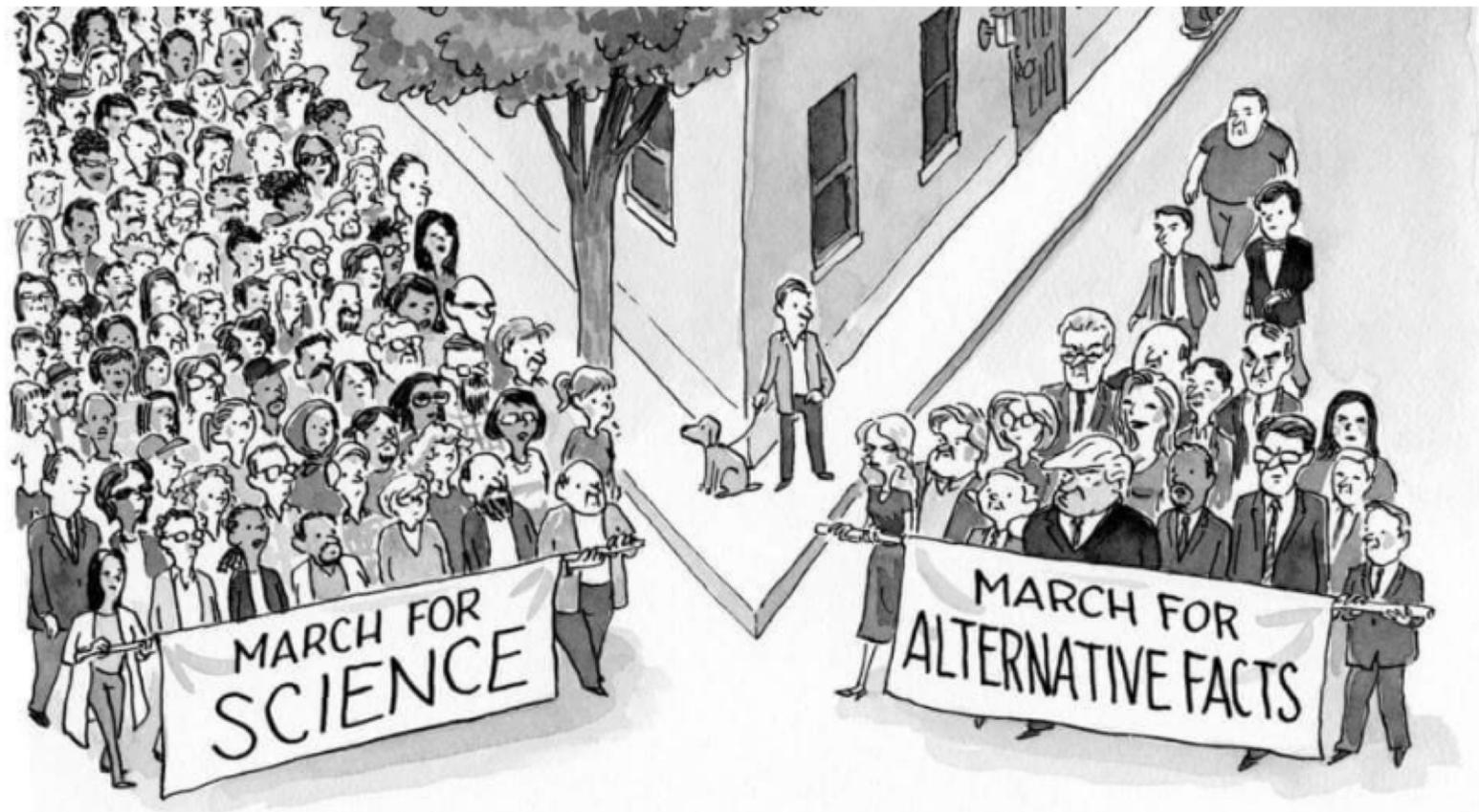


# Health After 60

## Alternative Facts and Your Health

John Swartzberg, MD

November 30, 2018



# Health & Wellness Publications



## WellnessFacts

■ Lung cancer death rates in California are 28 percent lower than in the U.S. average, and the gap is widening each year, according to a new study by Cancer Research Network. Early adoption of screening offerings in the state has led to fewer people getting to smoke, higher quit rates among young smokers, and higher smoking among those who do smoke, compared to U.S. averages. In the 1970s the proportion of ever-smokers among young adults in California was similar to the rest of the country, but by 2014 it was 40 percent lower. The overall rate of deaths of lung cancer in California has been one-third that in the rest of the country.

■ People with diabetes have high rates of cardiovascular disease, but not if they have few risk factors under control, according to a Swedish study in the new *Journal of Medicine*. It tracked 271,000 people (average age 61) with type 2 diabetes who were followed for 16 years. The few factors were almost hemoglobin A1c (indicating poor long-term blood sugar control), smoking, elevated LDL ("bad") cholesterol, high blood pressure, and albuminuria (an early marker of kidney damage). Participants who didn't smoke and had all four other factors under control had little or no increased risk for heart attacks, stroke, or premature death compared to the general population. Each controlled risk factor had little or no beneficial effect on its own.

■ Sleeping seven to eight hours a night is best for cognitive performance for most people, according to a large study in the journal *Sleep*. Canadian researchers had more than 10,000 people complete a word-complex online survey and cognitive test. Participants reported their average 7.4 hours per night, on average, during the past month. That was the same as the average total sleep duration with the cognitive test results. They found that, regardless of age, people sleeping seven to eight hours per night performed best, on average, especially on tests of memory and verbal ability. Short-term memory was not affected by sleep duration. People who regularly sleep less than seven hours a night and those sleeping more than eight hours were equally impaired.

■ Organic foods & cancer ■ Fire extinguishers ■ Eye health ■ Hearing disorder ■ Pelvic organ prolapse ■ Tick bites & meat allergy ■ Psoriasis ■ HPV vaccine

## Lectins: the new gluten?

A diet doctor blames these proteins in beans and other plant foods for our health woes

**W**hen it comes to concerns about high-carbohydrate foods, many people in our country have focused on gluten, a protein found in wheat and some other grains, which they deem responsible for countless common ailments through only a small percentage of people are truly sensitive to it. Now the vilified list has another member, which are ubiquitous carbohydrate-binding proteins found notably in plant foods such as legumes and whole grains, but also in animals and microorganisms. Like gluten, plant lectins get blamed for a laundry list of woes, from inflammation and obesity to cancer, arthritis, and gastrointestinal problems.

Leading the charge against lectins has been Dr. Steven Gundry whose 2017 book *The Plant Paradox* is a bestseller. The *Hidden Dangers in "Healthy" Foods: The Cause of Disease and Weight Gain* ("The more (or more) you eat, the more you gain") is the key to that subtitle—suggesting that plant foods you thought were good for you are making you sick. Other books followed, including a lectin avoidance cookbook, as well as Dr. Gundry's own line of proprietary dietary supplements (including one called *Lectin Shield*), mineral-spike chocolate (85¢ for 8 ounces), and anti-aging cream and serum (110¢/ounce), all somehow linked to his anti-lectin, happy-go-lucky and promoted by provocative ads and infomercials (often disguised as health news articles) on major websites. Dr. Gundry claims that lectins are "the #1 biggest danger in the American diet" and that "every-

thing you thought you knew about your diet, your health, and your weight is wrong." Those are just two of his many over-the-top conspiracy claims.

Lectins are really a new bogymen, in fact, starting two decades ago, proponents of the higher alkaline "Eat Right for Your Blood Type" diet lashed lectins to all sorts of autoimmune diseases, depending on one's blood type.

Here's a look at the claims and facts about lectins.

**Claim:** Lectins are toxic components of plant foods.

**Fact:** Some can be, under rare circumstances, but not when foods are consumed the way they are customarily prepared. Lectins are a large and diverse class of carbohydrate-binding proteins that perform a variety of important biochemical functions and are especially high in legumes and wheat. (Legumes refer to a family of plants, not to the flesh or seeds of such plants, and include most bean, lentil, and chickpea.)

Plants have evolved to produce sophisticated, multi-layered systems and compounds to defend themselves against insect, microbial, and animal attack. Lectins are no exception for plants and, like other "natural poisons," end up in foods we eat. Key to mead that plant foods contain thousands of compounds that could have good or bad effects on people who consume them.

Some of the lectins in certain raw legumes (especially kidney beans) can be deadly

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University of California, Berkeley

healthafter50  
Health Advice from the School of Public Health

www.healthandwellnessletters.berkeley.edu



## What to Do When High Blood Pressure Won't Budge

It's hardly news that high blood pressure increases your risk of a heart attack, a stroke, chronic kidney disease, and other serious health problems. Fortunately, there's plenty more you can do to lower elevated blood pressure, including healthy lifestyle changes and a variety of different classes of hypertension medication. But even those strategies aren't enough for some people, and their blood pressure remains high, a condition called resistant hypertension.

### New advice

It's been a decade since the American Heart Association (AHA) released its first evidence-based treatment for diagnosing and treating resistant hypertension. Since then, a wide range of research findings has shed light on resistant hypertension and the best ways to treat it. Last September, the AHA published a revised scientific

statement for resistant hypertension based on the latest research in the *Journal of Hypertension*, which underscores the importance of getting an accurate diagnosis and employing proven treatment strategies.

The AHA considers hypertension to be a blood pressure reading of greater than 130/80 mm Hg (millimeters of mercury). It considered patients who are on both of the following factors as prone: ■ Blood pressure remains elevated despite the concurrent use of three or more classes of antihypertensive drugs, which typically include a calcium channel blocker, a diuretic, and an angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitor or an angiotensin receptor blocker (ARB), administered at the maximum doses a patient can tolerate ■ Blood pressure requires four or more antihypertensive drugs to achieve a target goal

Researchers don't fully understand what makes some people's blood pressure resistant to treatment. African-American, older white, and men are at an increased risk of resistant hypertension. It also puts patients at especially high risk for health problems associated with hypertension, such as a stroke, a heart attack, heart failure, kidney disease, and earlier death than people with better-controlled hypertension.

**False alarms** ■ Your physician or doctor can confirm that you have resistant hypertension, but he or she must rule out other underlying causes, most of which are reversible, such as:



Resistant hypertension puts people at greater risk of cardiovascular disease as those with untreated high blood pressure treatment.

■ Poor adherence to the prescribed drug regimen. Fifty to 80 percent of people who need blood pressure-lowering medications don't take them as directed, resulting in poorly controlled blood pressure, according to the AHA. One in four patients prescribed high blood pressure pills never fills the initial prescription. If you've been taking your medication faithfully, sticking with your treatment plan could quickly bring your blood pressure under control.

■ White-coat hypertension. When some people visit their doctor, they may reflexively feel anxious, which can cause an abnormal rise in blood pressure, resulting in what's known as white-coat hypertension. To determine whether an elevated level is a white-coat effect, your doctor may ask you to take your own blood pressure readings at home or wear a portable blood pressure monitor for 24 to 48 hours. If your home blood pressure levels are stable and lower than your in-office measurements, you likely don't have resistant hypertension.

■ Poor lifestyle and dietary habits. Obesity, physical inactivity, a high-sodium diet, and heavy alcohol use contribute to high blood pressure. Even if

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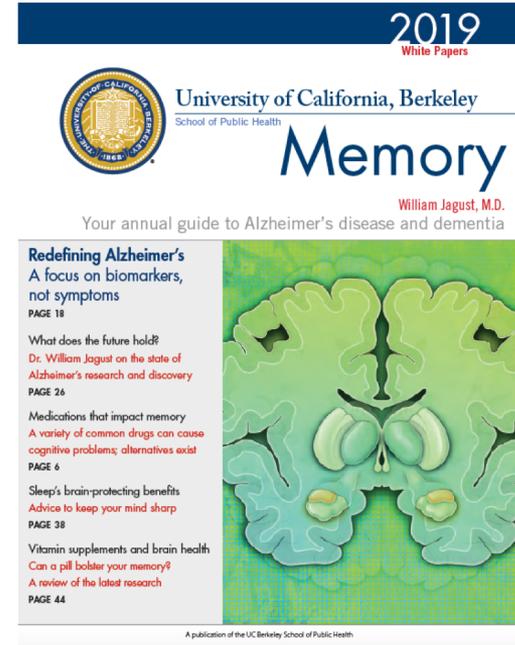
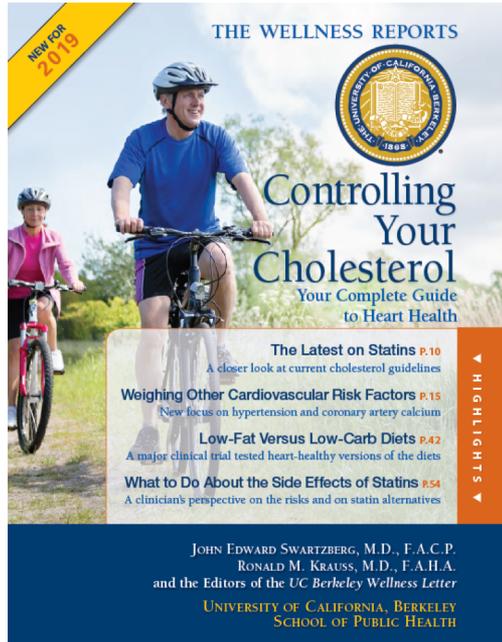
In This Issue

Behavioral Therapy for Weight Loss ■ Latent Glaucoma Treatments

A publication of the UC Center for Health & Behavior Change

School of Public Health  
UC Berkeley

# Health & Wellness Publications



# Topics

- Supplements
- Cancer
- Dementia
- Nutrition
- Hypertension
- Vaccinations

# Supplements

- Supplements are safe and effective.
- The claims made in ads and on labels are held to a standard of truth and accountability.
- If the label says a supplement contains certain amounts of various ingredients, you can trust it.
- Supplements must carry warning labels about potential side effects, and can be quickly taken off the market if they cause serious adverse effects.
- The word “natural” on a label means the product is safe.

# Supplements

- A daily multivitamin might help and can't hurt.



# Supplements

- Is anyone a candidate for multivitamins?
  - Women who may become pregnant.
  - Pregnant or breastfeeding women.
  - Strict vegetarians.
  - People on prolonged weight loss regimens.
  - Older people.
  - People on chronic PPIs or H-2 blockers.

# Supplements

- Airborne helps prevent respiratory infections.



# Supplements

- Omega-3's supplements help prevent heart disease.
  - Yes for secondary prevention.
  - Maybe for primary prevention.
  - Yes for fish.



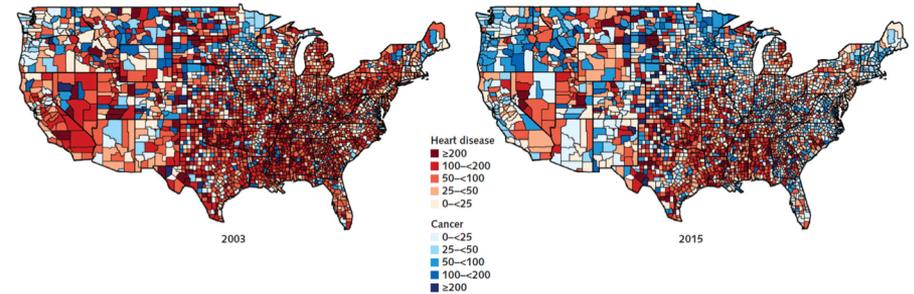


# Cancer

- Cancer rates are increasing.
  - Over the past decade, cancer death rates dropped by 1.5 percent annually, slightly better than earlier improvement.
  - Overall the death rate has dropped 25 percent since 1991, which translates into more than 2 million fewer cancer deaths.
  - The decline has been driven by the most common cancers—lung, breast, prostate, and colorectal.

# Cancer

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. – but in the next few years cancer is likely to surpass it.
- Coronary death rates dropped 28% between 2003 and 2015, while cancer death rates fell 16%.



# Cancer

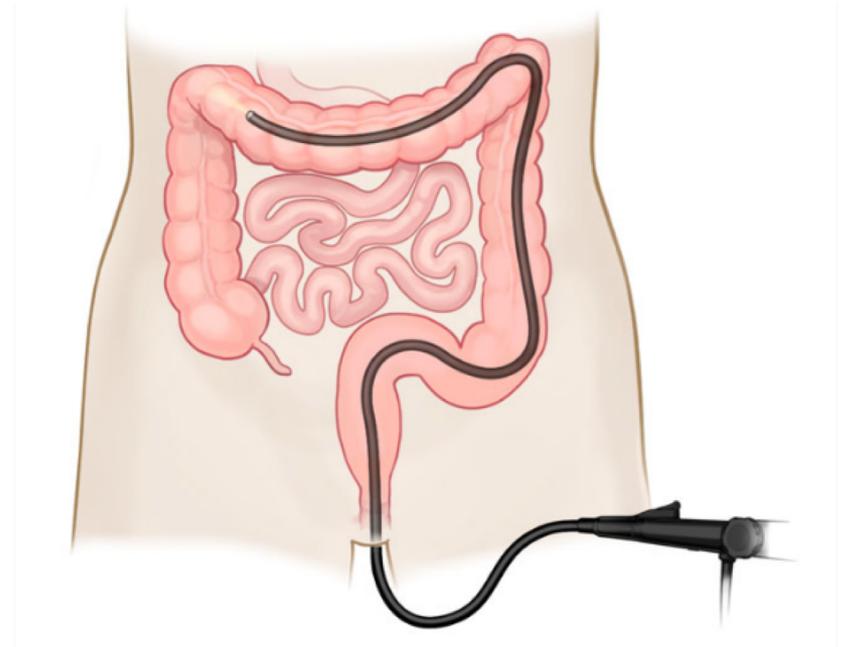
- The most common cause of cancer death in women is breast cancer.
  - Among females, lung (25%), breast (14%), and colorectal (8%) cancers are the leading causes of cancer death.
  - Lung cancer is by far the leading cause of cancer death among males (27%), followed by colorectal (9%) and prostate (8%) cancers.

# Cancer

- More men get cancer and die from it than women.
  - Men have a 20 percent higher cancer incidence and a 40 percent higher death rate than women

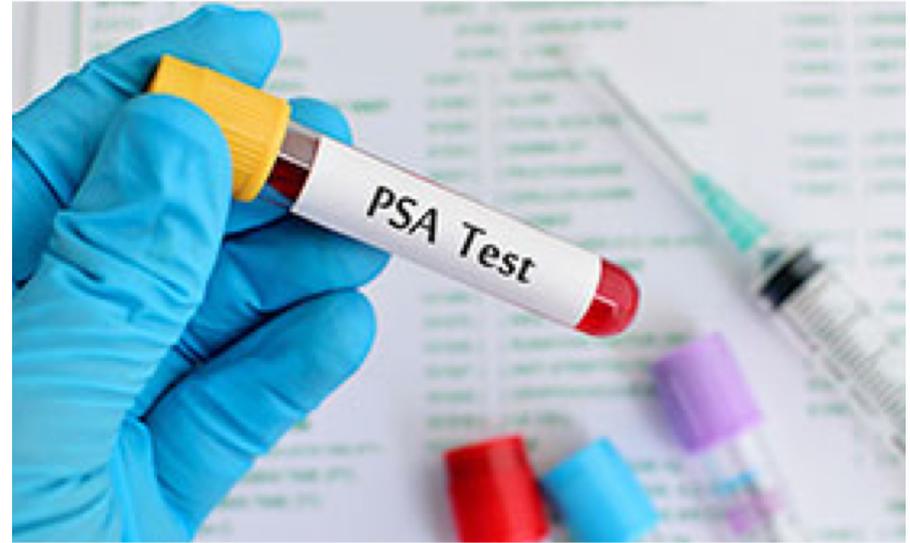
# Cancer: Colon

- Colonoscopy every 10 years is the gold standard for diagnosing colon cancer.
- Are there downsides?
- Are there alternatives?



# Cancer: Prostate

- PSA testing saves lives.



# Cancer: Prostate

- Who should consider screening?
  - USPSTF: Age 55 to 69 to make an informed, individual decision about whether to undergo PSA screening. No screening after age 69.
- ACS:
  - Start the conversation at a younger age, especially for high-risk men, including African Americans and those with a family history. Stop at 75.
- NCCN:
  - An initial PSA test should be offered to men when they reach age 45. A result of 1 ng/mL or less would suggest a low risk for prostate cancer, so repeat testing would only be necessary every two to four years.
  - Routine PSA screening should end at age 75 for all but very healthy men with a significant life expectancy.

# Cancer: Mammography

- Having a mammogram reduces your risk of dying from breast cancer.



# Cancer: Mammography

- Mammography increases your risk of over-diagnosis and unnecessary treatment.



# Cancer: Mammography

- USPSTF:
  - Every two years between the ages of 50 and 74. Women in their forties may also opt for biennial screening, depending on their risk factors and preferences. No advice for women over 75 because research is lacking.
- ACS:
  - Ages 40 to 45, optional. Annual ages 45 and 54. Biennial screening for ages 55 and older, continuing as long as a woman has a life expectancy of at least 10 years.
- ACOG:
  - Annual mammograms starting at age 40, with no upper age limit.

# Dementia

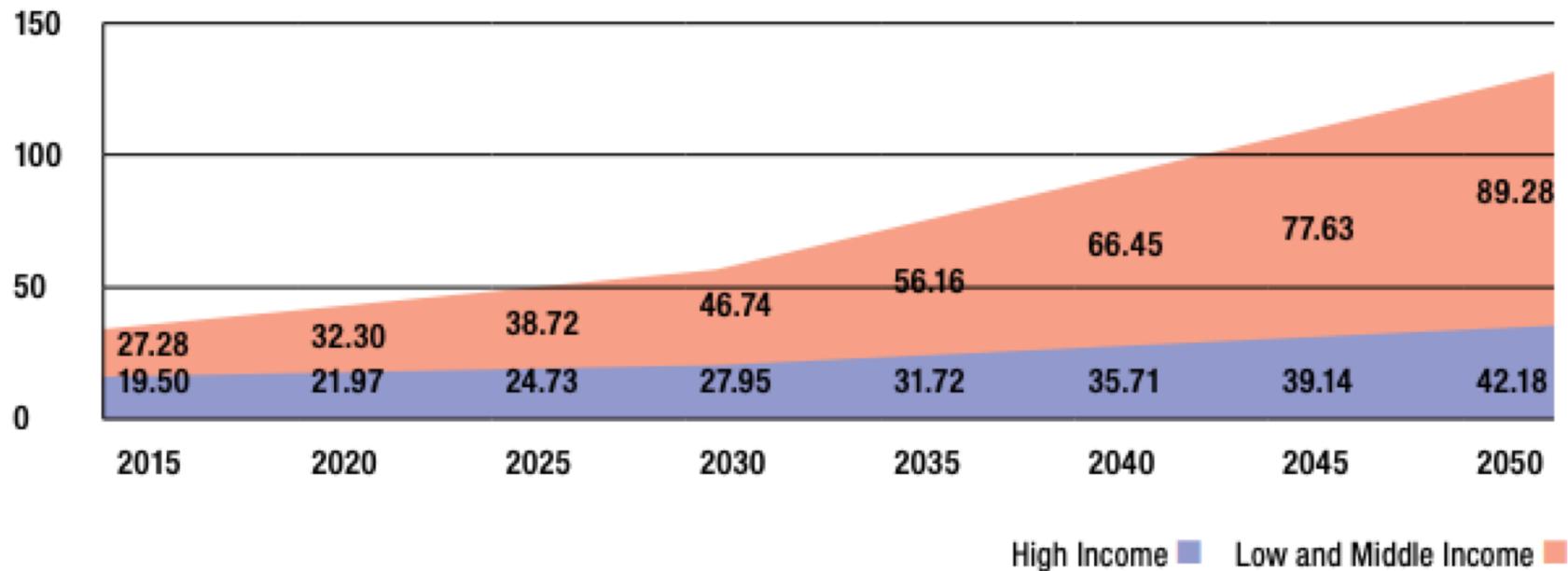
- The brain contains approximately 100 billion neurons. Tens of thousands of neurons die each day.

# Dementia

- Dementia rates are increasing.



# Dementia



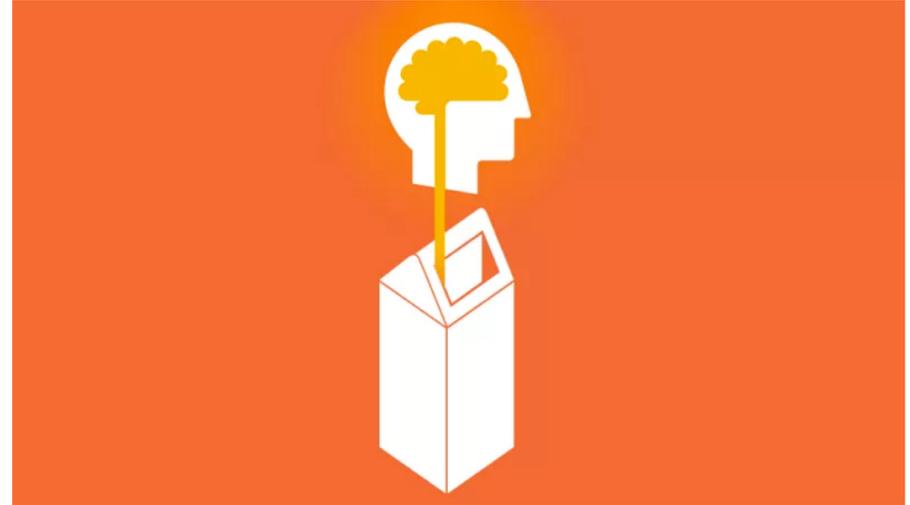
# Dementia

- Brain training helps prevent dementia.



# Dementia

- In January 2016 the creators and marketers of one widely advertised brain training program, Lumosity, agreed to pay \$2 million to settle charges made by the FTC that they deceived consumers with unsubstantiated claims about improving performance of everyday tasks and delaying age-related cognitive decline and dementia.



# Dementia

- Some supplements can help delay the onset of dementia.



# Dementia



BE WELL

## A Memory Supplement to Forget

by [JOHN SWARTZBERG, M.D.](#)

# Nutrition

- We don't get enough protein.

## Fruits & Vegetables

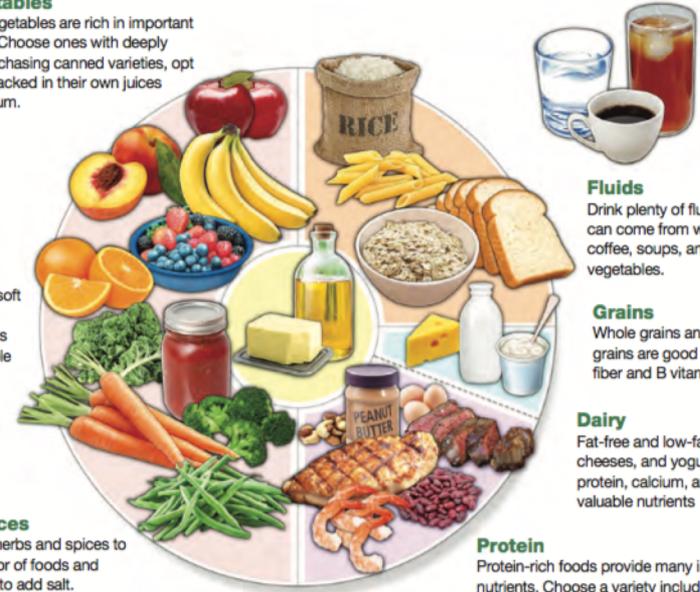
Whole fruits and vegetables are rich in important nutrients and fiber. Choose ones with deeply colored flesh. If purchasing canned varieties, opt for those that are packed in their own juices and are low in sodium.

## Healthy Oils

Vegetable oils and soft margarines provide important fatty acids and some fat-soluble vitamins.

## Herbs & Spices

Use a variety of herbs and spices to enhance the flavor of foods and reduce the need to add salt.



## Fluids

Drink plenty of fluids. Fluid can come from water, tea, coffee, soups, and fruits and vegetables.

## Grains

Whole grains and fortified grains are good sources of fiber and B vitamins.

## Dairy

Fat-free and low-fat milk, cheeses, and yogurts provide protein, calcium, and other valuable nutrients.

## Protein

Protein-rich foods provide many important nutrients. Choose a variety including nuts, beans, fish, lean meat, and poultry.

# Nutrition

- Some alcohol good for us.



# Nutrition

- We eat too much sugar.



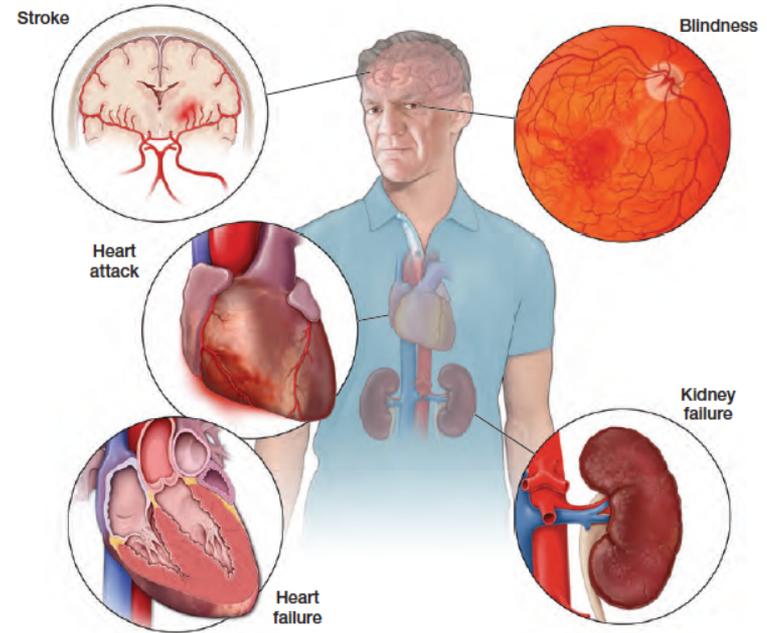
# Nutrition

- The MIND diet will help prevent dementia.

What's on the MIND Diet Menu?	
Brain-healthy foods	Consume at least
<b>Green leafy vegetables</b> Kale, collards, turnip greens, spinach, broccoli, romaine and leaf lettuce, Swiss chard, etc.	8 servings/week 1 serving = 1 cup raw, ½ cup cooked 
<b>Other vegetables</b> Red, green, and yellow peppers; carrots; cauliflower; green beans; squash; corn; etc.	1 serving/day 1 serving = 1 cup raw, ½ cup cooked 
<b>Whole grains</b> Oatmeal; whole-wheat bread, cereal, pasta, crackers; barley; brown or wild rice; popcorn; buckwheat; quinoa; etc.	3 servings/day 1 serving = ½ cup of cooked cereal, rice or pasta, 1 slice of bread, 1 ounce of dry cereal
<b>Nuts, mixed</b>	5 servings/week 1 serving = 1 ounce (about a handful) 
<b>Beans</b> Also other legumes such as lentils and soybeans	3 servings/week 1 serving = 1 cup uncooked, ½ cup cooked
<b>Poultry (not fried)</b> Chicken, turkey	2 servings/week 1 serving = 2-3 ounces, cooked
<b>Berries</b> Especially blueberries and strawberries	2 servings/week 1 serving = ½ cup 
<b>Fish (not fried)</b> Tuna, salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, etc.	1 serving/week 1 serving = 2-3 ounces, cooked
<b>Olive oil</b>	Use as the primary cooking oil
<b>Wine</b>	5 ounces/day (1 glass)
<b>Foods to limit (or avoid)</b>	<b>Limit to</b>
<b>Red meats (beef, lamb, pork)</b>	Less than 4 servings/week 1 serving = 2-3 ounces cooked 
<b>Butter or stick margarine</b>	Less than 1 tablespoon/day 
<b>Cheese</b>	1 serving/week, if at all 1 serving = 1.5 ounces
<b>Fast or fried food</b>	Once a week, if at all
<b>Pastries and sweets</b>	Less than 5 servings/week 

# Hypertension

- Hypertension is dangerous even if it does not cause any symptoms.



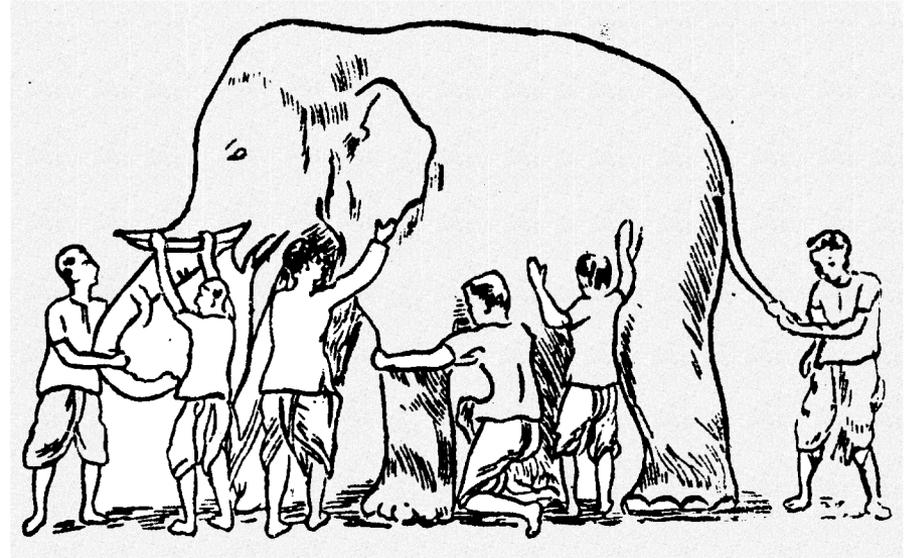
# Hypertension

BP Category	Systolic BP		Diastolic BP
Normal	<120 mm Hg	and	<80 mm Hg
Elevated	120–129 mm Hg	and	<80 mm Hg
Stage 1 hypertension	130–139 mm Hg	or	80–89 mm Hg
Stage 2 hypertension	≥140 mm Hg	or	≥90 mm Hg



# Hypertension

- There is a consensus as to who should be treated for hypertension.



# Hypertension

- Treatment for hypertension requires medications.

1. Diet: DASH
  - a) Low sodium
  - b) High potassium
2. Exercise
3. Achieve a healthy weight
4. Restrict alcohol
5. Quit smoking
6. Manage stress
7. Medication

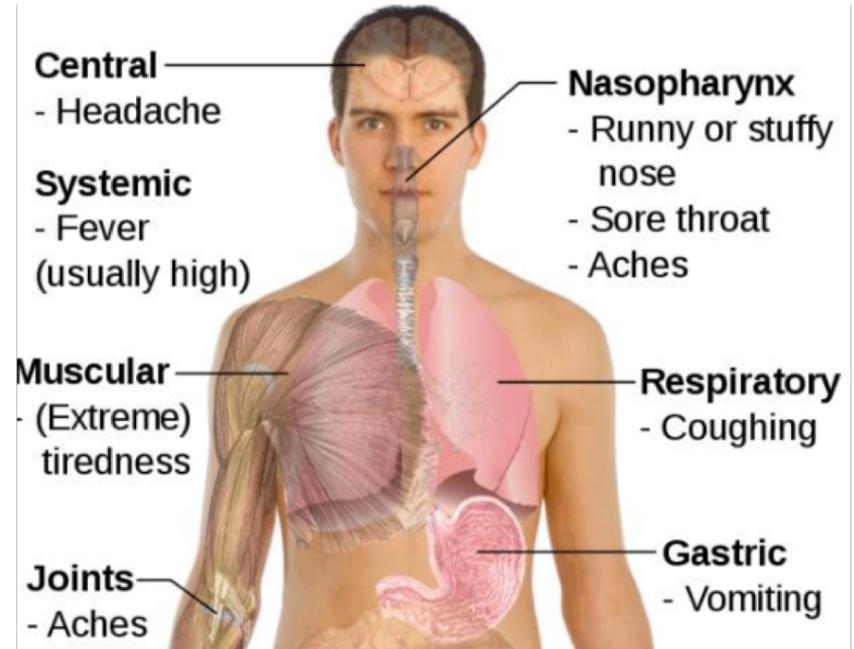
# Vaccination

- Influenza
- Shingles
- Pneumonia



# Influenza

- The flu shot doesn't work very well.
- I'm allergic to eggs and therefore can't get the flu shot.
- The flu shot can give you the flu.
- I'd rather take my chances with the flu than get the shot.



# Shingles

- I'm too old to get shingles.



# Pneumonia

- I got vaccinated five years ago and it's good for a lifetime.



**T H A N K**

**Y O U**