

# Personal Best

HOPE Health Letter<sup>®</sup>

DECEMBER 2024

## Keep Your Holiday Health on Track

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



**The holiday season brings happy times with parties and family gatherings.** But it can also bring gift shopping stress and changes to your regular eating habits. Take proactive steps to stay as healthy as possible while enjoying the holidays.

**Holidays are the time of excess.** It's common to spend too much, drink too much and miss out on sleep. The good news is that you stay on track by being aware of your habits.

**Listen to your appetite.** It's fine to have a small serving of all your favorite holiday foods — that's a great part of social events. Just eat until you feel mildly full instead of way too full. Enjoy leftovers instead of overeating at any single meal.

**Enjoy your usual meals and snacks.** Don't skip daily meals to save up the calories for the big party later. Eating well all day reduces overeating at the party.

**Be active.** Step away from the holiday hustle and bustle and go for a walk or do your preferred exercise.

**Drink moderately.** Moderate alcohol use is two drinks a day for men and one drink for women. Consistently drinking above this amount increases the risk of several chronic diseases, including heart disease and cancer.

**Set a budget and stick to it.** The health of your finances is important, too. Holiday stress — including credit card debt and finding the perfect gift — can be exhausting, lower immunity to viruses and trigger headaches. Stressed trying to find the perfect present? Send gift cards.

**Get enough sleep.** Give yourself permission to say no to extra activities when you are tired. Take a nap and aim for seven to nine hours of sleep per night.

### BEST bits

■ **Clear out the clutter.** This time of year, many people end up receiving more gifts than they can use. Do you have kids' toys, clothes you no longer wear, or gadgets and tools you have barely touched? Give them to a local charity. You'll declutter your home and have less stuff to deal with. You'll also make those goods available to someone in need. Or, if you could use some extra money, cash in on your clutter by selling new or gently used items at a garage sale, swap meet or online.

■ **Does cold weather make your joints hurt?** You aren't alone. Although arthritis can increase susceptibility to aches when temperatures drop, cold weather can make anyone's bones hurt. To ease the impact of cold weather on your body, dress in layers to stay warm. Do light exercise before you go out; this will lubricate and loosen stiff joints. Apply heating pads to painful areas when needed.

■ **Your T-zone — eyes, nose and mouth — is your primary port of entry for contagious infections,** including influenza, COVID-19, colds and pneumonia, as well as bacterial infections. Because we tend to touch our faces, eyes and noses multiple times every waking hour, we risk contracting infection from any germs on our hands. **Solution:** Wash your hands regularly and keep them off your T-zone.

## Cooking for Special Diets

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

### TIP of the MONTH

#### Raw Dough Warning

Most people know that they should not eat raw cookie dough due to the risk of food poisoning. Raw eggs in cookie batter may contain Salmonella, a harmful bacterium that can cause vomiting and diarrhea. But did you know that raw wheat flour can be as harmful as raw eggs? Flour needs to be baked before being consumed, since heat kills germs like E. coli and Salmonella. **Bottom line:** Bake your cookie batter, and only eat raw cookie dough if it is made with pasteurized raw eggs and heat-treated flour.



**Holiday eating may mean you are serving food to friends and family members with different dietary needs.** Some knowledge will help you feel more prepared when feeding guests with special diets. Here's what you need to know.

**Gluten-free:** This diet is medically necessary for people diagnosed with celiac disease (1% of the population), or gluten intolerance (6% of the population). Guests need to avoid wheat, rye, barley and anything made with these ingredients, including pasta and bread.

**What's on the menu:** vegetables, fruit, chicken, fish, potatoes, corn and rice.

**Important:** Watch out for condiments that contain gluten. Use dedicated gluten-free utensils to avoid cross-contamination.

**Vegetarian:** About 4% of the population are vegetarian and skip meat, poultry and seafood. About 1% are vegan and avoid meat, poultry, seafood, dairy and eggs.

**What's on the menu:** vegetables, fruit, grains; vegetarian proteins, including tofu, chickpeas, lentils or beans.

**Low carb:** About 7% of people follow a keto or low-carb diet to help manage weight or blood sugar levels.

**What's on the menu:** fish, chicken, cheese and eggs; vegetable side dishes; nuts, seeds and avocados.

#### Here are some tips to help accommodate several diets at one table:

- ➔ Ask guests to bring potluck dishes so people with special diets can bring their own safe food.
- ➔ Place a list of ingredients next to each dish (use place cards or name tags) so people following special diets know what's in each dish.
- ➔ Serve condiments and dressings on the side, so people can eat plain food if needed.
- ➔ Plan menus with lots of variety so there are a few foods that everyone enjoys.
- ➔ Opt for large charcuterie boards (with or without meat) with a variety of plain foods: sliced vegetables and fruit, cheese, nuts, gluten-free crackers, etc.



### Sticky Tofu Bowl

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 cup quinoa                              | 2 packages (200g each) tofu, cut into cubes |
| ¼ cup tahini (sesame seed paste)          | 2 medium carrots, shredded                  |
| 2 tsp honey                               | 1 ripe avocado, sliced                      |
| 3 tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce or tamari | 4 cups shredded purple cabbage              |
| 1 tbsp lemon juice                        |   |
| ½ tsp garlic powder                       |   |

**Preheat** oven to 375°F. **Line** baking sheet with parchment paper. **Cook** quinoa according to package directions. **In** a blender or food processor, combine tahini, honey, soy sauce, lemon juice and garlic powder. **Blend** to combine and thin with water if needed. **Add** tofu and half of the sauce to a bowl and stir well. **Reserve** remaining sauce. **Spread** tofu onto baking sheet and bake 30 minutes, stirring once. **In** each of 4 serving bowls, add a layer of quinoa. **Top** with sections of tofu, carrot, avocado and purple cabbage. **Drizzle** with remaining sauce and serve.

**Makes 4 servings. Per serving:** 551 calories | 31g protein | 28g total fat | 4g saturated fat | 15g mono fat | 8g poly fat | 50g carbohydrate | 6g sugar (<1g added sugar) | 13g fiber | 509mg sodium

**EASY** recipe

# FAMILY GATHERINGS: Keep the Peace

**Worried about family conflicts disrupting holiday get-togethers?** Even if you and your relatives disagree about everything from politics to family history, squabbles don't have to be inevitable, according to behavioral health experts.

**First, reduce anxiety about upcoming family gatherings by adjusting your attitude beforehand.** Worrying about what arguments may start isn't productive. Instead, relax before a get-together by listening to calming music or doing gentle exercises so you'll arrive calmer and less likely to be drawn into conflict.

## More tips for peaceful and fun family gatherings:

**Have realistic expectations.** The odds are, the get-together will not be perfect. Is there a relative who tends to criticize you? Do you dread hearing arguments about politics? Do you have to deal with relatives who use their phones at the table? Instead of being frustrated, remain calm and use humor whenever possible to lighten the mood.

**Change the subject.** While you can't keep anyone from asking rude questions (e.g., "Why aren't you married yet?") or bringing up political beliefs you find annoying or even crazy, you can control your reactions. Instead of arguing, simply say, "Let's not get into that now," and change the subject. If that doesn't work, excuse yourself and walk away for a while.

**Focus on gratitude.** It may sound like a cliché, but psychologist Andrea Bonior says research shows focusing on what you can be grateful for — including having family gatherings — can benefit physical and emotional health. Look for the moments you connect happily with relatives, as well as pitfalls you may turn into funny stories later.



**Take care of your heart this time of year.** Being fit as a fiddle doesn't protect against **holiday heart syndrome**. This typically happens after an otherwise healthy person with a normal heart engages in binge drinking and overindulging in salty foods. (The CDC defines binge drinking as consuming five or more drinks during a single occasion for men or four or more drinks on an occasion for women.) Excess caffeine can also play a role in stressing the heart. Holiday heart syndrome causes abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmias), primarily atrial fibrillation. Seek medical help immediately for symptoms, such as a fluttering heartbeat, chest discomfort, shortness of breath and lightheadedness. **Best prevention:** Don't drink alcohol in excess. If you don't drink, don't start.

## Too Stressed to Think?

By Eric Endlich, PhD

**You may have heard that chronic stress can be bad for your blood pressure** and other health measures. But did you know it can impact your ability to think clearly, too?

### Brain fog is a common complaint among those who experience a great deal of anxiety.

A recent study found that when stress levels are higher, ability to recall items tends to be lower. The body's built-in emergency response, triggered by stress, primes us to make simple split-second decisions (e.g., fight or flight) but is not well-suited to more complex mental tasks.

#### Brain fog symptoms include:

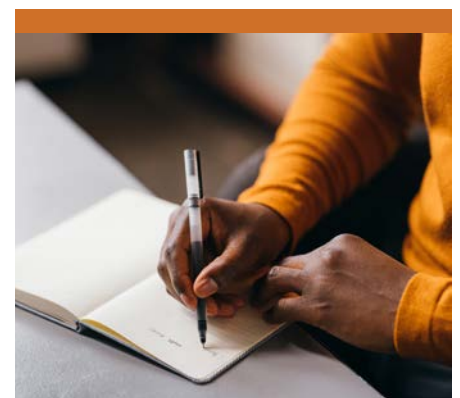
- Forgetting what you were planning to do next.
- Completing tasks more slowly.
- Frequent distraction.
- Tiredness while working.
- Difficulty recalling words.
- Disorganization.
- Confusion.

### Naturally, if your symptoms don't improve

or if you are concerned, it's a good idea to consult your health care provider to rule out any nutrient deficiencies or other medical conditions that could be affecting your mental functioning.

#### Strategies to manage stress and brain fog include:

- Getting good-quality nourishment, sufficient hydration, adequate sleep and regular exercise.
- Taking breaks from challenging activities.
- Reaching out to friends, loved ones or mental health professionals for support.
- Learning a relaxation technique, such as deep breathing, meditation or guided imagery.



**Designate a worry time when you can jot down your concerns in a journal, and put it away until the next scheduled time.**

- Practicing mindfulness by focusing on what your senses can perceive right now.
- Using organizational tools to improve time and task management.



December 5 to 11  
is Handwashing



**Awareness Week** — a good time to learn the proper way to clean your hands and prevent the spread of illness. Wet your hands with clean water and apply soap; lather by rubbing hands together, scrubbing the backs of hands, between fingers and under nails, for at least 20 seconds; rinse hands with warm or cold water; and dry them with a clean towel. Always do this before preparing or eating meals, and after coughing, sneezing and using the toilet. Carry alcohol-based hand sanitizer when you're in public places, such as stores and public transit. Find more tips at [cdc.gov/handwashing](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing).

## body & mind

### Q: How to cope with family estrangement?



**A:** An estimated 20% of adults have had periods of estrangement from their fathers and 25% have been cut off from a sibling. Typical causes for this include divorce and emotional abuse. In many cases, the source of tension involves a third party, such as a stepparent or someone an adult child is dating.

**If you are dealing with a family estrangement, these strategies may help you cope:**

- ✦ Know that you're not alone. Millions of others are in the same situation.
- ✦ Keep in mind that you can only control your decisions, not those of other family members; reconciliation may or may not occur.
- ✦ When attempting to reconnect with a family member, start by trying to understand their perspective.
- ✦ Consider joining a support group.
- ✦ Seek professional help from a family counselor if needed.

— Eric Endlich



## Why You're Always Cold

**It's not surprising you feel cold outside this time of year** — but why are you cold indoors? Some people feel chilly and downright cold, even when the heat in their home or office is set at a toasty temperature, while a partner or coworkers may be totally warm and comfortable.

**Being extra-sensitive to cold**, including even slight variations in temperature, is called **cold intolerance**. It can make you uncomfortable, but there are strategies you can use to help your body temperature stay warmer:

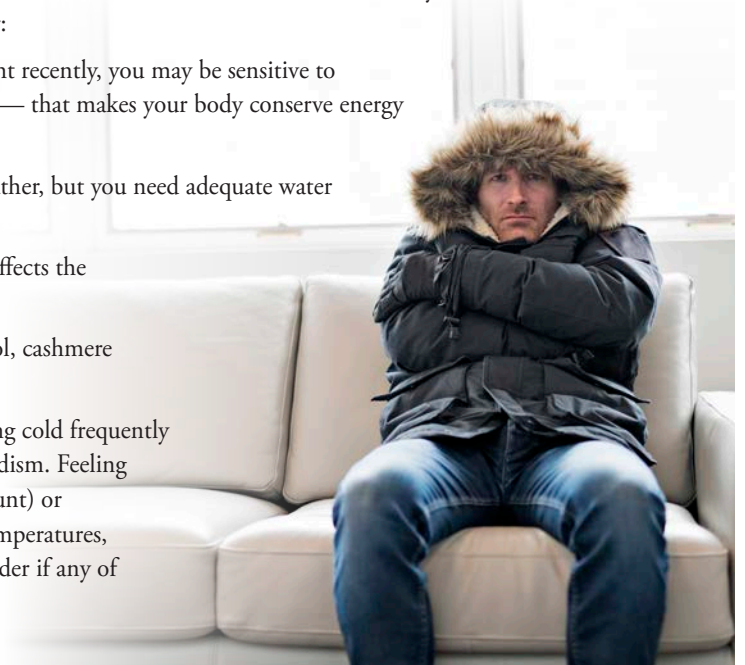
**Get enough to eat.** If you're naturally thin, or you've lost a lot of weight recently, you may be sensitive to temperatures and feel cold when others feel fine indoors. Don't skip meals — that makes your body conserve energy by lowering your body temperature.

**Drink enough water.** Sure, it's easier to drink lots of water in hot weather, but you need adequate water to regulate body temperature in winter, too.

**Get adequate sleep.** Skipping on snooze time slows metabolism and affects the part of the brain which regulates body temperature.

**Dress warmly.** Add layers as needed to keep you comfortable. Silk, wool, cashmere and flannel are good choices. And wear socks if your feet are cold.

**If you continue to feel extra cold**, talk to your health care provider. Feeling cold frequently when you're in a warm environment is a common symptom of hypothyroidism. Feeling inappropriately chilly can also be a sign of anemia (a low red blood cell count) or Raynaud's phenomenon, which is marked by extreme responses to cold temperatures, which can cause fingers and toes to turn white or blue. And ask your provider if any of your medications can make you feel cold.



## Q: What is RSV?

**A:** Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common cause of respiratory tract infections. It can infect the upper respiratory tract and lungs of both children and adults. The symptoms are typically mild and self-limiting in most adults and older children.

**Some people are susceptible to more severe disease**, such as breathing problems that can lead to hospitalization. Infants younger than 12 months, especially premature babies, are more vulnerable. So are older adults and people with chronic heart or lung conditions. In addition, people of any age with a weak immune system may get sicker from RSV.

**An RSV vaccine can help prevent more serious disease.** The CDC recommends the vaccine for the following:

- ✦ Everyone 75 years of age or older.
- ✦ People ages 60 to 74 with certain chronic health conditions, such as chronic heart or lung disease.
- ✦ Adults who live in nursing homes.
- ✦ Pregnant women at 32 to 36 weeks to prevent RSV in their infants during the first six months after birth.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD



**The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine helps protect girls and women from getting cervical cancer.**

Now, a study of nearly 3.5 million Americans has found males vaccinated for HPV had less than half the risk of head and neck malignancies than unvaccinated men and boys. The HPV vaccine decreases rates of oral HPV infection. Researchers found that vaccination decreases the risk of HPV-related oropharyngeal head and neck cancers, particularly in boys and men. Talk to your health care provider to make sure you are up-to-date on HPV vaccination. Immunization against HPV is recommended for most people between ages 9 and 26. If you're between ages 27 and 45, and you think you may want the vaccine, talk to your provider. The vaccine is less beneficial for people older than 26, especially if they've already been exposed to HPV.

# Winter INDOOR Exercise Ideas

**When the temperature plummets**, you likely want to curl up by the fire with a good book, but staying active in winter is necessary for your health and fitness. You don't have to go outside to remain active, but there are benefits to exercising outdoors in the winter in colder climates. Those benefits include less heat and humidity, burning more calories in the cold, boosting your immunity and absorbing vitamin D from the sunlight (don't forget SPF 30, broad-spectrum sunscreen).

**Here are some outdoor and indoor activities to consider:**

### Outdoor activities:

- Walking briskly.
- Running or jogging.
- Hiking or snowshoeing.
- Skiing cross country or downhill.
- Snowboarding.
- Ice skating.
- Sledding.
- Shoveling snow.



### Indoor activities:

- Strength training.
- Swimming.
- Rock climbing.
- Stair walking.
- Yoga, Pilates, spin (cycling) or other class.
- Working out to a streaming fitness video.
- Dancing.
- Tennis, pickleball or racquetball.



- Kickboxing.
- Bowling.
- Roller-skating.

**To stay warm** make sure you layer your clothing, wear shoes or boots with traction, sunglasses, gloves and a hat. If you're walking or running at dusk or at night, be sure to wear reflective gear.

**Remember:** Warm up before exercising, and cool down after your workout or activity.

## Gift Card Shopping Savvy

Gift cards are an easy choice if you need ideas for that special someone. Use these tips for giving gift cards as presents:

1 **Read the fine print.** Does the card have an expiration date? Does the card have a monthly fee if not used over time?

2 **Buy from reputable sources.** Stick to large, well-known retail chains or companies when buying gift cards. Doing so will steer you away from buying fake or expired cards. Avoid auction sites or discounted sites, where verifying authenticity is a challenge.

3 **Keep your receipts.** Ask for a gift receipt to give with the card and keep your receipt as well. This will give you and the recipient proof of purchase if issues arise with the card.

4 **Inspect the card before you buy it.** Has the code covering been scratched off, or is the card packaging damaged? Barcodes are targeted, too. Scammers take empty cards from a store, cover the barcode with a sticker and then repackage the card. That sticker has a barcode linked to a card the scammer owns. When you add money at checkout, that money goes to the scammer's card instead.

5 **Make sure the person who's getting the card uses it.** Surprisingly, some people don't. Millions of dollars go unspent each year on unused gift cards. Give them a card you know they'll use, such as their favorite grocery store or restaurant.

6 **Know what to do if the card is lost or stolen.** Treat gift cards as cash. However, some companies may offer replacement cards if they can trace card numbers and verify remaining balances.

— Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, CFP, AFC, MBA

# Annual Safety Gift Guide

Giving the gift of safety shows you care for someone and their well-being. Here are some ideas for everyone on your list.

### For the traveler:

1. Portable door locks — they're easy to install and remove, and provide added protection when traveling.
2. TSA-approved luggage straps — they keep baggage from accidentally opening.
3. RFID travel wallet, purse or belt — they protect against electronic theft. Some items include theft insurance with purchase.



### For parents:

1. Baby car cameras for the back seat — these help parents keep an eye on their little ones while they're driving.
2. Personalized kid safety bracelets — these can be marked with mom and dad's phone numbers.
3. Faucet protectors for bathtubs — these keep little ones' heads safe from accidental bumps.



### For everyone:

1. Smart jewelry — many pieces offer features, such as emergency calling, GPS tracking and distress signaling. Some jewelry also have fall detection, heart rate monitoring and activity tracking.
2. Multiple-tool tactical pen — in addition to being a functioning pen, this tool also can break glass in an emergency.
3. Doorstop alarm — this alarm can be wedged under doors at home or while traveling for extra protection.

## Watch for Black Ice

**Black ice can look like a wet road, but if you see vehicles in front of you skidding or notice tire skid marks or shiny spots, slow down.**

Here are some tips if you encounter black ice:

**Brake** with care. If you start skidding, apply firm pressure on your brakes to activate the anti-lock brake system (ABS). If your vehicle doesn't have ABS, gently pump the brakes.

**Remove** your foot from the accelerator and coast across the ice until you regain traction.

**Shift** to a lower gear if feasible.

**Try** to keep the steering wheel straight. If you start to skid, steer in the direction of the skid if your back end is sliding. If it's your front end, steer in the opposite direction.

**Remove** all distractions including mobile phones — you need to fully focus on driving.





# SUGAR MYTHS

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD



## Sugar is a controversial topic in the world of nutrition.

It's often painted as the ultimate dietary villain due to its connection to several conditions, such as diabetes and hyperactivity. So, how much of what we hear about sugar is true? Here are the most common myths about sugar, along with the science-based truth.

**MYTH:** Honey is healthier than white sugar.

**Truth:** All types of sugar can be harmful when eaten in excess. The type of sugar or syrup matters less than the amount you eat. Aim for fewer than 12 teaspoons (48 grams) of any added sugar per day. There are dozens of examples of added sugars, from honey to white sugar to many different syrups. There is no “healthier sugar” when you consume too much of it.

**MYTH:** Sugar causes cancer. **Truth:** Sugar is not classified as a carcinogen (a cancer-causing agent). However, eating too much sugar can increase visceral fat around the waistline, and can prompt the body to make more of certain hormones, such as insulin and estrogen. Excess visceral fat and hormones can increase the risk of developing some types of cancer. So, while sugar is not a carcinogen, it plays an indirect role in cancer development. A little bit of sugar is okay, but more than 12 teaspoons per day can be harmful in the long term.

**MYTH:** Sugar causes hyperactivity in children. **Truth:** More than a dozen studies have examined this and cannot prove that sugar causes hyperactivity. Picture your typical holiday setting or birthday party. It's probably raucous and joyful, with games or pool time or music. Yet with all that excitement, sugar is blamed for making kids hyper. The truth is, it's usually the party that contributes to the hyper mood, and it's probably not the sugar.

**MYTH:** Sugar causes type 2 diabetes.

**Truth:** Eating sugar does not directly cause type 2 diabetes. But diets that are low in vegetables, fruits and fiber, and high in sugar, fat and ultra-processed foods, are linked to an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. It's a complex disease, so sugar consumption is not the sole reason why it develops, but can be a contributing factor.



**MYTH:** Fruit contains harmful sugar.

**Truth:** Fruit contains fructose, a natural fruit sugar. Fruit also contains fiber, vitamins and minerals, and the value from these essential nutrients outweighs the bit of sugar in fruit. Few people consume too much fructose from fruit. It's the opposite: 80% of Americans do not eat enough fruit and should eat a lot more of it. Aim to eat two cups of fruit per day.

**MYTH:** I need to quit eating sugar entirely.

**Truth:** Excessive sugar intake is problematic but having a little bit of added sugar — fewer than 12 teaspoons a day — can be part of a balanced diet. Sugar has a lovely, sweet flavor, and is an important ingredient in many dishes. Sugar does not need to be entirely avoided and can be enjoyed in moderation simply because it tastes nice and brings joy. Plus, trying to cut out sugar entirely will lead to cravings and possibly overeating when you finally give in. Enjoying a small, sweet treat is a better idea.

## Artificial sweeteners: Safe or Not?

**Artificial sweeteners taste like sugar but provide no calories or carbohydrates.** They are used by people who want to enjoy sugary-sweet foods while managing blood sugar levels and calorie intake. Artificial sweeteners, such as aspartame and sucralose, are deemed safe if used in moderation and within the recommended government guidelines, but there are some red flags to know about.

**FDA safe intake levels per day, per 1 kg (2.2 lbs):**

**Aspartame:** 75 little packets (50 mg per 1 kg of body weight per day).

**Sucralose:** 23 little packets (5 mg per 1 kg of body weight per day).

**Saccharin:** 45 little packets (15 mg per 1 kg of body weight per day).

**Of course, no one should ingest this many packets in a day.** Per government guidelines, a packet in your coffee or tea should be fine.

**Want more information?**

Download the FDA's **Safe Levels of Sweeteners** chart at [fda.gov/food/food-additives-petitions/aspartame-and-other-sweeteners-food](https://www.fda.gov/food/food-additives-petitions/aspartame-and-other-sweeteners-food). Scroll down to **Safe Levels of Sweeteners**.

**There are potential downsides** for artificial sweeteners, too, especially when people use excessive amounts.

**Gut health:** Studies show that artificial sweeteners can upset

the normal balance of beneficial bacteria in the gut (microbiome). This can cause digestive issues.

**Cancer:** The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies aspartame as “possibly carcinogenic to humans” when consumed in high amounts, based on limited evidence.\* The IARC's recommended intake of aspartame is less than 40 mg per 1 kg (2.2 lbs.) of body weight per day (a person weighing 70 kg,

or 154 lbs., would have to drink 9 to 14 cans of diet soda per day to exceed it). **Note:** That's less than the FDA safe level.

**Weight gain:** Even though artificial sweeteners have no calories, some studies link them to weight gain. They may increase appetite since they are unable to make you feel full or satisfied (because they have no calories).

\*Learn more about IARC classifications at [embexplained.info/?ID=25717](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/artificial-sweeteners). IARC is part of the World Health Organization.

## DR. ZORBA'S corner

**Peanut allergies have increased dramatically during the past several decades.** Research at the National Institutes of Health reinforced other studies showing that feeding your infants peanut butter or soft peanut snacks starting at the age of six months actually reduced their risk of a peanut allergy by a whopping 80% even for families who had a family history of peanut allergy. The 508 participants were an average age of 13 when they enrolled. Researchers found that eating peanuts from infancy to age 5 gave a protective effect that lasted without needing to eat peanut products consistently throughout childhood and early teens. The study was part of the Learning Early About Peanut Allergy. **Note:** Never feed any child under age five whole or chopped peanuts because they are choking hazards. — Zorba Paster, MD

### Stay in Touch. Keep those questions and suggestions coming!

Phone: 800-871-9525 • Fax: 205-437-3084 • Email: [PBeditor@ebix.com](mailto:PBeditor@ebix.com)

Website: [personalbest.com](http://personalbest.com)

Executive Editor: Susan Cottman

Advisers: Patricia C. Buchsel, RN, MSN, FAAN; Jamie Lynn Byram, PhD, CFP, AFC, MBA; Eric Endlich, PhD; Kenneth Holtyn, MS; Reed Humphrey, PhD; Gary B. Kushner, SPHR, CBP; Zorba Paster, MD; Cara Rosenbloom, RD; Elizabeth Smoots, MD; Margaret Spencer, MD  
Editor: Airmie Miller  
Graphic Designer: Sheila Nupen

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## STUDY: Types of Depression and Anxiety Identified

**Depression is more than feeling sad, and anxiety is more than worry.** They're mental health disorders that affect millions of people — and not all in the same way. A breakthrough in identifying distinct types of depression and anxiety by researchers at Stanford Medicine's Center for Precision Mental Health and Wellness may hold the key to finding treatments that are most effective for individual patients.

**The research team used functional MRI brain imaging,** combined with machine learning, to identify six biological subtypes (biotypes) and to zero in on the best likely treatment for each type. (At press time, the researchers hadn't created medical names for the biotypes.) **Bottom line:** Instead of a hit-or-miss approach to seeing what anti-depressants or other therapy might work best for an individual's treatment, the researchers hope to find ways to help patients quickly and effectively.

## STUDY: Friendship and Healthy Aging

**Socializing with friends regularly can boost health through the years.** In fact, in-person, quality friendships can promote health benefits, including longevity, comparable to those associated with the Mediterranean diet, according to several recent studies.

**The research comes at a time when many people are trading in-person friend visits for socializing online.** But it could be healthier to see friends in real life, especially as we age.

University of British Columbia researchers collected information from 13,000 volunteers, all over 50 years old, to see how many friends the study participants had and how they interacted with their buddies. The results revealed that during four years, face-to-face get-togethers at least once a week were strongly linked to better physical and mental health.

