December 1, 2024
BL Personal

BOTTOM LINE on your health

GLUTEN-FREE DOESN'T MEAN HEALTHY, warns Lisa R. Young, PhD, RDN, CDN/LDN. Products labeled "gluten-free" often are highly processed, containing added sugars, salts and fats. And a study commissioned by Moms Across America found that most products tested had high levels of the pesticide *glyphosate*. Also, several "gluten-free" foods contained gluten. *Solution:* Don't buy gluten-free if you're not gluten-sensitive. If you are, create habits based on whole, organic naturally gluten-free foods such as fruits, vegetables, poultry and fish.

Lisa R. Young, PhD, RDN, CDN/LDN, is adjunct professor of nutrition at New York University, New York City, and author of *Finally Full, Finally Slim*. DrLisaYoung.com

ARTIFICIALLY SWEETENED DRINKS LINKED TO AFIB, says Rod Passman, MD. People who drank two liters or more per week of artificially sweetened beverages had 20% higher risk for atrial

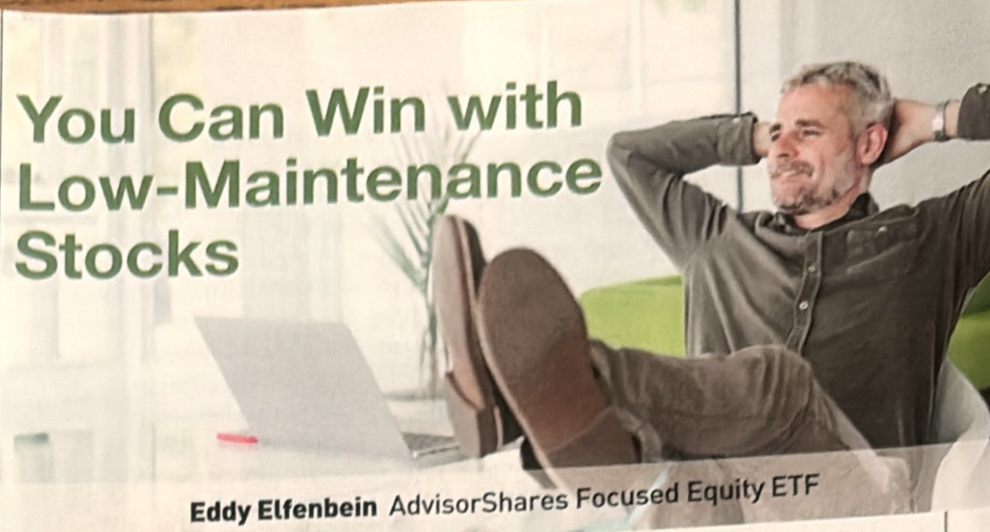
fibrillation (Afib)—irregular heartbeat linked to stroke risk. People with a genetic predisposition for Afib had the highest risk. *Self-defense:* Consider whether your family history warrants avoiding artificial sweeteners.

Rod Passman, MD, MSCE, is director of Center for Arrhythmia Research at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago, commenting on a study of 202,000 adults published in *Circulation: Arrhythmia and Electrophysiology*.

WEIGHT-LOSS DRUGS DON'T APPEAR TO AFFECT DEPRESSION or suicide risk, reports Thomas Wadden, PhD. Neither the FDA nor the European Medicines Agency have found conclusive evidence that GLP-1 weight-loss drugs cause suicidal thoughts or actions among the general population. Trial data on *semaglutide* use by people in good mental health also show no impact on depression or suicide. Still, patients with existing psychological problems should discuss their mental health with their prescribing doctors.

Thomas Wadden, PhD, is obesity researcher and professor of psychology in psychiatry at Perelman School of Medicine at University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and lead author of a study published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

You Can Win with Low-Maintenance Stocks



Eddy Elfenbein AdvisorShares Focused Equity ETF

Few investors embrace the mantra, *Less is more* or have been more successful at it than Eddy Elfenbein. Since 2005, Elfenbein has trounced the S&P 500 index. From January 1, 2006 through October 28, 2024, the S&P 500 generated returns of 575.41% with dividends reinvested. Elfenbein's Crossing Wall Street Buy List saw returns of 691.87% for that same period (with dividends reinvested). He even has outperformed renowned figures like Warren Buffett over that period.

How he does it: Elfenbein holds a buy list of 25 equally weighted high-quality companies. The list is locked, so no changes can be made during the year. At the start of each new year, he can sell and replace up to five stocks, and the entire list is rebalanced back to equal weighting. This low-maintenance approach is especially attractive when investors are overwhelmed by endless choices and complexity. Even more impressive is that Elfenbein has achieved stellar results without chasing cutting-edge growth stocks such as Tesla or Nvidia. Instead, his buy list is filled with safe, boring companies.

Bottom Line Personal asked Elfenbein how he selects stocks...and how you can incorporate his strategy into your own investing. Here's what he had to say...

SET IT AND FORGET IT

Early in my career, I thought of investing as a game I was trying to win. I bought stocks of fast-growing companies that weren't going to pay profits or dividends for years, if ever. I counted on some picks to soar in price to make up for my losing bets. Treating stocks as lottery tickets was exciting, but I've achieved better performance with less stress by thinking of stocks as partial ownership in real businesses. Once I adopted that mindset, my investing criteria shifted dramatically...

I invest only in great companies. The companies must offer products and services that customers routinely need and consider essential...and they must have understandable and easy-to-analyze business models, dominant positions in their market niches, strong cash flow and high profit margins, and a long history of steadily rising sales and earnings. Two of my favorites and longest holdings...

Aflac (AFL). Most investors know the insurer's duck mascot that says "Aflac" instead of quacking. Aflac provides more than 50 million consumers in the US and Japan with supplemental health insurance for accidents, dental and vision, disability and cancer. The business model is stable, and Aflac has increased its dividend, recently yielding 2.4%, for 41 consecutive years. *Recent share price:* $109.79.*

Stryker Corp. (SYK) has thousands of patents for medical devices and spends more than a $1 billion a year on research and development. It is a leader in hip- and knee-replacement products and an early mover in robotic surgeries for joint replacements. Stryker enjoys wide profit margins and remarkable earnings >>

*Performance figures are through October 28, 2024, courtesy of Morningstar, Inc.

Bottom Line Personal interviewed Eddy Elfenbein, manager of the AdvisorShares Focused Equity ETF (CWS), which is rated five stars by Morningstar. The ETF's five-year annualized return of 13% ranks in the top 3% of its category. He is based in Washington, DC. AdvisorShares.com/etfs/cws