



Intermittent Fasting for Weight Loss, Disease Prevention, and More

Talk show host Jimmy Kimmel eats whatever he wants five days a week but limits himself to 500 calories on the other two. Researcher Mark McCarty skips breakfast and exercises every morning. Actor Hugh Jackman confines all his eating to an eight-hour window and fasts for the other 16 hours of the day to bulk up for his role as a superhero. Neuroscientist Mark Mattson delays eating until after his midafternoon run, forgoing both breakfast and lunch on weekdays.

All these people are doing some form of intermittent fasting—and it's paying off. Kimmel dropped 26 pounds and has kept them off for several years. McCarty lost two-thirds of his body fat after starting this program 20 years ago. Jackman's regimen, combined with intensive exercise, transformed his body into an incredibly lean and muscular Wolverine.

And research by Dr. Mattson, who has maintained the same weight for more than 30 years, demonstrates that intermittent fasting not only impacts weight and muscle mass but also has positive effects on metabolism, brain function, disease prevention, and overall health.

No Logic for Three Meals a Day

Eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner is so deeply engrained that we rarely question it. From a medical perspective, however, there is no rationale for eating

three meals a day. It's simply a cultural construct woven into our daily lives, work and school schedules, and social activities.

Our ancient ancestors didn't have regular meal-times. They ate when and what they could hunt or gather. Intermittent fasting was the rule, not the exception. The feast-or-famine environment in which we evolved has made the human body exceptionally well adapted to going for prolonged periods of time without food.



You wouldn't know it in modern America, where breakfast is positioned as the most important meal of the day, food cravings are confused with hunger, and snacking from morning to night is perfectly acceptable. Our current eating habits seem normal to us, but they are unprecedented in history

and are a prime contributor to our staggering rates of obesity, diabetes, and degenerative diseases.

Obvious and Subtle Benefits

Eating less—and less often—does much more than promote weight loss. Calorie restriction turns on protective genes that trigger cell and mitochondria regeneration and DNA repair. Long-term restriction actually extends lifespan and reduces disease burden. Laboratory animals fed 30 percent fewer calories live 10–20 percent longer and age more gracefully than their well-fed lab-mates.

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Health & Healing

YOUR DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WELLNESS MEDICINE

Julian Whitaker, MD, has practiced medicine for over 35 years, after receiving degrees from Dartmouth College and Emory University. Dr. Whitaker has long been an advocate of living a healthy life. Dr. Whitaker is compensated on the sales of the supplements he formulates with Healthy Directions, LLC. He is not compensated for other companies' products that he recommends in this newsletter. He is the author of 14 health books including: *The Mini-Fast Diet*, *The Whitaker Wellness Weight Loss Program*, *Reversing Hypertension*, *Shed 10 Years in 10 Weeks*, *The Pain Relief Breakthrough*, *Reversing Heart Disease*, *Reversing Diabetes*, and *Dr. Whitaker's Guide to Natural Healing*.

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Remember, you can read current and past issues of *Health & Healing* when you create or access your account at drwhitaker.com.

Dear Reader,

A year ago, Neil Fachon was a student at Northeastern University, attending engineering classes and enjoying life in Boston. Then he started experiencing dizziness, double vision, and other unusual symptoms. An MRI was ordered, and on March 3, 2016, Neil was diagnosed with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), a rare, aggressive brain tumor, and given three months to live.



Neil Fachon and family touring Dr. Burzynski's medical facility

After researching their options, Neil and his parents, Wendy and Dean, decided on antineoplastons, a nontoxic gene-based therapy discovered by Stanislaw Burzynski, MD, PhD. An FDA-approved clinical trial of antineoplastons for DIPG had just begun, and Neil received his first treatment at the Burzynski Clinic in April. Incredibly, that very day the FDA put a hold on the clinical trial. The Fachons immediately petitioned the federal court in his home state of Rhode Island to continue treatment—and won!

The FDA has a long history of denying access to potentially lifesaving treatments—even in cases such as Neil's, where the best that can be expected of standard treatment (radiation) is a few extra weeks or months. Only three percent of patients with fatal illnesses get into clinical trials of promising drugs, and although “compassionate use” is occasionally granted by the FDA, most folks are left out in the cold.

Dr. Burzynski's antineoplastons is a case in point. Despite his remarkable successes saving lives of cancer patients—including three long-term survivors of DIPG—he has been harassed by the FDA for decades and his clinical trials remain closed. (You can read some of his patients' inspiring stories at burzynskipatientgroup.org.)

This is just plain wrong. The FDA needs a serious overhaul, and a step in that direction is “right to try” legislation, which gives terminally ill people access to promising treatments that have not completed the rigorous, 10- to 15-year, billion-dollar FDA approval process. Laws have been passed in several states, and similar bills have been introduced in the US legislature. To learn more, find out where your state stands, and see how you can help, visit righttotry.org.

Neil is by no means out of the woods, but this treatment has given him hope, and he exceeded his doctors' dire predictions months ago. He and his family are working hard to raise awareness about alternative therapies and patients' freedom of choice. Let's help spread the word.

Happy New Year,

Fasting (continued from page 1)

Intermittent fasting, which is much less draconian, has many of the same benefits. Regularly skipping meals is a mild stressor that boosts defense and repair mechanisms. It increases mitochondrial efficiency, reduces oxidative stress, and revs up processes that promote the proper folding and assembly of proteins and the clearing out of damaged molecules and cellular debris.

Periodic fasting also improves insulin resistance, abdominal obesity, blood sugar and lipid abnormalities, hypertension, and other aspects of metabolic syndrome. In addition, it raises levels of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein that enhances cognitive function and protects against neurodegeneration. Animal research reveals that intermittent fasting increases resistance to stroke, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, cancer, and diabetes, and small studies suggest similar benefits for humans.

Weight loss is the focus of most of the clinical trials, and they show that this approach is more effective and sustainable than low-calorie dieting for reducing body fat while maintaining muscle mass. Fasting turns you into a fat-burning machine. After about 12 hours without eating, glycogen (the storage form of glucose) is depleted, and your body switches over to using fat for energy. As long as you stay in fasting mode, you'll continue to burn stored fat. And if you exercise while in the fasting state, fat burning shifts into high gear.

How-To's of Intermittent Fasting

The great thing about intermittent fasting is that you have lots of options. Jimmy Kimmel follows the 5:2 diet, outlined in the 2013 book *The Fast Diet*, which recommends eating 500–600 calories any two non-consecutive days per week and normally the other five. Researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago have followed hundreds of obese patients on eight- to 10-week regimens of alternate-day fasting (very low-cal every other day) and report average losses of 13 pounds and significant improvements in blood pressure, insulin, cholesterol, and triglycerides.

Hugh Jackman's "Wolverine diet," described in *The 8-Hour Diet*, is time restricted, limiting eating to an eight-hour period, and Mark McCarthy and Mark Mattson use similar time-restricted approaches. It doesn't matter what hours you decide to fast. Most Whitaker Wellness patients follow my "mini-fast" program and skip breakfast, as it stretches the 10 or so fasting hours during sleep into 14–16 hours. Breakfast also seems to be the easiest meal to miss, since dinner is often family or social time.

It doesn't really matter what you eat either—at least in theory. Kimmel says he "eats like a pig" five days a week, and Jackman reportedly took in 4,000 calories a day to achieve his superhero physique.

However, for enduring weight loss and overall health, I recommend cleaning up your diet and concentrating on whole foods such as lean protein, olive oil, low-glycemic carbohydrates, lots of vegetables, and a little fruit.

As for exercise, it isn't a deal breaker, but regular physical activity boosts results and is essential for optimal health.

Much Easier Than Dieting

I have the most clinical experience with time-restricted intermittent fasting. In fact, I wrote a book about it. *The Mini-Fast Diet* lays out the nuts and bolts of

the program and has dozens of inspiring before-and-after stories and photos, but the program is simple: Skip breakfast, get some exercise during the fasting period, and eat sensibly the rest of the day.

Breaking old habits isn't easy. Cutting out meals and going longer stretches without eating takes discipline and getting used to. However, it's a heck of a lot easier and more rewarding than counting calories, avoiding specific foods, and obsessing about dieting all day. And if you stick with it, weight loss and better health are inevitable.

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My Recommendations

- ▶ Be sure to drink lots of water during fasting periods. Non-caloric beverages such as coffee and tea are fine, and caffeine helps curb appetite. You don't have to count calories, but for best results, eat a healthy diet.
- ▶ To learn more, visit drwhitaker.com or read *The Mini-Fast Diet*. Other books on intermittent fasting include *The Fast Diet* and *The 8-Hour Diet*.
- ▶ Intermittent fasting is not recommended during pregnancy/nursing or for anyone prone to hypoglycemia.

Dear Dr. Whitaker

Q *I have a history of osteoporosis. I took Fosamax for a time and have continued to take calcium and vitamin D. My doctor recently told me to stop taking calcium supplements because they increase risk of heart attack. I am very concerned. Can you give me some advice? — Anne M., Tampa, FL*

A This rumor has been circulating for years, but it can finally be laid to rest. The National Osteoporosis Foundation and the American Society for Preventive Cardiology tasked an expert panel with examining all the peer-reviewed literature on calcium and cardiovascular disease. The report, published in October 2016 in the esteemed *Annals of Internal Medicine*, found no links between calcium supplements and increased risk of heart disease, stroke, or death from cardiovascular disease or other causes.

The conclusion: “In light of the evidence available to date, calcium intake from food and supplements that does not exceed the tolerable upper level of intake (2,000–2,500 mg/day) should be considered safe from a cardiovascular standpoint.” The panel further stated, “Discontinuation of supplemental calcium for safety reasons is not necessary and may be harmful to bone health when intake from food is suboptimal.”

I stand by my longtime recommendations to eat calcium-rich foods such as low-fat dairy, tofu, and leafy greens and take 1,000 mg of supplemental calcium daily, along with 250–500 mg magnesium,

2,000–5,000 IU vitamin D, and a good multivitamin. I also suggest you get a new doctor.

Q *I have been a fan of yours for over 20 years and take a number of the vitamins you recommend. My problem is sleep issues. I take Restful Night Essentials (along with some protein and an ounce of tart cherry juice concentrate with water). I go to sleep pretty quickly, but I wake after a couple of hours and stay awake forever. My brain takes off and won't stop. I've tried adding melatonin and blue light blockers for the TV and computer. I doubt my problem is sleep apnea. The only thing that works is sleeping pills, which I know aren't good for you. I am a tennis instructor, 72 years old, so I really need quality rest. — M.G., via email*

A When I wake up in the night with a busy mind, I take 100 mg of Dilantin. Low doses of this inexpensive anti-seizure drug, which I also prescribe for anxiety, depression, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, calm down the “static” in the brain and help me get right back to sleep. Most doctors are unfamiliar with these off-label uses. If your physician won't prescribe it, consider coming to Whitaker Wellness.

I also recommend eating your protein snack half an hour after you take your supplements. Melatonin is best taken on an empty stomach, and the amino acids GABA and L-theanine may be competing for absorption with the amino acids in your protein. If these suggestions don't help, get tested for sleep apnea, just to be sure.

 [Read more Q&As online at drwhitaker.com/featured-questions-and-answers](https://drwhitaker.com/featured-questions-and-answers). Send your own questions to drwhitakerquestions@drwhitaker.com.

From My Blog

More Health Benefits of Cinnamon Discovered

Cinnamon may be relegated to your spice drawer, but this popular culinary herb also deserves a place in your medicine cabinet. Clinical trials have found that consuming as little as one gram (about 1/2 teaspoon) of cinnamon per day can lower blood sugar by a whopping 20 percent. This versatile compound has also been shown to reduce cholesterol and triglyceride levels as well as blood pressure. Much of the latest research focuses on cinnamon's benefits for the brain. In addition to enhancing learning in animals, cinnamon compounds have protective properties against neurodegenerative disorders such as Parkinson's and dementia and have been found to improve motor function and inhibit the buildup of proteins associated with Alzheimer's disease. Cinnamon can be sprinkled on food, added to tea, coffee, and other beverages, or taken in capsule form. For detailed information on the many uses of cinnamon, visit my blog.

 [Get the rest of the story—and share your opinion—by visiting my blog at “Connect with Dr. Whitaker” on drwhitaker.com.](#)



Works for Me...

► **Constipation** *A few months ago I misread the label on my powdered magnesium citrate relaxation drink and took a bit too much. Let me just say its claim as a “natural laxative” is warranted. Recently, my husband was a little backed up so I suggested he give magnesium a try. It worked like a charm. — Claudia G., Springfield, MO*

Magnesium is an effective therapy for occasional constipation. Dosage varies from person to person, so it's best to start low (500 mg) and build up gradually to 1,000 mg or more.

► **Asthma** *I have been working on improving my asthma for the last seven years. I used to be on many different medications; however, I was able to discontinue most of these one by one. Finally, after visiting your clinic I was able to stop my steroid inhaler and now I'm down to one rescue inhaler, which I rarely need. I just wish I had come to see you sooner. — Debi Tepper, via email*

To learn more about natural therapies for asthma, reread the September 2016 newsletter.

For information on treatment at Whitaker Wellness, call 800-488-1500.

► **Hip Pain** *I am taking turmeric for hip pain and it seems to be doing the trick. Some days I forget I even have a bad hip. This has been the best thing I have ever tried, and I love the fact I am using a spice! — Jill Pritchard, via email*

Turmeric (curcumin is the active ingredient) is a proven anti-inflammatory and pain reliever. The brand we use at the clinic, Meriva, is available in stores and online, or can be ordered by calling 800-810-6655. Use as directed.

► **Healthy Aging** *I have taken your vitamins since the early '90s and people often remark that they would never think I was 85. I was a triathlete, always winning in my age group but have not competed in the last few years, as I would only be racing myself! Today, I swim 3/4 mile in an hour three times a week and try to cycle with a group 10–25 miles weekly. I am convinced my physical activities and overall good health and appearance are all thanks to 20-plus years of quality supplement use. — Lyn Henderson, San Antonio, TX*

📧 Have a Health Tip to share? Send it to worksforme@drwhitaker.com. Read more tips at drwhitaker.com/works-for-me.

Healing Tip

Ever heard of the “see food” diet? It sounds like a joke, but it's the real deal. A 2016 study found that women who kept fruit in plain sight in their kitchens weighed an average of 13 pounds less than the average of the other study participants. And cereal or soda on kitchen countertops was linked with 20–25 extra pounds.

📧 Like my Facebook page at facebook.com/WhitakerMD to receive daily healing tips and join the conversation.

Monthly Health Quiz

ACHOO! Which of the following sneezing facts are not true?

- A) A sneeze can spew airborne droplets 10 feet.
- B) It is impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.
- C) Your heart stops briefly when you sneeze.
- D) Sunlight triggers sneezing.



Answer:

A, B, and C are false. Saliva/mucus droplets can travel nearly 30 feet and stay in the air for 10 minutes. It's hard but not impossible to keep your eyes open while sneezing. The belief that the heart stops is just a myth. And about one in four people have a photic sneeze reflex and sneeze in response to bright light.

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Notable Quote

“I think in terms of the day's resolutions, not the year's.”

— Henry Moore, English sculptor, 1898–1986

No computer? Mail your question or health tip to *Health & Healing*, 6710-A Rockledge Dr., Ste. 500, Bethesda, MD 20817.

Kidney Disease: What Works/What Doesn't

If you've ever had a kidney stone, you know how excruciating it can be. Some say it's more painful than childbirth, although I'm sure many women would argue with that. Fortunately, kidney stones ultimately pass, either on their own or with the help of medications, sound waves, scopes/lasers, or surgery.

There's another, more serious kidney ailment that gives little warning. Chronic kidney (renal) disease often goes undiagnosed until function is seriously impaired, and once it advances to end-stage disease, or kidney failure, dialysis or transplant are the only options.

Some 20 million Americans are affected by chronic kidney disease, and half of them don't know they have it—which is why everyone should take steps to protect their kidneys.

Prevention First

Your kidneys are workhorses. Every day, these fist-sized organs filter 150–200 quarts of blood and produce four to eight cups of urine. They remove wastes, maintain proper blood composition and fluid levels, and produce the active form of vitamin D as well as hormones necessary for blood pressure control and red blood cell formation.

Each of your two kidneys contains about a million nephrons, made up of looping capillaries (glomeruli) and collection tubes (tubules) that filter blood and divert wastes and excess fluids to the bladder. It is estimated that if all these capillaries were laid end to end, they would stretch out well over 100 miles!

Optimal kidney function depends on robust blood flow through the nephrons, and conditions that damage these delicate blood vessels—especially diabetes (diabetic nephropathy) and hypertension—are the leading causes of chronic kidney disease. Therefore, the most important thing you can do is tackle these risk factors.

Control your blood sugar with weight loss, exercise, diet, berberine, and other natural therapies. Lower blood pressure with lifestyle changes, potassium- and nitrate-rich foods, and targeted supplements. Take multivitamins. A 2016 study linked

high intakes of vitamins B12, C, D, and E, folate, magnesium, and potassium with a decreased incidence of chronic kidney disease.

Other risk factors within your control include obesity, smoking, and overuse of ibuprofen and other analgesics, and proton pump inhibitors (Nexium, Prilosec, and Prevacid).

Treatment Is Challenging

Because patients are often diagnosed at relatively advanced stages, treatment is challenging. In addition to diabetes and blood pressure meds, diuretics, iron supplements, and drugs for boosting red blood cells may be recommended. Statins are also often prescribed due to kidney patients' increased risk of cardiovascular disease, but a recent eight-year study linked statin use with a higher incidence of acute and chronic kidney disease.

Exercise has proven benefits, and water-soluble vitamins and minerals help stave off malnutrition. Although a high sodium or protein intake does not cause

chronic kidney disease, both can accelerate progression of existing disease. Talk to your doctor about the right amount of sodium and protein for you.

Let me make it clear that I do not have a cure for advanced kidney disease. But I do want to tell you about additional therapies for slowing progression and improving kidney function.

Supplements and Baking Soda

A 2016 clinical trial involving more than 15,000 participants with mild-to-moderate disease found that adding 800 mg of folic acid per day to drug therapy significantly delayed progression. Other recent studies demonstrate benefits of supplemental vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids.

Then there's good old baking soda. The kidneys (and lungs) are responsible for maintaining the body's proper pH. If the blood is too acidic, the kidneys produce bicarbonate to balance pH; if it's too alkaline, they excrete it. Diseased kidneys are less efficient, and acid levels may rise, resulting in

My Recommendations

- ▶ Everyone with chronic kidney disease should be under the care of a nephrologist.
- ▶ To learn more about controlling risk factors such as diabetes and hypertension, visit whitakerwellness.com.
- ▶ If you're interested in chelation, EECF, or other treatments at Whitaker Wellness, call 800-488-1500.

a condition called metabolic acidosis that worsens function and overall health.

In a groundbreaking study, patients took 600 mg tablets of sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) or placebo tablets three times a day for two years. Sodium bicarbonate significantly slowed decline in kidney function—just 9 percent of this group had rapid progression compared to 45 percent in the placebo group. They were also able to tolerate more protein and had gains in muscle mass. And despite the sodium, there was no increase in blood pressure or edema.

Other Overlooked Therapies

As I mentioned, kidney disease is marked by damage to the blood vessels and accompanied by heightened risk of cardiovascular disease. At Whitaker Wellness we use two other treatments that improve both vascular health and kidney function.

Enhanced external counterpulsation (EECP) is a noninvasive therapy that increases circulation and promotes new blood vessel growth throughout the body—including the kidneys. Although most of the research involves patients with angina and heart failure, EECP has been demonstrated to slow kidney decline, even in patients who are on dialysis.

EDTA chelation, which removes heavy metals from the body, also has proven benefits. Lead is

a known kidney toxin, and several small studies have shown that chelation retards progression and improves markers of chronic kidney disease.

Take Care of Your Kidneys

More than 400,000 Americans are undergoing dialysis. Over 100,000 are on waiting lists for kidney transplants, but fewer than 17,000 are performed every year. Kidney disease remains our ninth leading cause of death.

One of these years, we'll be regenerating diseased kidneys with stem cell therapy and growing new organs in the lab or creating them with 3D printing. Until that day, I hope you'll get serious about prevention. If that's too late, discuss these alternative therapies with your physician.

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Whitaker Wellness Success Story

Going Toward a Bright Future

"Last year I had a heart attack. My wife drove me to the hospital in record time—the doctors said that in another 30–40 minutes I would have died, so I owe this second life of mine to her. Afterward, I was much weaker than before. I was limited physically and unable to play my favorite sports, like soccer, or really do much at all.

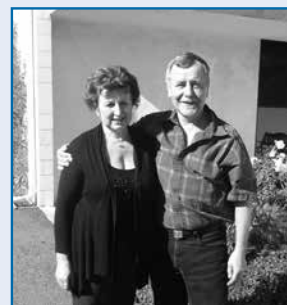
"A friend of mine told me he went to Whitaker Wellness after having a serious heart attack 10 years ago, and he is now living a normal life, working hard, and is very happy with his recovery. I Googled the clinic, and my wife agreed it was the place for me.

"Since being at the clinic and treated with EECP, hyperbaric oxygen, IVs, and APAP for sleep apnea, I have improved so much. I even won the walking contest, taking the title of the Year-to-Date Winner. I can now walk five to six miles, no problem.

"Two weeks before my heart attack, I tested 'normal.' I never smoked, didn't drink much, and I eat healthy. When I had my heart attack I kept asking myself, 'Why?' I received so many answers while at the clinic.

"The main problem in my life is stress. In my lifetime, I have been an immigrant in four different countries. Learning the different languages and customs of the countries was a big part of my stress. On top of that, the company at which I had a job for the past 30 years closed their doors last year. So I opened my own business and started a new life. Stress is the reality of my life.

"I'm so glad to have found a solution. When the spring and summer come, I look forward to soccer, canoeing, and hiking. We are going toward a bright future." — *George Torka, Winnipeg, MB, Canada*



George and Barbara Torka

To make an appointment at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, call 800-488-1500 or visit whitakerwellness.com.

Innovations in Wellness Medicine

Exercise: Is Less More?

When it comes to exercise, could less be more? High-intensity interval training—short bouts of intense exercise interspersed with moderately paced activity—is increasing in popularity, as are slower, more intense weightlifting sessions lasting just 20 minutes once or twice a week (SuperSlow, Power of 10, and Perfect Workout). Now, research suggests that going all out for a little as one minute during your exercise routine provides significant benefits.

In a 2016 study, participants who didn't initially exercise much were divided into two groups. Three times a week for 12 weeks, one group rode an exercise bike at a steady, moderate pace for 45 minutes. The other group did sprint interval training: three rounds of two-minute, moderately paced cycling followed by 20 seconds of all-out, no-holds-barred cycling, for a total of 10 minutes of exercise. Guess what? Both groups had similar improvements in cardiorespiratory fitness, insulin sensitivity, and muscle mitochondrial content—even though the steady cyclers exercised five times longer. This is great news for people who “don't have time to exercise” or who just want more effective workouts in less time.

Ashwagandha for Stress, Mood, and Pain Relief

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is an adaptogenic herb commonly used in Ayurvedic medicine to alleviate stress, treat mood imbalances, and strengthen the immune system. A recent study shines light on another benefit of this versatile herb: pain relief.

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, patients with knee pain were randomly assigned to one of three study groups and instructed to take ashwagandha root extract (either 250 mg or 125 mg) or a placebo twice per day. Swelling, pain levels, stiffness, and disability were assessed at the start of the study and after four, eight, and 12 weeks. At the study's completion, significant improvements in all markers were seen in the groups taking both dosages of ashwagandha, with reductions in pain, disability, and stiffness noted as early as four weeks after starting on this supplement. Look for ashwagandha alone or in combination products in health food stores or online, and aim for the optimal study dosage of 250–500 mg daily.

Did You Know?

- Moderate physical activity reduces risk of viral and bacterial infections.
- Excess caffeine, alcohol, nitrite-rich processed foods, and MSG are the most common migraine triggers.
- Studies of veterans link depression with low levels of omega-3 fatty acids.
- Excessive alcohol intake increases risk of mouth, pharynx, esophagus, colorectal, liver, and breast cancer.
- In a recent study, the youngest children in their class were 75 percent more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD than the oldest.
- Using smartphones before bedtime doubles kids' risk of poor sleep and daytime sleepiness.
- Vitamin E supplements protect against pneumonia in nonsmoking older men.
- Morning sickness is associated with a reduced risk of miscarriage.
- Just 1 in 10 American teenagers spend time outside every day.
- There are 80–90 million pet cats in the US, and almost as many ferals and strays.

Health & Healing Resources

- **Renew Your Subscription** 800-539-8219 (M–F 9 AM–5 PM EST)
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