

Weekend Health Quiz

Take our test, and live better in 2007

By Kate Rope • Photographs by Adam Levey



1 **FILL IN THE BLANK**
A glass of fruit or vegetable juice a day may help keep _____ at bay.

- A. diabetes
- B. melanoma
- C. chicken pox
- D. Alzheimer's disease

Answer: D. A study in *The American Journal of Medicine* reported that people who drank three or more servings of fruit or vegetable juice weekly are 76 percent less likely to develop Alzheimer's than are those who consume less than one serving per week. The reason may be the antioxidant polyphenol, which has been shown to protect cognitive function in animals. (Juices are often made with polyphenol-rich peels and pith.) The study's author, Qi Dai, M.D., suggests substituting a glass of juice for one of the five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables that adults are recommended to eat daily.



2 A Sunday dinner featuring pot roast and mashed potatoes may be a highlight of your weekend, but it's not exactly the healthiest of meals. If you indulge in this sort of high-fat comfort food, how might you minimize its impact?

- A. by fasting for the rest of the night
- B. by walking for 45 minutes after the meal
- C. by waking up 30 minutes earlier the next day
- D. by doing nothing; one meal won't hurt your arteries

Answer: B. Cap off your big Sunday supper with an evening stroll. Researchers at Indiana University analyzed the blood-vessel health of eight volunteers after they ate a low-fat meal, a high-fat meal, and then a high-fat meal followed by 45 minutes of leisurely walking. The participants' arteries were at their healthiest (allowing blood to flow the most freely) after the high-fat meal and the walk. According to Janet Wallace, Ph.D., a professor of kinesiology at Indiana University, exercise may increase the levels of antioxidants in the blood, keeping vessels more robust. Of course, if you have heart disease or diabetes, always check with your doctor before undertaking any exercise program. >

3

MIX AND MATCH

How well do you know your beverage? Match the popular drink below with its caloric equivalent in food.

1. a medium slice of pepperoni pizza
2. a turkey sandwich, a small bag of pretzels, and an apple
3. Lean Cuisine Shrimp & Angel Hair Pasta
4. two pancakes with a tablespoon of syrup
5. six Oreo cookies
6. five Hershey's Kisses



6

TRUE OR FALSE

A diet that's rich in calcium can give you everything you need to keep your bones healthy.

Answer: False. Even if you load up on foods like milk and yogurt, you may not get enough calcium because the body needs vitamin D to absorb it and "there is an epidemic of vitamin D deficiency," says Felicia Cosman, M.D., the clinical director of the National Osteoporosis Foundation. A lack of vitamin D and calcium can lead to bone-density loss, a major contributor to osteoporosis. Few foods naturally contain vitamin D, but our bodies produce it with sun exposure—something we get less of these days. Cosman advises taking a daily 400 IU to 800 IU vitamin D3 supplement in addition to getting enough calcium. Or, if you rely on a calcium supplement, pick one with at least 400 IU of vitamin D.

Answers: A: 6; B: 5; C: 2; D: 4; E: 1; F: 3. If you're watching your weight, think carefully about what you drink. That large Sprite is the caloric equivalent of six Oreo cookies. Would you prefer a Frappuccino to an order of pancakes? And for the calorie count of a 7-Eleven Super Big Gulp Coke, you could have a tasty lunch. Consuming this many calories in your beverages is like "filling up the gas tank without even knowing you stopped at the pump," says Roberta Anding, R.D., a clinical dietitian at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. To quench your thirst without expanding your waistline, switch to less decadent coffee drinks (try a low-fat latte), fruit juice in moderation, and plain old water. And when you *must* scratch that soda itch, go for a can of diet.

4 Portion size is everything, but ounces are hard to visualize. Which combination of objects will help you put a healthy amount of meat, vegetables, and starch, respectively, on your plate?

- A. a softball, a baseball, a Frisbee
- B. a golf ball, a deck of cards, a softball
- C. a deck of cards, a baseball, a computer mouse
- D. a Frisbee, a matchbook, a softball

Answer: C. Servings of food have been so supersized, "it's the reason we've gained so much weight," says Lisa Young, Ph.D., the author of *The Portion Teller Plan*. In fact, in 2006,

researchers at Rutgers University studied what Americans consider to be a typical portion, then compared the results to a study done in 1984. The 177 participants were asked to serve themselves an amount they considered to be a typical portion size. Their "typical" serving of cornflakes had grown by 20 percent—which equals about 20 additional calories a day and could add up to a two-pound weight gain in a year. Young recommends keeping portions in check with the visual clues provided in answer C. "It doesn't have to be exact," she says, "but it gives you a clue."

5 One in three Americans will develop diabetes as an adult. What's the most important thing you can do to lower your risk?

- A. exercise
- B. maintain a healthy weight
- C. get enough sleep
- D. eat a low-fat diet

Answer: B. While it's a good idea to do all these things, the best way to fend off diabetes is to watch your weight. A National Institutes of Health-sponsored study found that people at risk for diabetes who lost just 5 percent to 7 percent of their weight cut their chances of developing the disease by nearly 60 percent. There's also "pretty good evidence that

sleep deprivation increases the risk," says John Buse, M.D., the president-elect of the American Diabetes Association. Which is why, besides limiting the saturated fat and processed carbohydrates in your diet, you should stay well-rested.

TRUE OR FALSE

Exercise improves your sex life.

Answer: True. In a study published this past July, Harvard School of Public Health researchers surveyed approximately 20,000 men between the ages of 40 and 75. Their findings? Men who are overweight and physically inactive are more than twice as likely to experience erectile dysfunction. >

8

Grains high in fiber can help lower cholesterol and protect against some cancers. Can you rank the grains at right in order of the highest fiber content to the lowest?

Answer: A and C, D, B. Barley and quinoa tie for first place with 3 grams of dietary fiber per serving (1/2 cup), says Dave Grotto, a Chicago-based spokesman for the American Dietetic Association.

Half of that fiber is soluble, the kind that can lower bad cholesterol and help control blood sugar. Oats pack a respectable 2 grams total (half of it soluble), and brown rice follows with 1.8 grams, mostly insoluble. The government recommends at least three servings of whole grains daily.



9 Shedding pounds will help protect you against heart disease and diabetes, but a study showed that trimming down might also do which of the following:

- A. boost your intelligence
- B. reduce your headache frequency
- C. improve your farsightedness
- D. help you quit smoking

Answer: B. In a study of more than 30,000 volunteers, researchers at New York City's Albert Einstein College of Medicine analyzed body mass index and headache prevalence and severity. They discovered that though being overweight did not make people more

prone to migraines, it did make their headaches more severe and more frequent.

11 Weekends are the time to recharge, but if you find it hard to unwind when Friday rolls around, what beverage may help you relax?

- A. a cup of black tea
- B. a glass of skim milk
- C. a mug of hot cocoa
- D. a pint of beer

Answer: A. Although alcohol can take off the edge, if your goal is long-term stress relief, sipping black tea may give you better results. Researchers at University College London had

75 volunteers drink a fruit-flavored beverage daily; unbeknownst to some participants, their drink actually contained four cups of black tea. After six weeks, the subjects were put through a series of stressful scenarios. All of them experienced increased blood pressure and heart rates. However, about an hour later, those in the tea group reported feeling more relaxed, and compared with the other volunteers, their levels of the stress hormone cortisol fell faster.

12 Which series of easy, maintainable changes should you make to your diet if you want to be 10 to

20 pounds lighter at the year's end?

- A. banish snack foods, never grocery-shop hungry, make celery your go-to munchie, and never eat out
- B. keep snacks out of sight, always serve them on a plate when you do eat them, don't eat in front of the TV, and fill half your dish with veggies
- C. never miss breakfast, swear off dessert, always take the stairs, and pass up seconds
- D. don't eat the crust on your pizza, cook your meat well-done, never eat dinner rolls, and skip the cream and sugar in your coffee

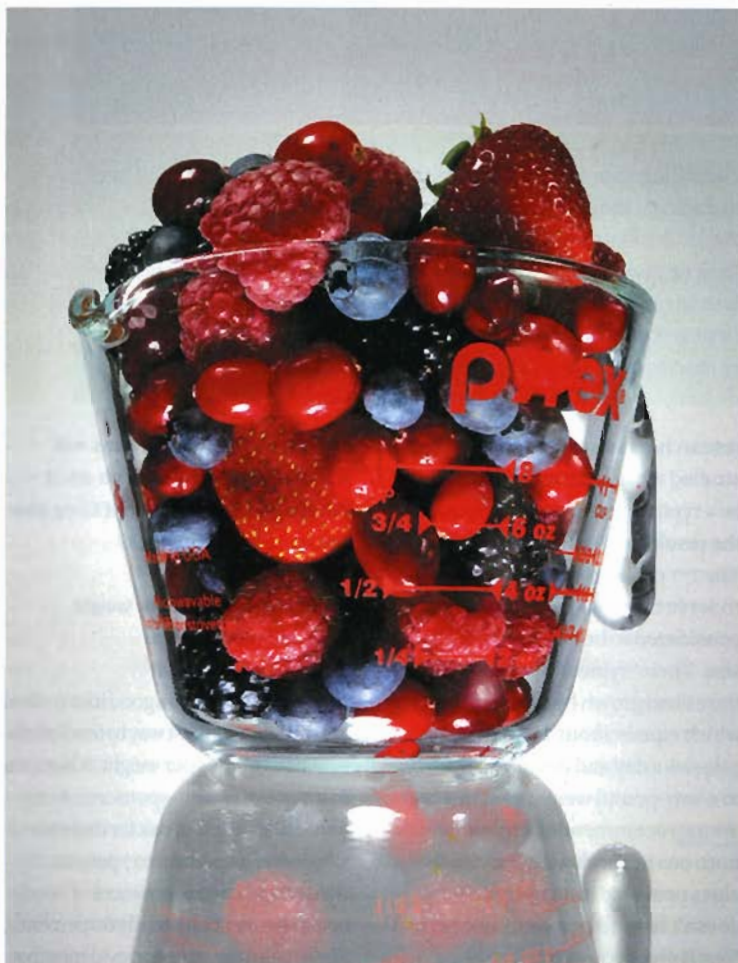
Answer: B. Shaving just 100 to 200 calories from your daily diet can lead to a 10- to 20-pound weight loss over the course of a year. According to *Mindless Eating* author Brian Wansink, Ph.D., Americans follow visual clues (rather than physical ones, like fullness) to determine when to stop eating. Learning a few food tricks can help you lose weight without feeling deprived. For instance, half a plate of vegetables will fill you up faster on fewer calories while making you feel like you've had the same big meal. Moving temptations like cookie jars and candy dishes just a few feet out of your normal path (or out of sight) makes you half as likely to dip into them. Limiting your afternoon snack by serving it on a plate instead of eating it out of its package can cut your caloric intake by 30 percent. And always sit at a table: Dining in front of the TV often leads to overeating. **E**

10

Antioxidant-rich berries make a very healthy snack. Rank these berries in order of their antioxidant content, highest to lowest:

- A. cranberries
- B. blueberries
- C. raspberries
- D. blackberries
- E. strawberries

Answer: D, E, A, C, B. While blueberries may get the most press, blackberries actually have the highest per-serving antioxidant content, according to a study in the July 2006 issue of *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Still, all five varieties are good sources of antioxidants, which are abundant in fruits and vegetables.



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