

# Nutrition Action

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HEALTH LETTER®  
CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

## 6 POUNDWISE

things you may not know about extra weight



**HIGH BLOOD  
PRESSURE**  
are you at risk?

**Opioid supplement  
SCAM**

The best  
**non-dairy  
milks**

M E M O

# Lost Lives, Bogus Claims



You can set your clock by it. Whenever the nation is beset by some new health scourge, the charlatans emerge with their miraculous cures.

Ebola, H1N1 flu, West Nile Virus. They all spawned products

promising to inoculate the healthy or cure the infected.

The Food and Drug Administration, as it should have, warned the manufacturers of those products that their treatments and “vaccines” were unapproved.

It’s time to expand that fraternity of frauds to include the manufacturers of bogus opioid-addiction cures.

The opioid epidemic prematurely snuffs out the lives of more than 30,000 Americans each

year. The FDA has approved three drugs to treat opioid addiction: methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone.

While only about 20 percent of people with an addiction are in treatment, any new treatment would be invaluable.

Make that any new *effective* treatment.

That means scratching the supplements made by the eight companies contacted by David Schardt for his article on page 11 (“The Opioid-Scam Epidemic”).

Despite making claims like “helps ease withdrawal symptoms” and “speed detox,” the companies produced no adequate evidence that their pills worked. Worse yet, some didn’t even feel that they needed to.

“Scientific studies are very costly, so no, there is no study,” acknowledged one manufacturer.

In December, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, *Nutrition Action’s* publisher, [asked the FDA](#) to ban the opioid-withdrawal

supplements made by the eight companies, and asked the Federal Trade Commission to prohibit the companies from using phony claims in their advertisements.

But until the Feds act, it’s buyer beware.

At least people won’t have to worry about falling for the bogus claims made for one opioid-withdrawal supplement.

Roughly a year after the FTC reached a \$1.4 million settlement with the makers of Elimidrol, 5,379 people who had been lured by the supplement’s “false and misleading” claims were sent partial-refund checks.

(Elimidrol is still being sold online, but only as a vague “life-enhancing support supplement.”)

“By peddling their unproven product,” said the FTC, “these defendants have prevented people from seeking legitimate treatment.”

And that’s exactly the point. The opioid epidemic is bad

enough. Luring desperate patients away from treatments that work is about as low as it gets.

It’s time to put an end to that.



Bogus withdrawal supplements lure people away from treatments that *really* work.

*Peter*

Peter G. Lurie, MD, MPH, President  
[Center for Science in the Public Interest](#)

*In October, David Schardt retired after 25 years at Nutrition Action. Whether writing about the latest supplement scams, men’s health, or the microbiome, David had one focus: informing and protecting consumers. While we will miss David’s presence in the office, his byline will continue to appear in these pages as he takes on occasional special assignments.*

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# POUND 6 WISE

things you may not know about extra weight

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN

**W**ith 70 percent of American adults and 33 percent of children now classified as overweight or obese, the obesity epidemic is not exactly a secret. Yet some recent findings about the causes and consequences of weight gain may surprise you.

## 1 Extra pounds means extra cancer risk.

“The evidence is extremely clear that excess weight increases the risk of cancer,” says Walter Willett, professor of epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. “I would give it a 99 percent-plus certainty.”

Willett co-authored a recent report on obesity by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.<sup>1</sup>

“Many people don’t think about excess weight as a cause of cancer,” notes Willett. “But it’s probably the second most important cause after smoking.”

That’s largely because so many people are overweight and because extra pounds boosts the risk of so many cancers.

(For any one person, smoking is far more dangerous. It raises the risk of lung cancer 25-fold. Excess weight rarely more than doubles your risk of a dozen or so other cancers.<sup>2</sup>)

How can excess body fat lead to cancer?

■ **Estrogen.** The picture is clearest for some cancers of the breast (in postmenopausal women) and uterus, which are fueled by high levels of hormones like estrogen.

“Obese postmenopausal women have blood estrogen levels about three times higher than lean postmenopausal women,” says Willett. (Fat cells make estrogen.)

“So it’s no big surprise that women who are obese or even overweight have higher rates of cancers that are related to estrogen.”<sup>3</sup>

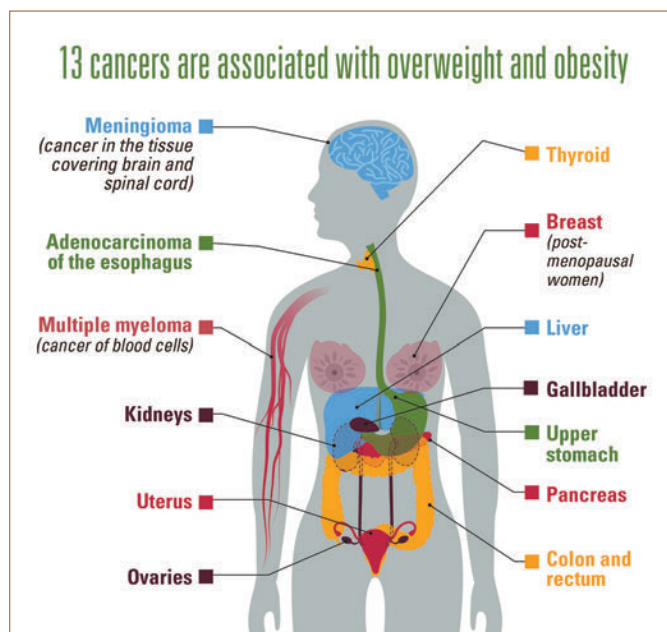
■ **Insulin.** For pancreatic, kidney, and colorectal cancers, researchers are looking at another potential culprit.

“One likely mechanism is that excess weight often leads to higher blood insulin levels,” explains Willett. “And insulin basically makes cells multiply more rapidly.”

For breast cancer, both estrogen and insulin may matter. In one study, after researchers took estrogen into

account, postmenopausal women with the highest blood insulin levels still had 2½ times the risk of breast cancer of those with the lowest blood insulin levels.<sup>4</sup>

■ **Inflammation.** Excess weight can lead to chronic, low-level inflammation that



Source: [cdc.gov/vitalsigns/obesity-cancer](https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/obesity-cancer).

boosts the risk of cancers like adenocarcinoma of the esophagus.

“Overweight is a cause of gastric reflux and heartburn,” says Willett. “The acidity causes cell destruction and inflammation, and that process increases the risk of cancer.”

People with obesity are five times more likely to get esophageal cancer—which has a dismal 18 percent five-year survival rate—than those who are normal weight.

“The increase in adenocarcinoma of the esophagus is clearly related to the rise in obesity,” says Willett.

## 2 Fat cells are hard to lose.

What happens to the extra calories when you overindulge?

To find out, researchers at the Mayo Clinic fed 23 lean young men and women 400 to 1,200 extra calories a day by padding their diets with Snickers bars, milkshakes, and Boost Plus drinks.<sup>5</sup> After two months, the volunteers had gained about eight pounds. But that surplus got stashed in different depots.

“Almost all the weight gain in abdominal body fat was an increase in fat cell size,” says Michael Jensen, director of the Obesity Specialty Council at the Mayo Clinic.

In contrast, “when people gained leg fat, they actually gained new fat cells.” Jensen’s earlier study estimated that when people gained 3½ pounds of new leg fat, they acquired roughly 2.6 billion new fat cells.<sup>6</sup>

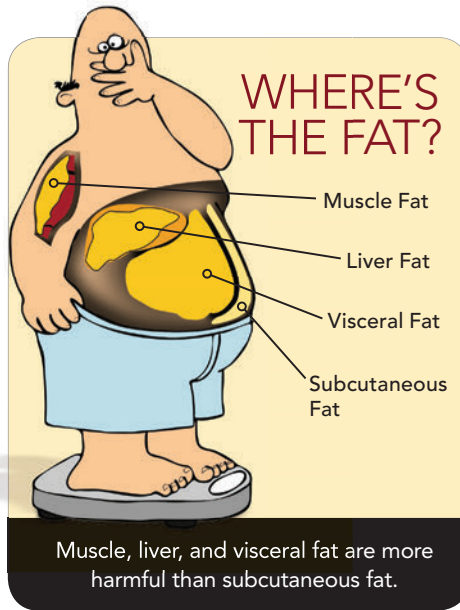
Next, Jensen had the participants spend two more months cutting calories and upping their exercise. The result: 6 of the 8 pounds disappeared.

“Everybody lost all or pretty much all of the abdominal subcutaneous or visceral fat they had gained,” says Jensen.

“The only fat that they hadn’t yet lost was some of the leg fat they had gained. So we concluded that it’s easier to shrink fat cells back down to their original size than to make fat cells go away.”

Are you stuck with those fat cells

forever? “We don’t know whether the new fat cells would have eventually gone away if people had kept off the weight long enough,” says Jensen.



And don’t assume that you’ll never gain new fat cells around your middle.

“If you gain enough weight, you have to make new fat cells,” says Jensen. “From an average small fat cell to the biggest of the big, it’s about a four-fold increase in size. They can only get so big.”

Ironically, the leg fat that’s hardest to lose is also the least harmful.



Have a low-fat yogurt with nuts (unsaturated fat) instead of crackers with cheese (saturated fat).

## 3 A big waist isn’t good, no matter what your weight.

An oversized waist doesn’t bode well, even if you’re in the “healthy weight” range. “If someone is keeping their weight about the same but their waist is

increasing—a very common pattern in middle-aged men—that can be a problem,” says Willett.

When researchers pooled data on roughly 650,000 men and women, the risk of dying over nine years rose significantly for every additional two inches of waist, even in people who weren’t overweight.<sup>7</sup>

“If your abdominal circumference increases by more than two inches, that means you’re out of balance,” says Willett.

A large waist matters in part because it’s an unambiguous sign of extra fat.

“Our methods of measuring obesity are not perfect,” notes Willett. “We know that for the same height and weight, some people have more muscle while others have more fat. But if someone has a big belly, we know that it’s not due to a big muscle sitting there.”

What’s more, a larger waist could signal a bigger deposit of the visceral fat that’s buried deep in the belly, which is more harmful than the subcutaneous fat that’s just under your skin.<sup>8</sup>

“Visceral fat accumulation is more closely linked to developing type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease,” says Ulf Risérus, associate professor of clinical nutrition and metabolism at Uppsala University in Sweden. Why?

“The main theory is that visceral fat cells release a lot of fat, which goes directly to the liver, where it causes metabolic disorders,” says Risérus.

Visceral fat may also release more inflammatory proteins than subcutaneous fat.<sup>9</sup>

“Visceral fat is linked to insulin resistance both in the liver and in other parts of the body,” says Risérus.

(When you have insulin resistance, your insulin becomes less able to move blood sugar into cells. That often leads to type 2 diabetes.)

“And a fatty liver produces more triglycerides,” adds Risérus, “which can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease in the long term.”

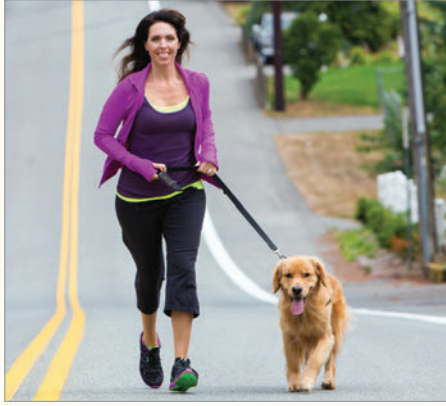
When do you gain visceral fat? When your subcutaneous fat can’t cope.

“When people start gaining unhealthy amounts of subcutaneous fat, the fallback is to start putting any more fat into

# Playing Defense

"It's easy to put on pounds living in our environment, where there's food all around and often no good place to exercise," says Harvard's Walter Willett. "But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try the best we can to minimize that weight gain."

Both quantity and quality matter. "A high-quality diet—with fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, and nuts—can make it easier to control weight, rather than loading up on things like sugar-sweetened beverages, refined starches, and sugars," says Willett.



Go for a walk with a friend.

Exercise also matters. Your best bet: a mix of aerobics—like walking, biking, jogging, or swimming—and strength (resistance) training. A weight-loss diet with exercise shrinks visceral fat more than diet alone.

"Resistance training should be part of your activity pattern," says Willett. "Even a few minutes a few times a week makes a big difference."

That's because our muscles shrink as we age. "Even if we keep our diet and activity the same, our muscle mass tends to go down due to decreases in hormones that maintain

muscle," Willett explains. "Testosterone, estrogen, and insulin-like growth factor decline with age for reasons we don't understand."

Declining hormones is probably a good thing, he adds. "If they didn't, we would probably have a lot more cancer. But the decline also means that our muscles shrink, so we need to increase resistance training just to maintain the same muscle mass."

Don't like the gym? You don't need one.

"You can use elastic resistance bands," suggests Willett. "It's just like lifting weights. You can exercise different muscle groups, and the bands cost about three bucks each."

The best part: "You don't need to do it every day. You don't need expensive equipment. You can do it at home."

Sounds like you're out of excuses.



Try resistance bands for strength training.

visceral fat cells," says the Mayo Clinic's Michael Jensen.

How much is too much? It varies.

"Some people can gain a lot of subcutaneous fat, and it functions perfectly normally," says Jensen. "And other people gain maybe just four or five pounds, and all of a sudden, it's completely dysfunctional."

Worse yet, if the visceral fat cells reach *their* limit, any more fat gets stashed in muscle, the liver, and elsewhere.

"Those organs can't package the fat very well, so it can interfere with cell functions," says Jensen.

What you eat may also matter.

## 4 Saturated fats may boost deep belly fat.

Are some fats in foods more likely to end up as harmful visceral fat than as less-harmful subcutaneous fat?

To find out, Risérus and his colleagues devised what some have called "the muffin study."

"We had lean people eat, on average, three muffins per day on top of their usual diet," he explains. That meant that each

participant ate 750 more calories a day than he or she needed.

"We wanted a moderate—not an extreme—increase in calorie intake to represent the normal situation in the Western world, where most people gain weight after their 30s," explains Risérus.

Half of the participants got muffins made with a saturated fat (palm oil), while the other half got muffins made with a polyunsaturated fat (sunflower oil).

After seven weeks, both groups had gained the same amount of weight (about 3½ pounds). But there was a difference.

"The subjects who consumed the muffins baked with saturated fat gained more visceral fat and more liver fat," says Risérus, "whereas there was clearly less visceral fat accumulation in the individuals who consumed the muffins baked with unsaturated fat." Instead, those people gained more lean tissue.<sup>10</sup>

In his recent—but not yet published—study, overweight or obese people gained liver fat when they ate muffins made with saturated, but not unsaturated, fat.<sup>11</sup> "So it's clear that that was not a chance finding," says Risérus.

What about monounsaturated fats like olive or canola oil?

"The evidence is not yet as strong as it is for polyunsaturates," says Risérus. "But some studies suggest that monounsaturated fat is better than saturated."

"Polyunsaturated omega-3 fats from fatty fish also seem good, though the evidence isn't as clear," adds Risérus.

His bottom line: "Replace some saturated fats from palm oil and butter, for instance, with a variety of mono- and polyunsaturated fats, mainly from plant sources like canola, olive, sunflower, and soybean oils and from fish."

And, needless to say, don't overeat. "If you gain weight, it's difficult to limit fat accumulation," says Risérus.

## 5 Sugars may boost liver & deep belly fat.

Excess liver fat is a sign of trouble. "It's associated with an increased risk for insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, and liver damage," says Kimber Stanhope, a researcher at the University of

California, Davis.

Some researchers argue that a fatty liver also *triggers* insulin resistance, which can lead to diabetes.

"We still don't know if increased liver fat is the cause or the result of insulin resistance," says Stanhope. But even if a fatty liver doesn't lead to diabetes, it can cause damage.

"Over the long term, it can lead to non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and inflammation," says Stanhope.

"The prevalence of fatty liver is going up in both adults and children," she adds. "Until recently, kids with fatty livers were rare."

Clearly, the obesity epidemic deserves much of the blame. But in 2012, Danish scientists added a new wrinkle to the story.

They reported that overweight or obese people who were told to drink a liter a day of sugar-sweetened cola accumulated more liver and visceral fat after six months than those told to drink a liter a day of milk (which had the same number of calories), diet cola, or water.<sup>12</sup>

The fructose that makes up roughly half of both table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup may be the culprit.

"In a small recent study, men who were given 25 percent of their calories from fructose had more liver fat after nine days than when they got 25 percent of their calories from starches like bread, cereal, pasta, rice, and potatoes," says Stanhope.<sup>13</sup>

"We need more studies to be sure, but it appears likely that sugars increase liver fat."

## 6 Even an extra 5 to 20 pounds matters.

"Many misleading stories based on deeply flawed analyses have suggested that it's okay to put on some pounds during midlife," says Harvard's Walter Willett. "But it's not a good idea at all."

Willett co-authored a study that



Have an orange (70 calories and no added sugar) instead of a Panera Cranberry Orange Muffin (480 calories and 10 tsp. of added sugar).

tracked roughly 93,000 women and 25,000 men from midlife to their later years.<sup>14</sup>

"Even modest increases in weight between entering adulthood and age 55 were related to a higher risk of the many outcomes we looked at," he notes.

Women who gained only 5 to 20 pounds after age 18 had a higher risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, obesity-related cancers, gallstones, and severe arthritis compared to women whose weight was stable.

Men had to gain more weight before their risk of most problems rose. But those who gained just 5 to 20 pounds after age 21 had a higher risk of type 2 diabetes and

high blood pressure. That's not trivial.

"The gain in weight may not show up as health problems by age 45 or 55," says Willett. "But it's a strong predictor of how healthy you'll be from that time on."

He cautions that you can gain weight and still have a body mass index classified as "healthy."

"Women can go from, say, a BMI of 18 to a BMI of 24, and they're still technically at a healthy weight," explains Willett. "But that corresponds roughly to a 40-pound weight gain. That represents a huge increase in risk."

The goal: stay as close as you can to what you weighed around age 20.

"If you see your weight from age 20 creeping up even by five or so pounds, that's something to be concerned about," says Willett.

It's not just because those few pounds add some risk.

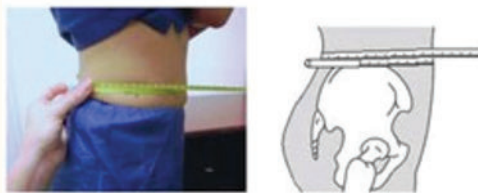
"More importantly, that weight gain essentially indicates that you're on track to gain even more weight," notes Willett.

"If you don't do something, that increase is going to continue, and by the time you get to 50 or 55, you can end up with a very large and very serious gain in weight."

Even doctors may not take a small weight gain seriously.

"This has been a neglected issue," says Willett. "Physicians often watch their patients gain weight and do nothing about it. Our study should be a heads up both to health care providers and to everybody else." 🍌

### How to Measure Your Waist Circumference



- 1 Stand and place a tape measure around your middle, just above your hipbones.
- 2 Make sure the tape is horizontal around your waist.
- 3 Keep the tape snug around your waist, but not compressing your skin.
- 4 Measure your waist just after you breathe out.

**Why keep track of your waist size?** As it expands, so does your risk of diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers, whether you're overweight or not.

Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/physical-activity/physical-activity-101.html)

- 1 [www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarc-news/2017/workinggroupreport10.php](http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarc-news/2017/workinggroupreport10.php).
- 2 *N. Engl. J. Med.* 375: 794, 2016.
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- 13 *J. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab.* 100: 2434, 2015.
- 14 *JAMA* 318: 255, 2017.

# Pressure Points

## More people have hypertension, say new guidelines

BY CAITLIN DOW

Nearly half of U.S. adults now have high blood pressure, according to [new guidelines](#) from the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology. Here's what's changed.

### What's New

Experts now say that nearly one out of two—rather than one out of three—adults have high blood pressure, or hypertension. Why?

Doctors used to diagnose hypertension if your blood pressure was above 140 systolic (the higher number) or above 90 diastolic (the lower number). But that doesn't capture everyone at risk.

"People in the 130-to-139 systolic or 80-to-89 diastolic range are at double the risk for a heart attack or stroke compared to people with normal blood pressure," says Paul Whelton, professor of epidemiology at the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and lead author of the new guidelines.<sup>1</sup>

"And we have good data from lifestyle and drug trials that getting pressures below that level is beneficial."

That range is now called "stage 1 hypertension." (It includes many people who had "prehypertension," according to the old guidelines.)

But that doesn't mean that half of all adults need

to take drugs to lower their pressure.

"Some people think that this is a conspiracy by the pharmaceutical industry to sell more drugs," says Whelton. "But not a single person on our committee had a relationship with industry."

Whelton expects that only about 30 percent of people with stage 1 hyperten-

sion will need to start taking anti-hypertensive drugs. "Only those at higher risk will be in a range where a drug makes sense," he notes.

Your estimated risk is high if your likelihood of having a heart attack or stroke during the next 10 years is greater than 10 percent. (To calculate your risk, go to [tools.acc.org/ASCVD-Risk-Estimator-Plus](https://tools.acc.org/ASCVD-Risk-Estimator-Plus).)

"And if someone has already had a stroke or heart attack, that automatically puts them at high risk for having another one," Whelton says.

### Diet & Exercise

"Far from recommending that everyone who has hypertension get a drug, we have gone to great lengths to say that, first and foremost, the approach has to be dealing with the underlying problem, which is lifestyle," Whelton explains.

And everyone, regardless of their blood pressure, should adopt a healthy lifestyle.

That starts with a DASH-like diet—eating more fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts, whole grains, and low-fat dairy, and less refined grains, salt, sugar, and red meat (see p. 9).

And it means moving more. "All forms of exercise, including weight lifting, will lower blood



### DO YOU HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

#### NORMAL BLOOD PRESSURE

\* Recommendations: Healthy lifestyle choices and yearly checks.

#### ELEVATED BLOOD PRESSURE

\* Recommendations: Healthy lifestyle changes, reassessed in 3-6 months.

#### HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE / STAGE 1

\* Recommendations: 10-year heart disease and stroke risk assessment. If less than 10% risk, lifestyle changes, reassessed in 3-6 months. If higher, lifestyle changes and medication with monthly follow-ups until blood pressure is controlled.

#### HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE / STAGE 2

\* Recommendations: Lifestyle changes and 2 different classes of medicine, with monthly follow-ups until blood pressure is controlled.

\* Individual recommendations need to come from your doctor.

Adapted from *American Heart Association News* ([news.heart.org/dont-just-get-your-bp-taken-make-sure-its-taken-right-way](https://news.heart.org/dont-just-get-your-bp-taken-make-sure-its-taken-right-way)).

< less than  
≥ equal to or greater than

# Measuring Blood Pressure: Get it Right

pressure,” says Whelton, “but the best evidence is for aerobic activity.” Aim for 90 to 150 minutes a week of either aerobic activity or resistance (strength) training, or a combination.

## What’s Your Pressure?

Chances are, your blood pressure hasn’t often been measured correctly.

“The new guidelines put a lot of emphasis on getting accurate measurements, because we’re confident that in many instances, they’re not as good as they could be,” says Whelton.

“We would close down laboratories if they didn’t meet quality control procedures for measuring cholesterol. We wouldn’t fly in an airplane where the pilot didn’t follow the required pre-check for quality control. And yet, it’s no secret that blood pressure measurements done in clinical settings don’t follow guidelines very well.”

To solve the problem, the new guidelines explain how to get accurate blood pressure readings both at a doctor’s office and at home.

**Relax for at least five minutes.**

**Don't have a conversation.**

**Use correct cuff size.**

**Put cuff on bare arm.**

**Support arm at heart level.**

**Empty bladder first.**

**Avoid caffeine, exercise, and smoking for 30 minutes beforehand.**

**Back supported by chair (not sofa). Feet flat on floor.**

**Keep legs uncrossed.**

**What to buy?** Look for an automatic, cuff-style, bicep (upper-arm) monitor. Take it to your next doctor’s appointment to make sure that it’s accurate and you’re using it correctly. For a list of validated monitors, see [dableducational.org/phygmanometers/basics\\_2\\_dipm.html#ArmTable](http://dableducational.org/phygmanometers/basics_2_dipm.html#ArmTable).

Source: Adapted from American Medical Association ([www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/press-room/press-releases/2017-11-09](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/press-room/press-releases/2017-11-09)).

“They have a cardiovascular risk that is much closer to people with normal blood pressure than to those with higher blood pressure, so they may not require treatment,” explains Whelton. “But they need to be monitored because their pressure can track upwards.”

People with “masked hypertension” are at greater risk.

“These people have normal pressure in the office, but high pressure out of the office,” says Whelton. “They’re even more concerning, because their risk is more similar to people who have high pressure all the time.”

Both are quite common, says Whelton. “Probably somewhere in the range of 15 to 25 percent of people.”

And don’t worry about one high reading, either at home or at the doctor’s office.

“A diagnosis should only be made after averaging two or more measurements on two or more occasions,” says Whelton.

“You don’t have to be a physician or a nurse to measure blood pressure accurately,” says Whelton. “Oftentimes, patients have the capacity to do it well because they’ve got more time and they’ll follow the protocol better.”

Regular readings at home can make a world of difference.

For example, people with “white coat hypertension” only have high blood pressure in a doctor’s office.

<sup>1</sup> *J. Am. Coll. Cardiol.* 2017. doi:10.1016/j.jacc.2017.11.006.

## For More Information

Check out the new, 2018 edition of our *Safe and Easy Steps to Lower Your Blood Pressure* at [NutritionAction.com](http://NutritionAction.com).



# Got High Blood Pressure?

Here's how much your systolic pressure could fall with diet and exercise, according to the new guidelines.

## Eat a DASH Diet

Load up on fruits and vegetables and shrink bad fats, added sugars, and salt. Here's a 2,100-calorie version. (Note: servings are small.)

↓11 points

	Daily Servings
 <b>Vegetables &amp; Fruit</b> 1 serving: ½ cup (or 1 cup greens) or 1 piece fruit	11
 <b>Grains</b> 1 serving: ½ cup pasta or rice or cereal or 1 slice bread	4
 <b>Low-fat Dairy</b> 1 serving: 1 cup milk or yogurt or 1½ oz. cheese	2
 <b>Legumes &amp; Nuts</b> 1 serving: ½ cup beans or ¼ cup nuts or 4 oz. tofu	2
 <b>Poultry, Fish, Lean Meat</b> 1 serving: ¼ lb. cooked	1
 <b>Oils &amp; Fats</b> 1 serving: 1 Tbs.	2
 <b>Desserts &amp; Sweets</b> 1 serving: 1 tsp. sugar or 1 small cookie	2
 <b>Wild Card</b> Poultry, Fish, Lean Meat or Oils & Fats or Grains or Desserts & Sweets	1

## Exercise

Aim for 90 to 150 minutes a week of aerobics (brisk walking, biking, running, etc.) and/or resistance training (biceps curls, leg presses, etc.).

↓5 points



Source: adapted from *J. Am. Coll. Cardiol.* 2017. doi:10.1016/j.jacc.2017.11.006.

## Lose Weight

Expect about a 1 point drop in systolic blood pressure for every 2 pounds you lose.

↓5 points



## Get More Potassium

Goal: 3,500 to 5,000 milligrams a day. You get the most bang for your calorie buck with fruits and veggies.

↓4-5 points

	Calories	Potassium (mg)
Baked potato with skin (1 small)	130	750
Beet greens (½ cup cooked)	20	650
Yellowfin tuna (4 oz. cooked)	150	600
Sweet potato with skin (1 small)	130	540
Wild Coho salmon (4 oz. cooked)	160	490
Spinach (½ cup cooked)	20	420
Banana (1)	110	420
Low-fat plain yogurt (6 oz.)	110	400
Fat-free milk (1 cup)	80	380
Cantaloupe (¼)	50	370
Lentils (½ cup cooked)	120	370
Pinto beans (½ cup cooked)	120	370
Tomato sauce (½ cup)	30	360
Avocado (½ cup)	120	360
Spinach (2 cups raw)	10	340
Shelled edamame (½ cup cooked)	100	340
Peach or nectarine (1)	60	290
Brussels sprouts (½ cup cooked)	30	250
Orange (1)	70	240
Romaine lettuce (2 cups raw)	10	230
Apple (1)	100	200

Sources: USDA and manufacturers.

## Cut Salt

Cut your sodium by 1,000 milligrams a day, ideally to 1,500 mg a day. Most sodium comes from packaged and restaurant foods that don't even taste salty. Some examples:

↓5 points

Salt Sneak	Instead, try:
<b>Bread</b> 100-200 mg (1 slice)	Try Pepperidge Farm or other brands with 100 mg per slice.
<b>Cheese</b> 150-250 mg (1 oz.)	Use Swiss (40-60 mg) or fresh mozzarella (80-100 mg) or just 1 "slim cut" slice.
<b>Raw poultry</b> 200 mg (4 oz.)	Buy chicken or turkey without salt "solution" (80 mg).
<b>Deli meats</b> 500-700 mg (2 oz.)	Get Boar's Head low-sodium meats at the deli counter (about 50-80 mg).
<b>Soup</b> 600-900 mg (1 cup)	Buy Imagine or other "light in sodium" soups (200-400 mg).
<b>Pizza</b> 1,000 mg (2 slices)	Replace meat with veggies (not olives). Go light on cheese.
<b>Restaurant entrées</b> (1,000-2,000 mg)	Save half for later. Add a salad or other veggies to boost the potassium.

## Limit Alcohol

If you drink, stop at one drink a day for women or two for men. 🍷

↓4 points



# Quick Studies

A snapshot of the latest research on diet and exercise

## Beware Cookie Dough



In one 2016 outbreak, 56 people—aged 1 to 95—were diagnosed with Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* infections, which can cause bloody diarrhea and may lead to kidney failure. A quarter had to be hospitalized.

The culprit: contaminated flour that the people tasted as unbaked dough or batter. Three children got sick after restaurant staff

gave them raw dough to play with while waiting for their meals.

**What to do:** To avoid *E. coli* in raw flour (or *Salmonella* in raw eggs), don't taste unbaked dough or batter and wash your hands after handling raw flour or eggs.

[N. Engl. J. Med. 377: 2036, 2017.](#)

## Metformin & B-12

A multivitamin may prevent the low vitamin B-12 levels that are sometimes caused by metformin, a drug used by millions of people with diabetes.

In a study of roughly 2,500 people aged 50 or older, 16 percent of metformin takers who took no multivitamin—but only 4 percent of those who took a multi—had low or borderline B-12 blood levels. (A typical multi has 6 to 25 micrograms of B-12.) People without diabetes who took a multi were also less likely to have low B-12.

**What to do:** Anyone 50 or older—and especially metformin takers—should get at least 2.4 micrograms of B-12 a day from a B-12 supplement, a multi, or a fortified food. Some older people have too little stomach acid to extract B-12 from food. Even B-12 supplements with 1,000 mcg are safe.

[PLoS One 2016. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0160802.](#)



## Less Protein, Less Muscle?

Eating enough protein may help prevent muscle loss in older people.

Researchers fed 29 men who were over age 70 diets that contained either the Recommended Dietary Allowance for protein or double the RDA.

After 10 weeks, only the double-RDA group had gained trunk muscle and power on a

knee-extension test (which requires a bent leg against resistance). Leg muscle didn't change in the double-RDA group, but it fell in the RDA group (possibly because those men had to cut back on their usual protein intake to not exceed the RDA).

**What to do:** Aim for a protein intake (in grams) equal to about half your body weight (in pounds), as some experts recommend (see Nov. 2014, p. 3). So if you weigh, say, 140 pounds, shoot for 70 grams of protein a day. If possible, stick to protein foods rather than a liquid supplement, which is mostly sugar, oil, and milk and soy protein. 🍌

[Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 2017. doi:10.3945/ajcn.117.160325.](#)

## Milk & Hip Fractures

"Study: Milk may not be very good for your bones or the body," reported the *Washington Post* in 2014.

A new, better study says otherwise.

Scientists tracked 80,000 women and



43,000 men for roughly 32 years. Those who drank at least one glass of (mostly skim or low-fat) milk a day had a 17 percent lower risk of breaking a hip than those who drank less than one glass a week. Those who drank at

least two glasses a day had a 23 percent lower risk.

Cheese eaters had no lower risk. Ditto for yogurt eaters, though few people ate even one serving a day.

**What to do:** This study isn't proof that milk prevents hip fractures, but it counters some earlier reports that milk doesn't protect bones.

[Osteoporos. Int. 2017. doi:10.1007/s00198-017-4285-8.](#)

# The Opioid-Scam Epidemic

## Detox pills offer empty promises

BY DAVID SCHARDT

Drug overdoses killed 64,000 people in the United States in 2016. Roughly six out of every 10 of those deaths involved opioids. Methadone and other prescription drugs can help people kick the habit. What about Opiate Detox Pro, TaperAid Complete, and other supplements that are sold online? We asked a handful of companies for evidence to back up their claims. It wasn't pretty.

"It will help to detox your body and help soothe the symptoms of opiate withdrawal naturally," says one supplement's website. "Speed Your Detox," says another.

For people dependent on opiate painkillers who are desperate for help, those promises are tantalizing. That's especially true for people who don't have insurance that covers effective treatments.

"But there's no credible evidence that dietary supplements can help with the prevention of opiate addiction, detoxification, or relapse prevention or recovery," says Bachaar Arnaout, an addiction psychiatrist and assistant professor at the Yale School of Medicine.

"These supplement companies are giving false hope to people who are desperate to get better. The danger people face by being misled is that they will be resorting to ineffective measures that can cost them their health and their lives."

Addiction withdrawal "simply does not respond to mild measures like a vitamin or mineral supplement," says Arnaout. "And there's no evidence that these make any difference in the course of opiate addiction."

We asked eight companies that market opioid-withdrawal supplements—most are combinations of vitamins, minerals, and herbs—to show us the evidence supporting their claims. What they

produced was anything but convincing.

The makers of Vasovita 2.0, for example, said that they had "data documenting highly significant differences" between six people who were given Vasovita and six who were not. (Not exactly a big study.) But because the company has applied for



Testimonials galore. Evidence? Not so much.

a patent, "our attorney advises us not to release any further data at this time."

The other companies didn't even pretend to have that much. For example:

■ **Mitadone Anti Opiate Aid Plus** (\$40 a month).

**Claims:** "Helps ease withdrawal symptoms." "Helps you quit."

**Evidence:** "We don't really have any scientific studies as such currently, it takes years & millions of dollars to do that," the

company e-mailed us.

■ **TaperAid Complete** (\$182 a month).

**Claim:** "Helps those individuals who have decided to completely discontinue opioids."

**Evidence:** "Only informal studies with the 170 people I've shared it with so far," a company spokesman wrote in an e-mail.

■ **Opiate Detox Pro** (\$20 a month).

**Claims:** "Advanced Addiction Withdrawal Formula." "Opiate addiction ease."

**Evidence:** "Scientific studies are very costly, so no, there is no study," the company e-mailed us.

■ **Opiate Freedom Center Ultimate Recovery System** (\$75 a month).

**Claims:** "Speed Your Detox." "Make Withdrawal Easier."

**Evidence:** The company never responded to our e-mails. It also ignored a challenge to its claims from the Better Business Bureau's National Advertising Board. The board has referred the case to the Federal Trade Commission.

In December, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (*Nutrition Action's* publisher) [asked](#) the Food and Drug Administration to ban the sale of the eight companies' opioid-withdrawal supplements, and asked the FTC to prohibit the

phony claims in their ads.

"It is appalling that companies are profiting from the opioid epidemic by offering untested products whose use does not even correspond to the biology of opioid addiction," says Arnaout.

"The heartbreaking thing is that we do have FDA-approved medications that work for treating opioid addiction. But only a minority of people actually receive them." 🍌

# The Healthy Cook

## The Bean Variations

BY KATE SHERWOOD

While great by themselves, these stewed beans are also the perfect base for dozens of dishes. Here are three to get you started. 🍴

Got a question or suggestion? Write to Kate at [healthycook@cspinet.org](mailto:healthycook@cspinet.org).

### Basic Stewed White Beans

*Easy, peasy. Sauté some vegetables and herbs, add canned beans, season, and you're in business. This recipe makes four 1-cup servings. With any of the variations, you get four 1½-cup servings.*

- 2 large carrots, finely chopped
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbs. tomato paste
- 1 tsp. dried oregano or thyme
- 2 cans no-salt-added cannellini beans
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

1. In a large skillet over medium heat, sauté the carrot and onion in the oil until lightly browned, 4-5 minutes.
2. Stir in the tomato paste. Cook, stirring often, until the paste starts to darken, 2-3 minutes.
3. Stir in the oregano. Cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
4. Stir in the beans and their liquid. Cook until heated through, 1-2 minutes. Season with the salt and pepper.

PER SERVING (1 cup): calories 290 | total fat 12 g  
sat fat 1.5 g | carbs 37 g | fiber 10 g | total sugar 6 g  
added sugar 0 g | protein 11 g | sodium 340 mg



SERVES 4

### Salad Days!

Kate's latest — Salads that make a meal.

Visit [NutritionAction.com/SaladDays](http://NutritionAction.com/SaladDays) or send a check for \$15 and your name & address to CSPI—Salad Days, Suite 300, 1220 L St. NW, Washington DC 20005.



Photos: Kate Sherwood/CSPI.

### Garlic Shrimp

Sauté ½ lb. shrimp and 3 cloves minced garlic in 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil until cooked through, 2-3 minutes.

Stir in 1 Tbs. lemon juice, ¼ tsp. kosher salt, and 2 Tbs. chopped parsley. Spoon over basic stewed beans.

1½ cups: calories 400  
sat fat 2.5 g | protein 23 g  
sodium 530 mg

### Spinach & Sundried Tomatoes

Stir 4 cups baby spinach and ¼ cup chopped sundried tomatoes (oil-packed) into basic stewed beans. Garnish with 2 sliced scallions.

1½ cups: calories 320  
sat fat 1.5 g | protein 13 g  
sodium 400 mg

### Cherry Tomato & Basil

Chop 1 pint cherry tomatoes and ¼ cup basil leaves. Mix with ½ tsp. kosher salt and 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil. Spoon over basic stewed beans.

Top with ¼ cup shredded parmesan.

1½ cups: calories 360  
sat fat 3 g | protein 14 g  
sodium 490 mg



BY LINDSAY MOYER & LEAH ETTMAN

**D**airy is still king. Non-dairy reportedly makes up only about 9 percent of all milk sales. But plant milks keep inching up. Why? Non-dairy is better for the planet (and for animals). And many people believe that it's better for their health. Clearly, all "milks" are not created equal. Here's a guide to dairy and beyond.

### 1 Know what you're missing.

Dairy milk is naturally rich in nutrients. Among them: calcium (30 percent of the Daily Value per cup), vitamin B-12 (20 percent), and potassium (10 percent). And dairy milks add 25 percent of the DV for vitamin D.

Many non-dairy milks—like our Best Bites and Honorable Mentions—add at least that much calcium and D.

Only soy milk naturally matches dairy's potassium, though some pea milks—Ripple and Bolthouse Farms—add enough to rival soy.

(Some milks boast that they're "soy-free." But if you like soy and want its protein, healthy fat, and potassium, there's no reason to drop it. See Sept. 2014, p. 9.)

Many plant milks don't add B-12. If you're a vegan, take a multivitamin.

### 2 Get enough protein.

Protein may not matter if you just want a low-calorie liquid to blend into your yogurt smoothie. But if you're counting on milk for protein, look for at least 7 grams per cup (our Best Bite minimum). Dairy delivers 8 grams.

That means nearly all almond, cashew,

coconut, flax, rice, and other nut milks are out. They typically have 0 to 1 gram of protein per cup. But most soy and pea milks are in. (Some light or sweetened soy milks have just 5 or 6 grams.)

### 3 Limit added sugar.

A cup of dairy milk has 3 teaspoons (12 grams) of naturally occurring lactose (milk sugar).

Most non-dairy milks naturally have 0 to 2 grams of sugar. Anything more than that is added.

(Some rice and oat milks have as much as 20 grams of sugar, because

companies use enzymes to break down their starches into sugars. We counted that sugar as added.)

Who needs it? Plenty of unsweetened non-dairy milks taste good.

Don't like unsweetened? Most sweetened "original" non-dairy milks have just 1 to 1½ teaspoons of added sugar—far less than most vanillas (1½ to 3 teaspoons) or chocolates (3 to 5 teaspoons). Our added-sugar limit for a Best Bite is five grams (about a teaspoon).

Tip: Check the label. Blue Diamond Almond Breeze Hint of Honey Vanilla has 2 teaspoons of added sugar per cup. Pacific's "lightly sweetened" Vanilla Hemp milk has 4 teaspoons per cup. You call that lightly?

### 4 Get healthy fats.

If you drink dairy milk, stick with 1% or fat-free to limit saturated fat. For non-dairy, don't worry about the fat in nuts, seeds, and soy. It's the healthier, unsaturated kind. Just avoid coconut milk.

### 5 Skip rice milk.

Arsenic is a human carcinogen, and rice soaks it up from soil and water. A half cup of rice milk could put an adult at the daily arsenic limit set by *Consumer Reports*. (Kids under 5 shouldn't drink rice milk daily.) Our Best Bites and Honorable Mentions have no rice or rice syrup.



Looking for non-dairy protein? Soy and pea deliver.

Photos: © luigi.giordano/fotolia.com (top), Lindsay Moyer/CSPi (bottom left), Leah Ettman/CSPi (bottom right).

## Going Nuts?

Most almond milks have no more than 4 to 6 nuts per cup. (That's why they're low in calories and protein.) Now you can get more nuts (17 or 18) and more protein.

The downside: the extra-nut milks we found don't add calcium or vitamin D...and have more calories (typically 130 to 150) than regular nut milks.

Dream Ultimate Almond has "4 times more almonds." The nuts supply 5 grams of protein. Ditto for Elmhurst Milked Almonds. Extra nuts also mean 3 to 6 grams of protein in Elmhurst Milked Cashews, Milked Hazelnuts, Milked Walnuts, and Milked Peanuts.

Should you go for more nuts? Yes, if you're looking for a creamier milk that's made with unsaturated fat. But you still get more protein for your calorie buck with pea protein milk.



More nuts means a richer, creamier milk.



Protein from peas.

## Give Peas a Chance

Your best shot at a non-dairy milk that tastes like Bessie made it: pea protein. Silk came the closest, just beating out Bolthouse.

■ **Silk Protein Nutmilk.** The creamy mix of pea protein with almond milk and cashew milk yields 10 grams of protein per cup. The regular (130 calories and just ½ teaspoon of added sugar) is a Best Bite.

■ **Bolthouse Farms Plant Protein Milk.** The Unsweetened (90 calories) and Original (110 calories and 1 teaspoon of added sugar) each has 10 grams of protein from peas. Both are Best Bites.

■ **Ripple.** The Unsweetened Original (70 calories) and Unsweetened Vanilla (80 calories) are Best Bites, but our tasters preferred the 100-calorie (sweetened) Original, which missed our added sugar limit by just 1 gram. All have 8 grams of protein.

## More Calcium?

"50% more calcium than dairy milk," boast many non-dairy milk cartons. But more isn't necessarily better. Calcium doesn't cause heart attacks (see Jul./Aug. 2017, p. 3), but getting too much from supplements or fortified foods may raise the risk of kidney stones, hip fractures, and prostate cancer.

Shoot for 1,000 milligrams a day (1,200 mg for women over 50 and men over 70). That includes what you get from food and supplements. Count roughly 250 mg for each serving of dairy you eat (150 mg for greek yogurt), and add 250 mg for the rest of your diet.



More calcium isn't always better.

## Free for All

"Dairy-free," say many non-dairy milk cartons. (Duh!) Are other "free" claims more helpful?

■ **Cholesterol-free.**

Any milk made from plants (soy, nuts, grains, etc.) has no cholesterol. It also has no lactose (milk sugar).



Most brands are now carrageenan-free.

■ **Gluten-free.** Most non-dairy milks are naturally gluten-free. But if you need to avoid gluten, always check the label.

■ **Carrageenan-free or gum-free.** The controversial thickener carrageenan (see Jan./Feb. 2015, p. 14) is gone from most non-dairy milks. Some brands, like Forager Project, are also "gum free." But gums like gellan or locust bean, though not well tested, are probably safe for most people (see [chemicalcuisine.org](http://chemicalcuisine.org)).



Like coconut milk? Cut the sat fat with a blend.

## Nuts for Coconut

What's fueling the coconut craze? It's partly due to medium-chain fatty acids (MCFAs), which "[help] to support metabolism," according to the Trader Joe's coconut milk cartons.

In one good study, dieters given 18 to 24 grams of MCFAs a day for four months lost about 3½ more pounds than dieters given olive oil.<sup>1</sup>

But you'd have to drink 26 to 38 cups a day of coconut milk to get as much MCFAs as those dieters got. And each cup has 45 to 90 calories. So much for a magic weight-loss bullet.

And so much for your arteries, which have to deal with coconut milk's cholesterol-raising *longer*-chain saturated fatty acids. Like coconut? Silk and Blue Diamond almond-coconut blends cut the sat fat to just 1 gram. 🥥

<sup>1</sup> *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 87: 621, 2008.



# Nuts to You!

**Best Bites (✓✓)** and **Honorable Mentions (✓)** have no more than 1 teaspoon of added sugar and 2 grams of saturated fat per cup, no rice or rice syrup, and at least 30% of the Daily Value (DV) for calcium and 25% for vitamin D. Best Bites also have at least 7 grams of protein. Milks are ranked from least to most added sugar, then most to least protein, calcium, and vitamin D, then least to most calories.

## Cow's Milk (for comparison) (1 cup)

	Calories	Added Sugar (tsp.)*	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)	Vitamin D (% DV)
✓✓ Milk, fat-free	80	0	8	30	25
✓✓ Milk, 1%	100	0	8	30	25
Milk, 2% <sup>F</sup>	120	0	8	30	25
Milk, whole <sup>F</sup>	150	0	8	30	25

## Soy Milk (1 cup)

	Calories	Added Sugar (tsp.)*	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)	Vitamin D (% DV)
Elmhorst Organic Unsweetened	120	0	12	4	0
Westsoy Organic Unsweetened	100	0	9	0	0
✓✓ Silk Organic Unsweetened <sup>1</sup>	80	0	8	30	30
✓✓ Trader Joe's Organic Unsweetened, refrig.	70	0	7	30	30
✓✓ 365 (Whole Foods) Organic Unsweetened	80	0	7	30	30
✓ Silk Light Original	60	0.5	6	45	30
✓✓ Silk Original <sup>1</sup>	110	1	8	45	30
✓✓ Silk DHA Omega-3	100	1	7	40	30
✓✓ Trader Joe's Organic Original, refrig.	90	1	7	30	30
✓✓ Trader Joe's Organic Vanilla, refrig.	90	1	7	30	30
✓✓ 365 (Whole Foods) Organic Original	100	1	7	30	30
✓✓ Dream Organic Enriched Original	100	1	7	30	25
✓ Silk Light Vanilla	70	1	6	45	30
Silk Vanilla <sup>1</sup>	100	1.5	6	45	30
Silk Light Chocolate	90	3	3	45	30
Silk Chocolate	120	4	5	45	30

## Pea Protein Milk (1 cup)

	Calories	Added Sugar (tsp.)*	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)	Vitamin D (% DV)
✓✓ Bolthouse Farms Unsweetened	90	0	10	45	40
✓✓ Ripple Unsweetened <sup>1</sup>	80	0	8	45	30
✓✓ Good Karma Flaxmilk + Protein Unsweetened	70	0	8	30	25
✓✓ Silk Protein Nutmilk	130	0.5	10	45	25
Dream Boosted Almond Original	120	0.5	10	20	25
✓✓ Bolthouse Farms Original	110	1	10	45	40
Silk Protein Nutmilk Vanilla	140	1.5	10	45	25
Ripple Original	100	1.5	8	45	30
Bolthouse Farms Vanilla	140	3	10	45	40
Silk Protein Nutmilk Chocolate	150	3.5	10	45	25
Ripple Vanilla	130	3.5	8	45	30
Bolthouse Farms Chocolate	160	4	10	45	40
Ripple Chocolate	150	4	8	45	30

## Almond Milk (1 cup)

	Calories	Added Sugar (tsp.)*	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)	Vitamin D (% DV)
Dream Ultimate Unsweetened	130	0	5	6	0
Elmhorst Milked Almonds Unsweetened	130	0	5	0	0
New Barn Organic Unsweetened <sup>1</sup>	90	0	3	6	0
✓ Silk Unsweetened <sup>1</sup>	30	0	1	45	25
✓ Blue Diamond Almond Breeze Unsweetened <sup>1</sup>	35	0	1	45	25
✓ Trader Joe's Unsweetened	40	0	1	45	25
Califia Farms Unsweetened <sup>1</sup>	40	0	1	45	0
✓ Dream Enriched Unsweetened Original	50	0	1	30	25

Calories  
Added Sugar (tsp.)\*  
Protein (g)  
Calcium (% DV)  
Vitamin D (% DV)

365 (Whole Foods) Organic Unsweetened	40	0	1	10	25
Pacific Organic Unsweetened	35	0	1	2	25
✓ Blue Diamond Almond Breeze Reduced Sugar Original	40	0.5	1	45	25
Califia Farms Vanilla	50	0.5	1	45	0
✓ Silk Light Original	40	1	1	45	25
Califia Farms Original	60	1	1	45	0
Elmhorst Milked Almonds	150	1.5	5	6	0
Blue Diamond Almond Breeze Original	60	1.5	1	45	25
Silk Original	60	1.5	1	45	25
Silk Organic Original	60	1.5	1	10	25
Blue Diamond Almond Breeze Hint of Honey Vanilla	60	2	1	45	25
Blue Diamond Almond Breeze Vanilla	80	3	1	45	25
Silk Vanilla	80	3	1	45	25
Silk Dark Chocolate <sup>1</sup>	110	4.5	2	45	25

## Other Nut Milks (1 cup)

Elmhorst Milked Cashews	130	0	4	2	0
Elmhorst Milked Hazelnuts Unsweetened	100	0	3	2	0
✓ Silk Cashew Unsweetened	25	0	1	45	25
Elmhorst Milked Walnuts	130	0.5	3	2	0
Forager Project Organic Cashew Original	90	0.5	2	2	0
Elmhorst Milked Peanuts	150	1	6	2	0
Elmhorst Milked Hazelnuts	140	1	4	4	0
✓ Dream Cashew Original	50	1	1	30	25
Silk Cashew Original	60	1.5	1	45	25
Pacific Hazelnut Original	110	3.5	2	30	25

## Blended Milks (1 cup)

✓ Blue Diamond Almond Breeze Almond Cashew Unsweetened	25	0	1	45	25
✓ Silk Almond & Coconut Unsweetened	35	0	1	45	25
✓ Blue Diamond Almond Breeze Almond Coconut Unsweetened	40	0	1	45	25
✓ Dream Blends Almond, Cashew & Hazelnut Enriched Unsweetened Original	50	0	1	30	25
✓ Silk Almond & Coconut Original	50	1	1	45	25

## Flax, Hemp, Oat, & Rice Milks (1 cup)

Pacific Hemp Unsweetened	60	0	3	30	20
✓ Good Karma Flaxmilk Unsweetened	25	0	0	30	25
Dream Rice Organic Enriched Original	120	2	1	30	25
Pacific Hemp Vanilla	160	4	3	50	30
Pacific Organic Oat Original	130	4.5	4	35	25

## Coconut Milk (1 cup)

Silk Unsweetened <sup>F</sup>	45	0	0	45	25
Silk Original <sup>F</sup>	80	1.5	0	45	25
Trader Joe's Vanilla <sup>1,F</sup>	90	2	0	20	30

✓✓ Best Bite. ✓ Honorable Mention. \* Estimate. <sup>1</sup> Average. <sup>F</sup> Contains more than 2 grams of saturated fat.

**Protein Target:** 75 grams. **Daily Values (DV):** Added Sugar: 50 grams (12 teaspoons). **Calcium:** 1,000 milligrams. **Vitamin D:** 400 IU.

Note: % DVs for calcium and vitamin D are based on the old Nutrition Facts label, which is still on most foods. The new label has higher DVs for calcium (1,300 mg) and vitamin D (20 micrograms, or 800 IU).

Source: company information. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.



## RIGHT STUFF

### Babycakes



“We believe in snacking without compromise,” say packages of **SkinnyPop Popcorn Mini Cakes**.

“We start with clean and simple ingredients: 100% SkinnyPop Popcorn, sunflower oil, a little dash of sea salt, and—POP!—out comes the best tasting popcorn mini cakes.”

Okay. So fresh fruit or veggies they’re not. But

when the urge for something crispy and crunchy and salty beckons, you no longer need to reach for the pretzels or chips.

A serving (around 20 mini cakes) of **Sharp Cheddar**—our favorite flavor—delivers just 120 calories and no saturated fat, with an impressive 4 grams of fiber... all of it from (whole-grain) popcorn. (Even whole-grain rice cakes seldom have more than a gram of fiber.)

And its sodium—135 milligrams—runs rings around, say, Quaker Cheddar Cheese Popped Rice Crisps (400 mg).

If you’re looking for a hint of sweetness, try the **Cinnamon & Sugar Mini Cakes**, at 120 calories and less than a teaspoon of added sugar.

And don’t forget full-size **SkinnyPop Popcorn Cakes**, which come in **White Cheddar**, **Maple Brown Sugar**, and **Sea Salt** flavors.

Like the minis, they’ve got few ingredients, great numbers, and great taste.

We’ll pop to that!

[skinnypop.com](http://skinnypop.com)—(512) 640-9050

## FOOD PORN



### Mac & Cheese, Louise!

“Casual dining, including Fridays, needs to be more imaginative and differentiated, especially around product innovation...” said TGI Fridays’ CEO in a [2017 article](#) on *Ad Age*’s website.

And what’s more innovative than slathering beer

cheese sauce over slices of bacon on top of a thick puck of breaded and deep-fried mac and cheese that’s been plopped on top of a hamburger?

Yup. **TGI Fridays Mac & Cheese Burger** with fries has it all...all 1,710 calories, all 38 grams of saturated fat (a two-day supply), and all 4,580 milligrams of sodium (ditto). It’s like eating two McDonald’s Big Macs bathed in half a pound of melted Velveeta. Woo hoo!



Of course, Fridays doesn’t have a lock on innovation. Applebee’s and almost every other major chain worth its (ahem) salt seems to have a burger that’s topped with a fried egg or chili or fried cheese curds.

And don’t forget Fridays’ Buffalo Wingman’s Burger. (Hint: It involves a burger, two buffalo wings, and a skewer.)

What’s next? The Stick of Butter Burger? The Deepfried Twinkie Burger?

“How many bites does it take to get to the center of a Mac & Cheese Burger?” asked the Fridays Twitter post.

Pick one up and, with luck, you’ll live long enough to find out.

[tgifridays.com](http://tgifridays.com)—(800) 374-3297



## DISH of the month

### Cauliflower Steak

Cut 2 or 3 ¾-inch-thick slabs from the center of a head of cauliflower. Sauté with half a lemon (cut side down) over medium-high heat in 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil until golden brown on both sides, 8-10 min. Squeeze the lemon over the cauliflower. Season with a pinch or two of salt.

## quick tip

Buy bagged or boxed salad greens? Open at home and toss in a paper towel. The towel absorbs excess moisture, which keeps the greens fresher for longer. And if they’ve been prewashed, don’t wash them. You could contaminate them with bugs from your sink.