



Coffee Confusion

Is coffee healthful or not? Ongoing research suggests coffee, regular and decaffeinated, may have positive health effects and few negative ones.

For example, major studies have found those who drank 3 to 4 cups of coffee daily were 20% to 25% less likely to develop diabetes; protection appeared greater for decaf drinkers.

And the latest Harvard study of 130,000 people for 18 to 24 years found no increased risk of death from cancer, heart disease or any cause among those who drank up to 6 cups a day.

How much is OK? The American Medical Association says that moderate coffee drinking (2 to 5 cups – 250 to 500 mg of caffeine) is likely harmless for healthy folks. *Note:* Research is typically based on black coffee drinks – not beverages with multiple jolts of caffeine and 200 to 500 extra calories per drink from sweeteners and whipped cream.

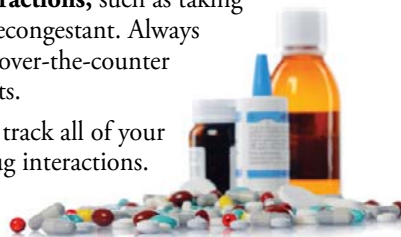
Watch for side effects. If you have regular insomnia, avoid caffeine – especially close to bedtime. If you're pregnant, have acid reflux or develop side effects such as nervousness and digestive problems, follow your provider's recommendations for caffeine from all sources.



Medications: Take as Directed

Many people begin using multiple medications by middle age as they develop common, long-term conditions such as arthritis, high blood pressure or diabetes. Use your medications safely and effectively with these reminders:

- **List all medicines and supplements you are taking;** include prescribed dosage, when you take them, and potential side effects. Share this list with your health care provider at every visit.
- **Learn about any potential for drug interactions,** such as taking your blood pressure prescription with a decongestant. Always get your provider's OK before taking any over-the-counter medicine, as well as herbs and supplements.
- **Use 1 pharmacy.** Ask your pharmacist to track all of your prescriptions and alert you to possible drug interactions.
- **Take your meds routinely,** at the same time every day.



QuikQuiz:

What's On Your Plate?

The message of the MyPlate nutrition campaign is simple. Fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables. Split the other half between grains and high-protein foods (choosemyplate.gov).

Why does this matter? In 2010, the National Cancer Institute found that 80% to 90% of Americans don't eat enough fruits and vegetables, and 99% don't eat enough whole grains – all foods shown to significantly lower the risk of several diseases.

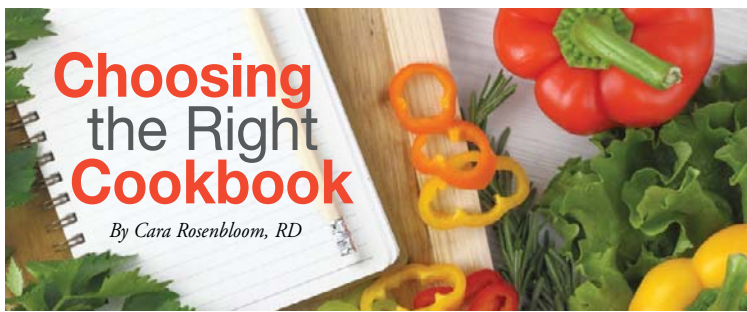
Test your MyPlate knowledge:

1. Which of these represents 1 serving from the vegetable group?
 - a) 1 cup of cooked vegetables
 - b) 1 cup of raw vegetables
 - c) 2 cups of leafy greens
 - d) all of the above
2. *True or false:* One-third of the grains you eat daily should be whole grains.
3. Which of these foods is not a whole grain?
 - a) whole-wheat pasta
 - b) brown rice
 - c) couscous
 - d) oats

>> Turn the page for the answers.



Talking on a cell phone while driving your car (including hands-free devices) increases your odds of a crash by up to 4 times. Texting while driving raises the odds many more times. Behind the wheel, focus only on driving, which is dangerous enough without increasing the risk of a crash. If you're riding with a driver who's distracted by these devices, speak up.



From step-by-step beginner's recipes to high-level French cuisine, there is a cookbook for every skill level and taste.

Begin your search by reading online cookbook reviews. Most booksellers group cookbooks according to the contents. Look in the "health" or "well-being" section.



Look for recipes that:

- ✓ Include lots of fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Use whole grains such as brown rice and quinoa, instead of refined grains.
- ✓ Call for healthful protein options, such as fish, skinless poultry, legumes or lean meat.
- ✓ Require low-fat milk products, such as skim milk and 0% to 2% yogurt.

Next, choose recipes that include the:

- 1. Cooking time:** It's handy to know how long each recipe will take. Tip: Beginners may need to double the cooking time until they become more adept at chopping and dicing.
- 2. Number of servings:** Have you ever made a soup that serves 16 portions, but only 2 of you are eating? Choose recipes that provide the number of servings, so you can halve or double (or leave as is) the recipe to accommodate the number of diners.
- 3. Nutrition information:** Some recipes seem healthful, but the numbers may tell a different story. Choose a cookbook that lists amounts of calories, fat, protein, carbohydrates, fiber and sodium.

Finally, get a book that has measures you use. Most cookbooks use metric and imperial units, which is practical if you have measuring cups. Some cookbooks use weight (ounces and grams), which only works if you have a kitchen scale.

What's On Your Plate?

Continued from the other side.

ANSWERS:

1. *d* – Most adults need at least 2 to 3 cups each of vegetables and fruits daily.
2. *False* – At least half of your grains should be whole, such as whole-wheat bread, brown rice, whole oats and whole-grain pasta. Aim for 6 to 9 ounces daily.
3. *c* – Couscous is a dish made from tiny refined granules of durum wheat.

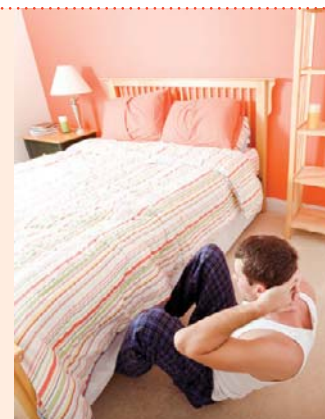
How much you need to eat depends on your age, gender and activity level. To simplify measuring foods, let your plate be your guide.

Plate size tip: Try moving from a 12-inch to a 10-inch dinner plate – this has helped people to serve and eat 20% to 25% less.



Exercise: Even a Few Minutes Matter

By Charles Platkin, PhD, MPH



Yes, it really can help to exercise for even a few minutes at a time, as long as they add up to at least 30 minutes per day, say researchers at Oregon State University. In fact, the researchers concluded that these short bouts can be just as beneficial as longer bouts of physical exercise achieved by a trip to the gym. This is important because most people report lack of time as the single most important reason they don't exercise. The study also looked at everyday activities such as raking leaves, and found they also contribute to overall health. So don't think if you miss your gym workout today you might as well not exercise at all – every little bit counts.

“Nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely.” – Rodin

Vaccines 101

Many adults are unaware they need immunization against several serious diseases throughout their lives. Adult vaccination is critical to avoiding serious illness and preventing the spread of diseases.

The CDC reported this year that the rate of adults getting vaccinated against whooping cough, shingles, hepatitis and other diseases is “unacceptably” low.

Current CDC-Recommended Vaccines for Adults:



- Annual flu shot
- Tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (Td/Tdap)
- Varicella (Chickenpox)
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) only until age 26
- Zoster (Shingles) for age 60 and older
- Measles/mumps/rubella (MMR)
- Pneumococcal
- Meningococcal for young adults (i.e., college age)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B

What you need depends on your age, occupation, medical conditions, foreign travel, and vaccination history. You may not need all of the vaccines listed above.

Don't forget: Flu season is coming up – get your flu shot this fall.



Smart Moves toolkit is at www.personalbest.com/extras/Aug13tools.

Next Month: Cholesterol Quiz