altern. Complement. Med.* 16: 213, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> *Urol. Nurs.* 28: 50, 2008.



## Airborne

**Claim:** “Helps support your immune system.”

**What’s in it:** Nine vitamins and minerals, a trivial amount of two amino acids, and a blend of herbs.

**Cost:** \$2.25 a day.

**The facts:** “There is no credible evidence that Airborne products, taken as directed, will reduce the severity or duration of colds, or provide any tangible benefit for people who are exposed to germs in crowded places.” That’s what the Federal Trade Commission charged in 2008 in announcing that Airborne’s manufacturer had agreed to stop making those claims and to provide up to \$30 million in refunds to consumers who believed they were deceived by the company’s ads.

Airborne now contends that it can “help support your immune system.” There’s no credible evidence for that assertion either, but since it’s classified as a “structure or function” claim, the company needs no evidence. Pretty slick.

**Bottom line:** Despite hundreds of millions of dollars in sales, there is no evidence that Airborne works.





## Sambucol

**Claim:** Provides “immune system support.”

**What’s in it:** Extract of elderberries. The “Original Formula” contains 3.8 grams of extract in a two-teaspoon serving.

Sambucol USA wouldn’t disclose how much is in the “Cold & Flu Relief” formula (the homeopathic version).

**Cost:** \$4.00 a day for “intensive use.”

**The facts:** Israeli researchers gave 15 adults and children who were coming down with the flu four tablespoons of Sambucol every day for three days, while 12 similar adults and children were given a placebo syrup. Symptoms cleared up three days faster in the Sambucol takers.<sup>1</sup> And 60 Norwegian men and women coming down with the flu were given four tablespoons of Sambucol or a placebo every day for five days. Symptoms cleared about four days faster in the Sambucol takers.<sup>2</sup>

Both studies used Original Sambucol. There’s no evidence for the homeopathic formula.

**Bottom line:** Original Formula Sambucol helped people recover from the flu faster in two small studies, but larger trials are needed.

<sup>1</sup> *J. Altern. Complem. Med.* 1: 361, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> *J. Intern. Med. Res.* 32: 132, 2004.

## Vitamin D

**Claim:** “The One Vitamin that Will Stop Flu in Its Tracks,” proclaims [drmercola.com](http://drmercola.com).

**What’s in it:** Vitamin D.

**Cost:** About \$1.50 a month for 1,000 IU a day.

**The facts:** Vitamin D increases the production of antimicrobial peptides (small protein-like natural antibiotics) in the body’s cells. And in two U.S. studies, people with higher vitamin D levels in their blood had a lower risk of upper respiratory infections. Does that mean that taking vitamin D can stop the flu (or a cold)?

Japanese researchers gave 334 children either 1,200 IU of vitamin D or a placebo every day from December through March. The vitamin D takers had six cases of the flu for every ten cases in the placebo takers.<sup>1</sup>

But three trials in adults—using 400 IU a day for six months, 800 IU a day for 11 to 25 months, or 2,000 IU a day for three months—all came up empty.<sup>2-4</sup> In none of the studies did those taking vitamin D have fewer cases of the flu or other respiratory infections than similar people who were given a placebo.

**Bottom line:** The evidence that vitamin D can prevent colds or the flu is meager.

<sup>1</sup> *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 91: 1255, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> *J. Infect. Dis.* 202: 809, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> *Age and Ageing* 36: 574, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> *Epidemiol. Infect.* 137: 1396, 2009.



## Wherefore Art Thou Homeo?

DayQuil. Cold-Eeze. Sambucol. All three claim to help you cope with colds and the flu. But each represents a different class of remedy, and the Food and Drug Administration regulates each in a very different way. That affects how much you can trust the products’ claims.

■ DayQuil is an **over-the-counter (OTC) medication**. OTC manufacturers have to convince the FDA that any claims they make

are supported by solid scientific evidence before their products hit the market. Since no OTC drug has been proven to prevent or shorten colds or the flu, OTC remedies can only claim to relieve symptoms. —*You can generally trust OTC claims.*

■ Sambucol is a **dietary supplement**. (The FDA requires dietary supplements to



say so on the label.) Dietary supplements can’t make claims about relieving colds or the flu without prior FDA approval, but they *can* make vague “structure or function” claims, like “helps support the immune system,” without having to prove that they’re true...or that they make any difference. —*Be skeptical of dietary supplement claims.*

■ Cold-Eeze is a **homeopathic medicine**. (The FDA requires homeopathic medicines to say so on the label.) Homeopathic remedies can claim to prevent or cure colds and the flu without having to show any proof to the FDA. Why?

Traditional homeopathic drugs aren’t considered a safety hazard because they’re diluted repeatedly until there’s nothing left

of their active ingredients. And in the past, few people used them. So, in 1938, Congress exempted them from strict regulation.

But that no longer makes sense. Homeopathy has become a huge industry that sells its products by the millions to shoppers everywhere from Walmart to supermarkets to the Internet. And many (Cold-Eeze, for example) contain substantial amounts of active ingredients.

“I seriously doubt if one-twentieth of the so-called homeopathic products sold in stores today have any basis in homeopathic principles,” says Southern Illinois University’s John Haller, an authority on the history of homeopathy. “That’s homeopathy’s dirty little secret.” —*Be skeptical of homeopathic medicine claims.*



# Pizza for One

## Have It *Your* Way

BY JAYNE HURLEY & BONNIE LIEBMAN

Pizza isn't what it used to be.

Most take-out pizza may still come with a choice of pepperoni, sausage, mushrooms, etc. But at table-service restaurants, you can get your personal pizza covered with everything from Japanese eggplant and arugula to artichoke hearts and lobster. Tired of mozzarella? There's Gorgonzola, Gouda, fontina, feta, or Romano.

Even crust is no longer just crust. You've got thin or deep-dish, honey-wheat or five-grain, all-natural or gluten-free. And why stick with the same old tomato sauce when pesto, salsa, or spicy peanut sauce is on the menu? Pizza has gone global.

Yet the dish still has serious problems: too many calories and too much saturated fat, sodium, and refined flour. Here's how to minimize the downsides at three popular chains. Odds are, the same advice applies at other pizzerias.

*Zahra Hassanali compiled the information for this article.*

## Pizza 101

**P**eople used to eat pizza by the slice. At sit-down restaurants, we now eat it by the pie. Translation: roughly 1,000 calories if it's thin crust and 1,800 if it's deep-dish.

Even if you could afford the calories in an individual pizza—if, say, you're competing in a triathlon next week—your arteries would have to find storage space for the roughly 20 grams of saturated fat (a day's worth) in a thin- or regular-crust pizza. That's cheese for you. Make it 30 grams if you order your pie meat-heavy or deep-dish.

And your blood pressure won't soon forget the 2,000 to 3,000 milligrams of sodium (one to two days' worth). Roughly 1,000 mg of that comes from the crust alone. Expect 4,000 mg of sodium if you order multiple meat toppings like bacon, sausage, pepperoni, and ham.

Nothing can turn restaurant pizza into a low-sodium, low-calorie meal. But you can minimize the damage.

Here's how:

**1. Eat no more than half.** Stop at a third to half of an individual pizza. Take the rest home.

**2. Add a salad.** Replace some white-flour dough and cheese with nutrient-rich vegetables by adding a side salad.

**3. Order a thin (preferably whole-grain) crust.**

Thinner is better. Odds are, you'll save calories—mostly from white flour you could do without—and some sodium.

At California Pizza Kitchen, for example, just the crust for a Thin Crust pizza (not counting any toppings) has 440 calories. That's less than the roughly 600 calories in a regular or Honey-Wheat with Whole Grain Crust (which is three-quarters white flour anyway). Even though the thin crust saves calories, you're still eating the equivalent of six slices of Wonder bread (in addition to the complimentary Italian bread that the waiter kindly

deposits on your table). The Thin Crust (or Honey-Wheat) also shaves about 150 mg of sodium off the regular crust. (Too bad that still leaves you a hefty 950 mg.) And at CPK, you can order any pizza on a Thin Crust.

At Uno, avoiding the signature Deep Dish Pizzas is Rule #1. According to the company, the crust alone delivers 1,320 calories and 1,320 mg of sodium. And its baked-in mozzarella helps guarantee that you'll get a day's worth of saturated fat (18 grams) before you add any toppings. (As if the cheese *on* the crust weren't enough.)

Both of Uno's "All Natural" Thin Crusts—Traditional and Five-Grain—trim the calories to around 500. The Five-Grain—which has more whole wheat than white flour and contains wheat germ, oat bran, sesame seeds, and flaxseeds—slashes the sodium from the Traditional's 850 mg to a hard-to-believe 380 mg. (At least that's what the company told us.)

**4. Ask for less cheese.** Chances are, you won't notice the difference. You can also curb the saturated fat by skipping pizzas made with multiple cheeses. For example, at California Pizza Kitchen, a Traditional Cheese Pizza has 16 grams of sat fat, while the Five-Cheese & Fresh Tomato hits 25 grams.

**5. Choose vegetable, chicken, or seafood toppings.**

To curb calories, saturated fat, and (often) sodium, stick with veggie, chicken, or seafood toppings instead of fatty meats like bacon, ground beef, pepperoni, salami, sausage, or steak.

Meat mixtures are the worst. Take California Pizza Kitchen's The Works (pepperoni and sausage) or The Meat Cravers (pepperoni, sausage, Canadian bacon, ham, and salami). Each supplies roughly 1,400 calories, 30 grams of sat fat, and more than 3,000 mg of sodium. Would you order three Quarter Pounders with Cheese for dinner? You might as well.



# UNO

## CHICAGO GRILL

**Uno Chicago Grill, with 160 locations in 24 states and Washington, D.C.,** is known for its signature Deep Dish Pizzas. Think of them as building materials for your deep-belly fat.

Some locations have a banner that proclaims Uno “The Healthiest Chain Restaurant in America.” You have to wonder what Kool-Aid the editors of *Health Magazine* were drinking in 2008, when they made that award.

And be suspicious of the nutrition information that’s dispensed by the computers at the kiosks near the entrance at many locations. The calories, saturated fat, and sodium look so good only because, in many cases, the numbers apply to just a third or half of a serving of pizza, soup, etc. So bring along your calculator. Message to corporate: It’s not nice to trick your customers.

On the plus side, Uno offers its tasty Five-Grain Thin Crust on *any* pizza. Give it a whirl.



Save 800 calories by ordering your Uno pizza on Five-Grain Thin Crust instead of Deep Dish.

■ **Harvest Vegetable on Five-Grain Thin Crust.** “Our house-made salsa, cherry tomatoes roasted with garlic, basil and olive oil, peppers, spinach, broccoli and caramelized onions finished with Cheddar and mozzarella” make for a delicious combo, but only if you like your pizza spicy. (If not, ask for Chunky Tomato or All-Natural Tomato sauce instead of salsa.) Uno calls the Harvest Vegetable pizza a “Mindful Choice.” While it may be more mindful (whatever that means) than other Uno pizzas, its day’s worth of sodium (1,620 mg) is anything but.

### SIDE SALAD PICKS

■ **House.** It’s mostly iceberg lettuce, but the calories stay under 200—and the sodium under 200 milligrams—if you get a vinaigrette (Fat Free, Low Fat Blueberry Pomegranate, or Classic) on the side and use just half. (According to the company, the salad comes with four tablespoons of dressing. Two should be more than enough for a side salad.)

■ **Caesar.** It’s the usual, featuring Romaine lettuce, croutons, and shaved Parmesan. But even with its 5 grams of saturated fat (more than half from the two tablespoons of Caesar dressing), the salad still beats eating the second half of your pizza.

■ **Field Greens with Goat Cheese & Glazed Walnuts.** Far more interesting than a House (or Caesar) salad, but its 530 calories are about what you’d get in half a thin-crust pizza. You can cut that down to 350 (and slash the sodium from 450 mg to 270 mg) by ordering the rich Lemon, Basil and Olive Oil Vinaigrette on the side and using just two tablespoons.

### PIZZA PICKS

■ **Roasted Eggplant, Spinach & Feta Thin Crust.** It’s got less saturated fat (11 grams) and sodium (1,680 milligrams) than any other Uno pizza, and its calories (870) are lower than any pizza other than the pedestrian Cheese & Tomato. The eggplant tasted undercooked at the two Unos we visited. Here’s hoping other locations do better.

■ **Mediterranean Thin Crust.** With spinach, plum tomatoes, kalamata olives, pesto, feta, and Parmesan, you escape with a low-for-pizza 15 grams of sat fat. But 2,400 mg of sodium is a lot to swallow, even if you eat just a third or half. The feta and olives are the likely culprits.

**W**ithin each section, items are ranked from least to most calories, then saturated fat, then sodium. Pizzas are shown with crusts featured on the menu. Use the “Crust vs. Crust” section to calculate how numbers would change with a different crust.

Traditional Thin Crust Pizzas (1 pizza)	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)
Cheese & Tomato	840	15	1,770
Roasted Eggplant, Spinach & Feta	870	11	1,680
Mediterranean	930	15	2,400
Harvest Vegetable on Five-Grain Thin Crust	990	18	1,620
Pepperoni	990	21	2,340
BBQ Chicken	1,020	15	1,980
Four Cheese	1,080	24	2,130
Sausage	1,080	24	2,700
Wowza Chicken	1,110	21	2,130
Lobster BLT	1,530	30	3,480
Individual Deep Dish Pizzas (1 pizza)	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)
Chicken Fajita	1,560	30	2,610
Farmer’s Market Pie	1,620	27	2,250
Cheese & Tomato	1,740	36	2,490

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)
Prima Pepperoni	1,830	36	2,910
Spinoccoli	1,860	33	2,340
Numero Uno	1,920	36	3,510
Chicago Classic	2,310	54	4,650

### Side Salads

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)
Caesar (with 2 Tbs. Caesar dressing)	250	5	430
House (with 4 Tbs. Classic Vinaigrette)	260	4	290
Field Greens with Goat Cheese & Glazed Walnuts (with 4 Tbs. Lemon, Basil and Olive Oil Vinaigrette)	530	10	450

### Crust vs. Crust

(1 crust, without toppings)

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)
Traditional Thin Crust	490	1	850
Five-Grain Thin Crust	500	1	380
Individual Deep Dish	1,320	18	1,320

**Daily Limits** (for a 2,000-calorie diet): **Sodium:** 1,500 milligrams.

**Saturated Fat:** 20 grams.

Source: company information.



**With more than 260 restaurants in 32 states and 10 foreign countries,** California Pizza Kitchen has traveled far beyond its namesake state. And with 34 pizzas—from Tostada and Thai Chicken to Pear & Gorgonzola and The Greek—you won't get bored for some time.

But you—and your medical bills—may get bigger if you keep eating one pizza per person. Here are the best pizzas to share... and the best salads to pair them with.

## PIZZA PICKS

### ■ Roasted Artichoke & Spinach Thin Crust.

Oven-roasted artichoke hearts, sautéed spinach, garlic, three cheeses (fontina, mozzarella, and Parmesan), and spinach artichoke sauce means “only” 990 calories, nearly a day's saturated fat (19 grams), and more than a day's sodium (2,480 milligrams). Still, it's the lowest-calorie pizza on the menu. Our advice: order it light on the cheese. It'll still be packed with flavor.



The Vegetarian Japanese Eggplant pizza has flavor to spare, even with less cheese.

■ **Tricoloré Salad Pizza Thin Crust.** If you think it's odd to eat a pizza topped with salad, just try it. The “caramelized Parmesan pizza crust topped with chilled arugula, baby red leaf lettuce, radicchio, diced tomatoes and shaved Parmesan cheese, tossed in our homemade Dijon balsamic vinaigrette” is delish, with or without grilled shrimp (100 calories), sautéed salmon (230 calories), or grilled chicken breast (240 calories). Bonus: you won't have to order a side salad.

The downside: The Tricoloré packs 1,000 calories, 15 grams of sat fat, and 1,910 mg of sodium. You can lose 180 calories, 3 grams of sat fat, and 250 mg of sodium by getting the salad topping dressed with just half of the generous four-tablespoon serving of Dijon balsamic vinaigrette.

### ■ Vegetarian with Japanese Eggplant.

Baby broccoli, grilled Japanese eggplant, roasted corn, sliced red onions, mushrooms, and sundried tomatoes. You'd be hard-pressed to find a pizza packed with more delectable vegetables. Eat no more than half

**W**ithin each section, main items are ranked from least to most calories, then saturated fat, then sodium. Pizzas are shown with crusts featured on the menu. Use the “Crust vs. Crust” section to calculate how numbers would change with a different crust.

#### Thin Crust Pizzas (1 pizza)

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)
Roasted Artichoke & Spinach with grilled chicken	990	19	2,480
Tricoloré Salad Pizza with grilled shrimp	1,000	15	1,910
with sautéed salmon	1,100	15	2,220
with grilled chicken breast	1,230	18	2,060
Goat Cheese with Roasted Red Peppers	1,240	16	2,200
Pepperoni Supremo	1,010	21	2,480
Four Seasons	1,020	21	3,050
Margherita	1,090	18	3,470
Sicilian	1,110	20	2,010
Pesto Chicken	1,230	29	3,110
	1,330	21	2,620

#### Traditional Crust Pizzas, unless noted (1 pizza)

Traditional Cheese	1,000	16	2,160
Italian Tomato & Basil	1,030	17	2,330
Vegetarian with Japanese Eggplant on Honey-Wheat with Whole Grain crust with mild goat cheese	1,060	15	2,370
Hawaiian	1,120	18	2,460
with pepperoni instead of Canadian bacon	1,060	16	2,410
White Pizza	1,170	22	2,580
with applewood smoked bacon	1,100	21	2,460
Five-Cheese & Fresh Tomato	1,240	26	3,000
Roasted Garlic Chicken	1,110	25	2,540
The Original BBQ Chicken	1,120	18	2,120
Pepperoni	1,140	19	2,570
The Hawaiian BBQ Chicken	1,140	22	2,640
Goat Cheese with Roasted Peppers with applewood smoked bacon	1,160	19	2,570
Chipotle Chicken	1,180	23	2,640
with grilled steak instead of chicken	1,310	27	3,180
Pear & Gorgonzola	1,200	19	2,770
	1,360	25	3,330
	1,200	24	2,180

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)
Wild Mushroom with grilled chicken	1,210	23	2,240
Tostada with grilled lime chicken	1,290	23	2,330
with grilled steak	1,220	20	2,470
Buffalo Chicken	1,290	20	2,560
BBQ Chicken with Applewood Smoked Bacon	1,490	27	3,240
The Works	1,250	23	3,380
Mushroom Pepperoni Sausage	1,270	23	3,110
The Greek with avocado instead of grilled chicken	1,300	17	3,000
Cheeseburger Pizza with avocado	1,300	23	2,520
with applewood smoked bacon	1,310	23	4,060
The Meat Cravers	1,340	27	3,600
California Club	1,390	28	3,220
	1,390	30	3,220
	1,420	22	2,980
	1,480	24	2,780
	1,440	26	2,900
	1,580	27	2,910
	1,580	30	3,440
	1,480	31	3,930
	1,520	25	2,770

#### Salads (with dressing)

Small Cravings Asparagus & Arugula	170	2	390
Small Cravings The Wedge	280	6	340
Classic Caesar Half Salad	280	7	520
Small Cravings Tuscan Panzanella	340	3	560
Field Greens Half Salad	500	6	400

#### Crust vs. Crust

(1 crust, without toppings)

Thin	440	0	960
Honey-Wheat with Whole Grain	590	2	950
Traditional	610	2	1,120

**Daily Limits** (for a 2,000-calorie diet): **Sodium:** 1,500 milligrams.

**Saturated Fat:** 20 grams.

Source: company information.



to trim the 1,060 calories, 15 grams of sat fat, and 2,370 mg of sodium. Order it light on cheese to let the veggies and Honey-Wheat with Whole Grain crust shine through.

■ **Goat Cheese with Roasted Peppers.** “Mild goat cheese with roasted red & yellow peppers, grilled Japanese eggplant, Mozzarella cheese, caramelized onions, fresh Italian parsley and our tomato sauce” sounds (and is) delish. Ordering it on a thin crust cuts the calories from 1,180 to 1,010. And skipping the mozzarella should trim a few grams off the 23 grams (a full day’s worth) of saturated fat. (The creamy goat cheese has more than enough oomph without another cheese.) Don’t even think about the applewood smoked bacon that the menu offers. Who needs an extra 130 calories, 4 grams of sat fat, and 540 mg of sodium?

## SALAD PICKS

A meal-size salad can deliver 1,000 calories and 1,000 to 2,500 milligrams of sodium. That’s why it’s best to stick to smaller (Half or Small Cravings) salads.

Here are a few of the better options:

■ **Small Cravings Asparagus & Arugula.** If you’re looking for a side salad, look no further. “Fresh arugula, asparagus and sun-dried tomatoes tossed in our homemade lemon-herb vinaigrette, topped with toasted almonds and shaved Parmesan cheese” clocks in at just 170 calories and 390 mg of sodium. It’s a lighter, delicious alternative to the 340-calorie Tuscan Panzanella Salad or the 280-calorie The Wedge Salad.

■ **Field Greens Half Salad.** It’s hard to see how “a blend of fresh field greens, pears and candied walnuts tossed in our homemade Dijon balsamic vinaigrette” reaches 500 calories without the optional grilled shrimp, sautéed salmon, or Gorgonzola cheese add-ons. (The half salad’s two tablespoons of vinaigrette contribute just 180 calories.) At least the sodium (400 mg) isn’t through the roof.

■ **Classic Caesar Half Salad.** It’s less interesting than the Field Greens Salad, but it delivers just 280 calories. The 520 mg of sodium is par for the course for restaurant salad.

**Sbarro has more than 1,000 locations—** mostly in shopping malls, airports, and train stations—in 30 countries. Most people buy just a slice...and never realize that they’re downing the equivalent of half a typical thin-crust pizza at California Pizza Kitchen or Uno.

Of course, you’d never figure that out from Sbarro’s Web site, which has a “Nutrition Information” page that has been “currently under construction” for what seems like a decade. We got numbers by calling Sbarro outlets in cities like New York and Seattle, where menu labeling is required. (We had to make some estimates for saturated fat, which the chain ignores.) Unfortunately, Sbarro doesn’t offer even part-whole-wheat crust.



A slice of thin crust cheese pizza is under 500 calories. Order less cheese with extra veggies.

ligrams (the Mushroom has 1,310 mg).

When you walk up to the counter, you’ll most likely find best-sellers like Cheese and Pepperoni. But if you’re willing to wait 10 to 20 minutes, you can request anything. Our suggestion: order a slice of light-on-the-cheese thin-crust veggie pizza topped with fresh broccoli, onions, peppers, tomatoes, or whatever fresh vegetables they offer, then take a lap or two around the mall while it’s in the oven.

Don’t have time to wait? Just be sure to skip the Sausage or Pepperoni pizza. Each slice has roughly 700 calories and nearly a day’s sat fat seasoned with more than a day’s sodium (2,000 mg). Many people who would think twice before ordering a Double

Quarter Pounder with Cheese don’t hesitate to get a slice of pepperoni pizza. Yet when it’s a slice at Sbarro, they do about the same damage. Get a slice of the chain’s Pan or Stuffed pizza and you’re pushing 700 to 1,000 calories. 🍕

## PIZZA PICKS

■ **Thin-Crust Cheese or Fresh Tomato & Basil or Mushroom.**

All three pizzas keep the calories at about 450 per slice, the sat fat at a third of day’s limit, and the sodium at around 1,000 mil-

**W**ithin each section, items are ranked from least to most calories, then saturated fat, then sodium.

### New York Style Thin-Crust Pizzas

(1 slice)	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)
Fresh Tomato & Basil	450	7	1,040
Cheese	460	7	1,080
Mushroom	460	7	1,310
Chicken & Vegetable	530	9	1,260
Pizza Blanca (White Pizza)	570	9	1,150
Supreme	630	14	1,720
Sausage	670	16	1,810
Pepperoni	730	19	2,200

### Pan Pizzas (1 slice)

Classic Pan Cheese	660	8	1,460
Sautéed Fresh Spinach & Yellow Peppers	670	10	1,470
Hawaiian (ham, Canadian bacon, pineapple)	680	11	1,820
Fresh Tomato & Basil	700	10	1,650

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)
Spinach & Mushroom	710	12	1,680
Spinach, Broccoli & Tomato	720	11	1,540
Mushroom	730	13	1,690
Meat Delight	780	15	2,250
<b>Stuffed Pizza, Calzone, &amp; Stromboli (1 piece or slice)</b>			
Cheese Calzone	770	11	1,410
Spinach & Broccoli Stuffed Pizza	790	14	1,610
Philly Cheese Steak Stuffed Pizza	830	17	2,090
Pepperoni & Cheese Stromboli	890	18	2,470
Pepperoni Stuffed Pizza	960	21	3,200

Note: all saturated fat numbers are estimates.

**Daily Limits** (for a 2,000-calorie diet): **Sodium:** 1,500 milligrams.

**Saturated Fat:** 20 grams.

Source: company information. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.

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, safer and more nutritious foods, and pro-health alcohol policies. 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.

## RIGHT STUFF

## FOOD PORN



### DELI DONE RIGHT

One quick stop at your supermarket's deli counter and you can stock up on a week's worth of quick sandwich fillings. But you'll also stock up on sodium—about 400 to 700 milligrams in each 2 oz. serving of deli turkey, roast beef, or ham.

That is, unless your deli carries **Dietz & Watson Gourmet Lite No Salt Added Breast of Turkey**. Each serving has just 50 mg of naturally occurring sodium. And it's made without nitrites, which are compounds that may raise cancer risk slightly.

Would you notice the Lite No Salt Added's milder taste if you took a bite after eating a slice of salted turkey? Probably. Would you notice any difference if you used some in a sandwich with mustard, onions, lettuce, or other fixin's? Not likely.

If you can't find the No Salt Added, try the company's **Gourmet Lite Breast of Turkey**. It'll cost you more sodium (240 mg), but you're still better off than you'd be with most other deli sliced turkeys.

If you're tired of turkey, look for **Boar's Head** lower-sodium meats. The two lowest—**No Salt Added Oven Roasted Beef Round** (40 mg of sodium in 2 oz.) and **Deluxe Low Sodium Oven Roasted Beef Cap-Off Top Round** (80 mg)—will pump up the flavor of your sandwich without pumping up your blood pressure.

"Launch your own assault on salt," urged the Boar's Head brochure we picked up at a local sandwich shop. "Too much salt can be a true health danger."

We couldn't have said it better.

**Dietz & Watson: (800) 333-1974**

**Boar's Head: (888) 884-2627**

### IWADDLE

"Four fluffy buttermilk pancakes loaded with creamy, rich cheesecake pieces and crowned with cool strawberries, powdered sugar and whipped topping." That's how the IHOP menu describes its **New York Cheesecake Pancakes**.

Just what we needed! Two out of three American adults are overweight or obese and IHOP decides that its ordinary stack of Original Buttermilk Pancakes is too skimpy. They can't expect customers to walk out of the restaurant with a mere 770 calories, mostly from white flour and (we suspect) a mix of butter and margarine (plus 55 calories' worth of sugar in every tablespoon of syrup). Patrons would be hungry before they left the parking lot, for heavens sakes.

In contrast, the New York Cheesecake Pancakes are stick-to-your-ribs fare. With 1,100 calories (1,320 with a typical quarter cup of syrup), there's enough to stick to your hips and thighs, too. And the day's worth of saturated fat (21 grams) plus three-quarters of a day's trans fat (1½ grams) can stick to your arteries...if they survive the 2,430-miligram jolt of sodium. (Some of that sodium may be less harmful because it comes from sodium bicarbonate instead of sodium chloride.)

IHOP even manages to target health-conscious diners. How many patrons order the (partly whole grain) Harvest Grain 'N Nut Pancakes, for example, without knowing that they're swallowing 920 calories (not counting the syrup)?

IHOP does offer some **Simple & Fit** dishes, which feature oatmeal, egg substitute, whole wheat toast, and fresh fruit. Everything else at the chain? Think of it as the Sugar & Fat menu.

**IHOP: (818) 240-6055**



## dish OF THE MONTH

### Margo's Cream of Cauliflower Soup

Sauté 1 chopped onion in 1 Tbs. of olive oil. Add 1 chopped large head of cauliflower, 1 quart of low-sodium vegetable broth, and 2 cups of non-fat milk. Simmer until tender, about 20 minutes. Purée (you can use a hand blender) and season with black pepper and up to ¾ tsp. salt.