

A hand with manicured nails holds a black magnifying glass over a light blue surface. Several pills are scattered on the surface: a white pill with a score line, a light brown pill, and several blue and teal pills. The magnifying glass is focused on the light brown pill.

FULMER SILL'S Living Safer

VOLUME 12 • EDITION 1

Has *Zantac* Harmed Public Health?

The Alleged Connection
Between Ranitidine and Cancer

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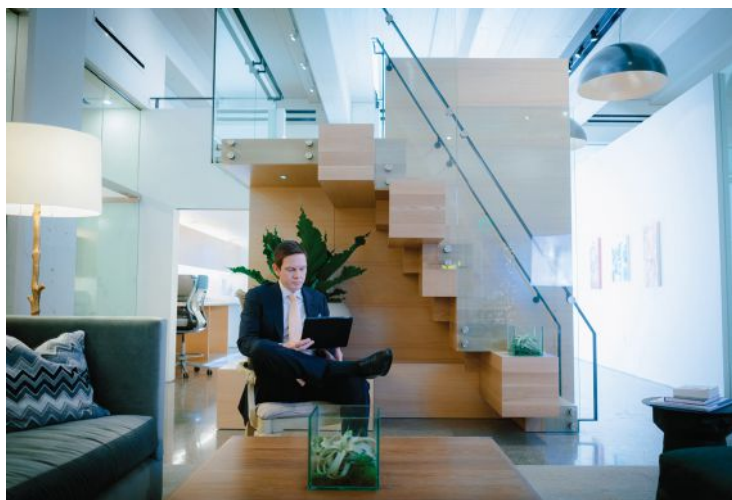
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Living Safer

A Letter from the Firm



Dear Friends,

Fulmer Sill is pleased to provide you with this copy of *Living Safer*. This publication is produced in collaboration with a growing community of respected legal professionals, industry experts and consumer advocates called The Injury Board, all committed to improving everyone's quality of life by promoting safety.

Our law firm is passionately devoted to protecting people and fighting for consumer rights, whether it be handling serious injury and death cases or consumer class actions. We believe that an informed client is the best client. To that end, this magazine promotes security and well-being through articles and safety tips. We hope this information will help you and those close to you avoid injury and give you guidance if injuries do occur. Our goal is to educate you about potentially hazardous products and conditions to help keep you and your family safe and to prevent others from suffering tragic injuries by promoting safe practices and responsible product manufacturing.

If you have any legal questions or would like to speak with our firm, please visit us at www.fulmersill.com, or call us at 405.509.6300.

Sincerely,
Matthew J. Sill

Small Hearts



Big Challenges

Early Detection Leads to Early Prevention

Small hearts can conceal big challenges, especially when it comes to congenital heart defects. Nearly one in three infants who die from birth defects has this condition. But a simple, non-invasive screening for all newborns could save the life of your child or the child of someone you know.

Tell your legislator to support pulse-oximetry testing for all newborns.
Get involved at YoureTheCure.org



Heart Disease and Stroke. You're the Cure.
YoureTheCure.org

What the Driver Sees

Behind this SUV is a group of daycare children. Not one of these children can be seen by the driver behind the wheel.



What the Driver Can't See

WORKING TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE IN AND AROUND VEHICLES

Before you turn the key...make sure you can see! Most drivers are unaware of the large and very dangerous blindzone that exists behind all vehicles. Every week at least 50 children are seriously injured or killed after being backed over because a driver was unable to see them behind their vehicle.

Help save the life of a precious child

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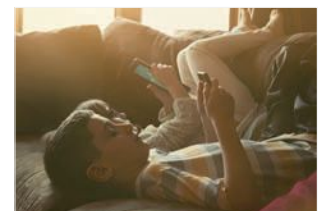
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The Real Fountain of Youth: Combating Inflammation

by Marc McCallister

Experts in the field of biology have determined that a universal condition, which all mammals suffer from, has been linked to many diseases and health conditions associated with aging: chronic inflammation. Health conditions known to be linked to chronic inflammation include heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, depression, dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The goal of this article is to provide you with information that can help you minimize the potency of chronic inflammation in your daily life.

Diet and lifestyle choices play a major role in combating chronic inflammation. Not surprisingly, unhealthy, processed foods are known to increase inflammation, while plant-based diets can actually help to fight inflammation. Simply put, the less processed the diet the better.

Fruits and Vegetables are a primary source of nutrients that are needed to form the foundation of a healthy diet. Many fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants that break down inflammatory substances within the body. It has been shown that some plant compounds like carotenoids can help keep oxidants in check. Additionally, fiber from produce is consumed by bacteria in the gut, which results in the production of anti-inflammatory substances.

Seafood and Omega-3s also play a major role in having a healthy diet. Foods that are high in Omega-3s not only prevent the formation of inflammatory compounds, but they also help to destroy them. The American Heart Association actually recommends at least two servings of fish per week.

Herbs, Spices and Olive Oil provide an easy and unobtrusive way to boost antioxidants in a meal or snack. Herbs and spices such as rosemary, thyme, basil, oregano and turmeric are thought to be protective against inflammation. Similarly, olive oil has been a staple of healthy Mediterranean diets for centuries and its anti-inflammatory phenolic compounds appear to provide significant health benefits.

Nuts and Seeds can serve as a healthy snack loaded with healthy fats and lots of antioxidants. Nuts and seeds have also been shown to reduce LDL ("bad") cholesterol. Multiple studies have shown that people who tend to eat nuts on a daily basis have lower BMIs and have better heart health.

Foods that are known to increase inflammation and contribute to poor health include: sugary beverages, refined carbohydrates, processed snack foods, alcohol and desserts. As with anything, moderation is an important component of maintaining a balanced diet should you decide to indulge yourself.

In addition to diet and food choices, low-grade chronic inflammation can also be addressed by establishing regular sleep habits, maintaining good dental health and participation in regular exercise or other stress-reducing activities. As mammals, it is inevitable that we will experience inflammation as a consequence of aging. However, simple mindful choices can go a long way to minimize and reverse its impact on the body's different systems. [IS](#)



Technologies Designed to Improve Wellness

by Rachel Gore

As technology evolves, wearable devices are broaching into the healthcare, wellness and fitness realm. Even more specifically, they are moving into the preventative care, diagnostics and urgent care segment. The market is growing so rapidly that Yahoo Finance has predicted the global market for wearable health and fitness trackers will reach \$5 billion by 2025.

Here are just a handful of wearables that you can purchase designed to monitor or improve your wellness:

1 FitBit

The first version of one of the most well-known wellness wearables, which has since acquired over 28 million active users, was launched in 2009 and has since come in many updated models.

Here are some of its key features:

- » Tracks steps, distance, calories burned, floors climbed and active minutes in a day.
- » Tracks sleep patterns and comes with auto sleep detection capabilities to create a better bedtime routine.
- » Tracks heart rate zones during workouts and at rest.
- » Allows you to log meals and snacks and estimates calories in vs. out every day.

2 Ava

Ava is a nighttime wearable that tracks women's menstrual cycles to gain an understanding of their overall health, fertility and

pregnancy. It is highly accurate, with one study finding that Ava detects “an average of 5.3 fertile days per cycle with an accuracy of 89%.” Here are some of its key features:

- » Monitors physiological parameters related to changing reproductive hormone levels throughout the menstrual cycle.
- » Identifies the beginning of the fertility window so women can determine peak fertility days.
- » Syncs data from the wearable bracelet to the Ava app, allowing users to view statistical results.
- » Measures skin temperature, resting pulse rate, heart rate variability, perfusion and breathing rate in users as they sleep.

3 KardiaMobile

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. With that in mind, medical device and Artificial Intelligence company AliveCor developed KardiaMobile. KardiaMobile is a medical-grade EKG monitor that attaches to the back of smartphones and tablets. It is ideal for those at-risk for heart disease or anyone who wants to better monitor and understand their heart health. Here are some of its key features:

- » Provides unlimited EKG recordings and instant EKG analysis, blood pressure, weight and medication tracking.
- » Generates personalized heart health reports and mails updated reports to consumers every 30 days.
- » Detects atrial fibrillation, bradycardia, tachycardia and normal heart rhythms.
- » Stores EKGs on smartphone devices and allows users to email EKG results to their doctors at the click of a button.

4 LogicInk

The waterproof LogicInk UV is a temporary tattoo featuring outer and inner circles that change color based on users’ level of sunlight exposure. Sunscreen can be applied over the top of it, and it informs users when they have reached their maximum UV exposure for the day. Here are some of its key features:

- » Tracks cumulative UV exposure.
- » Changes the outer circle color to pink when users reach their daily UV limit and inner circle to pink based on real-time UV exposure.
- » Informs users of dangerous UV exposure to reduce skin damage and the risk of skin cancer.
- » Comes with an optional mobile app that can scan the tattoo to track UV exposure patterns over time.

5 Motiv

Most wearables come in the form of watches or wristbands, but Motiv is an exception. Motiv is a ring that slips onto users’ fingers to monitor different health statistics and allow users to track and adjust their goals. It is a good fit for those who are not fans of wearing bulkier wristband wearables.

Here are some of its key features:

- » Offers fitness tracking services including heart rate, activity and sleep monitoring.
- » Adjusts daily targets based on users’ progress towards weekly goals.
- » Compatible with iOS and Android phones and tablets.
- » Comes in a silver, black or copper-colored finish and is much smaller and sleeker than traditional wearables like FitBit.

6 The Upright Go

The Upright go is a slim, patchlike wearable that sticks to the center of your back near your shoulder blades. When you slouch or start to have bad posture, the patch gently vibrates to serve as an active reminder to help you straighten back up.

- » Tracks daily progress and progress over time in an app that users can use to observe posture trends.
- » Comes in vibration mode or tracking-only mode if users want to track their posture without getting the vibration reminders during the day.
- » Generates a personalized training program with daily goals to improve posture over time, strengthen users’ backs, and train users’ brains to be aware of when they’re slouching.
- » Allows users to adjust the training time, vibration intensity and sensitivity in the corresponding app.

7 The Apple Watch

If you have an iPhone, the Apple Watch, like the Fitbit, is another wearable technology that tracks your fitness and health while also bringing iOS to handsfree. Below are some of its main features.

- » Tracks your heart rate and heart rhythm.
- » Alerts you if are listening to something too loud and decibels are high enough to affect your hearing.
- » Tracks diverse forms of exercise. The watch has GPS and is water resistant for up to 50 meters allowing you to track a variety of exercise. It also has a compass and ground elevation features for outdoor exercise like hiking or cycling.
- » Motivates you to exercise. The watch tracks progress and sends alerts reminding you to sit less and to exercise daily. You can also link up with friends and exercise together for motivation or a little friendly competition.
- » Encourages you to set aside a few minutes a day to relax and focus on breathing mindfully.

Extending well past classic options like the Fitbit wristbands, new technology has allowed wearables to offer unique wellness services like sleep, heart health, fertility, UV exposure and posture tracking. As technological advancements and the wearables market continue to grow side-by-side, it will be exciting to see what other capabilities become possible in the future. [IS](#)

Go to the Dermatologist Here's Why

by Frederick Schenk

Having grown up in Southern California, I spent much of my youth at the beach. The concept of sun screen was not a part of our vernacular.

In fact, rather than slathering on SPF 50, we chose to bake while consumed by the fragrance of coconut oils. The only time one of us went to see a dermatologist was to receive acne treatments. Decades later, I, along with many of my contemporaries, have become Mohs skin cancer patients.

Many skin conditions—among them acne, psoriasis, eczema, infections and hair loss—may require a visit to a dermatologist, but skin cancer treatment and prevention are the most important reasons to schedule an appointment.

More than 9,500 people daily are diagnosed with skin disease, and more than two people in this country die from it every hour according to the Skin Cancer Foundation. Everyone is at risk.

To decrease the odds of being diagnosed with some variant of skin cancer, many know to limit overexposure to the sun's harsh rays, especially during peak sunlight hours. Most importantly, people should take the crucial next step and visit a board-certified dermatologist for an annual, thorough skin screening. Individuals who have a family history or who have had cancer or an autoimmune disorder should go every six months.

A dermatologist's screening consists of a head-to-toe visual examination. If caught early on, the chance of successful treatment is much higher since skin cancer is one of the easiest cancers to cure.

Skin Cancer on the Rise

Unfortunately, skin cancer rates continue to soar despite the increasing awareness of preventative measures. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, each year more and more people are diagnosed with some type of skin cancer, and experts predict one in five Americans will be diagnosed with some form of it by age 70.

Of the three types of skin cancer, the most common is basal cell carcinoma, which directly correlates to ultraviolet radiation exposure. Squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma—the deadliest variation—complete the trio. Baby boomers who grew up basking in the sun are now showing the unfortunate results of overexposure. In fact, having five or more sunburns doubles your risk of melanoma.

I have successfully battled skin cancer four times and can't emphasize enough the importance of regular physician visits. An annual checkup is especially important if you—like me—fall in a high-risk group.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) lists common risk factors:

- » Fair skin and/or skin that freckles burns easily
- » Blue or green eyes
- » Blond or red hair
- » A history of skin cancer in your family
- » Regular sun exposure through work or recreation
- » A history of sunburns
- » Excessive moles

Those who are especially susceptible to skin cancer should receive more regular screenings, especially individuals who have undergone organ transplants and are on medications that suppress the immune system. Other immunosuppressed patients at higher risk for skin cancer include those with HIV or leukemia.

Along with routine skin checks, see a dermatologist if you notice a change in the shape, size, texture or coloring of any moles. A key warning sign of melanoma is an irregular growth that's wider than a pencil eraser. And ask your dermatologist to check spots that continuously scab, crust, itch, hurt or bleed. Suspicious tissue can then be removed and analyzed in a lab.

While dermatologists treat patients for many types of skin disorders, skin cancer is by far the deadliest. Schedule your regular screening. Now. [LS](#)



The Mind-body Connection:

3 Lifestyle Factors That Impact Physical & Emotional Well-being

by Rachel Gore



The connection between mental and physical wellness cannot be understated, yet it's not often that we stop to think about how closely related they actually are. Physical illnesses, injuries, ailments or conditions can bring on mental health issues. On the other hand, mental health issues can lead to a decrease in proper nutrition, physical fitness and other lifestyle factors that impact physical health.

This isn't just speculation. A breadth of scientific research has identified that the link between mental and physical well-being exists. Here are three major lifestyle factors that can impact—for better or worse—your physical and mental wellbeing:

1 Nutrition

Most people know an unhealthy diet can have adverse physical health consequences and cause conditions like high blood pressure, obesity and heart disease to develop, but the impacts of poor nutrition go well past that. According to Harvard Medical School, diets high in processed or refined sugars can impair brain function and worsen symptoms of mood disorders like depression.

This is largely because of the neurotransmitter serotonin, which performs several functions in the body such as regulating mood and sleep. A vast majority (95%) of serotonin is produced in the gastrointestinal tract, so it makes sense that what you choose to eat impacts this production.

A systematic review published in the *American Journal of Public Health* in 2014 identified a strong relationship between

an unhealthy diet and poor mental health in children and adolescents. Another 2014 systematic review, published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, found that studies overwhelmingly concluded that adults with healthier diets have lower odds of major depression.

It's important to note that while these results may indicate

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The mind and body are not separate units, but one integrated system. How we act and what we think, eat and feel are all related to our health.

— Bernie Siegel, M.D.

that eating a healthy diet lowers the risk of depression, they may also indicate that study participants with depression are less likely to eat healthy (or some combination of these two explanations).

2 Physical activity

Exercise has benefits beyond keeping you in good shape. It



might seem unlikely that exercise is good for your mood when you're reluctantly getting out of bed for a morning workout, but it's true. Exercise releases mood-boosting endorphins that reduce emotional stress, bring a sense of well-being, and improve sleep. Staying active can also reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. One study published in *Frontiers in Psychiatry* in 2018 found that major depression shortens life expectancy, but exercise is effective in reducing mortality and treating symptoms of depression.

For those struggling with a mental health condition, exercising is easier said than done. Luckily, you don't have to become a long-distance runner, join a gym or invest in a personal trainer to reap the benefits. Mustering up the energy to go on just a 10-minute walk can temporarily elevate the mood of people with depression, according to the Anxiety and Depression Association. However, regular exercise offers even more mental health benefits.

3 Sleep

Sleep plays a critical role in your physical health, yet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found that over one in three American adults aren't sleeping the recommended seven hours they need for optimal health. And while feeling tired throughout the day may not seem especially serious—especially if you're the type to combat this sleepiness with coffee every morning—

there are several serious health consequences that can result from not enough sleep.

Poor sleep has been linked to medical conditions such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease (America's leading cause of death), high blood pressure, impaired immune function and the common cold. It has also been linked to mental health conditions, with the National Sleep Foundation citing that "people with insomnia have greater levels of depression and anxiety than those who sleep normally. They are 10 times as likely to have clinical depression and 17 times as likely to have clinical anxiety."

Though not spoken of as frequently as insomnia, oversleeping (or hypersomnia) can be just as detrimental to your health. In fact, hypersomnia is connected to many of the same negative health consequences as insomnia, including heart disease, diabetes and obesity. A 2013 study published in *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience* found that 40% of young adults with depression experience hypersomnia, which is a strong risk factor for suicide and drastically reduces quality of life.

Balancing your physical and emotional needs by prioritizing a healthy lifestyle is necessary to maximize your overall well-being. Consider making small changes, like swapping out processed snacks with fruits and veggies, using the stairs instead of the elevator at work, and not bringing electronics into bed with you at night so you get the shut-eye you need. [IS](#)



Tips to Reduce Acid Reflux

by Judy Chaney

A ccording to the International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders (IFGD), Gastroesophageal reflux, or GERD, also known as Acid Reflux is very common, affecting 1 in 5 adults in the United States. Acid Reflux happens when the lower esophageal sphincter, the passage between the esophagus and the stomach, doesn't close completely and then acid from the stomach flows back into the esophagus causing irritation. Other potential causes include obesity, smoking, diet and pregnancy. The most common symptom of GERD is heartburn. If you've been having repeated episodes of heartburn—or any other symptoms of acid reflux—you may want to try the following tips to reduce acid reflux.

- » **Eat slowly.** Give your body time to get alert that you are full. You can also try eating smaller meals more frequently.
- » **Avoid certain foods.** Some foods are more likely than others to trigger reflux, including mint, fatty foods, spicy foods, tomatoes, onions, garlic, coffee, tea, chocolate and alcohol. Some have tried and had success with an elimination diet where you eliminate all of the trigger foods and then add them back in one at a time every few days or so to see if your symptoms come back. If a food triggers your symptoms again, you know that it is a food you should avoid.
- » **Don't drink carbonated beverages.** Bubbles make you burp, which sends acid into the esophagus causing more irritation.
- » **Stay upright after eating.** Gravity will help keep acid in the stomach. Stand or sit after eating. Wait at least three hours after eating before lying down or going to bed and when you do, sleep on an incline. Your head should be 6-8 inches higher than your feet. You can try adding a pillow or platforms to lift the top of the bed.
- » **If you smoke, quit.** Smoking decreases the lower esophageal sphincter's ability to function properly.
- » **Cut back on alcohol.** As with smoking, alcohol can cause the sphincter to relax or cause muscle spasms.
- » **Maintain a healthy weight.** Excess pounds put pressure on your abdomen, pushing up your stomach causing acid to flow back into your esophagus.
- » **Wear loose fitting clothing.** Clothes that fit tightly around your waist put pressure on your abdomen and the lower esophageal sphincter.
- » **Avoid vigorous exercise for a couple of hours after eating.** Bending over repeatedly or jumping around can cause acid to go back into your esophagus.
- » **Review your medications with your doctor.** A number of medications can increase your risk of GERD such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, certain asthma medications and some vitamins or supplements. [LS](#)

Simple Steps For **Healthy Living**

by J.R. Whaley



John Wesley said that, “People don’t need to be taught as much as they need to be reminded.” We all “know” what we “need” to do to live a healthier and more fulfilling lifestyle—more exercise, less stress and healthier eating habits. Unfortunately, however, we often do not have the discipline to follow through on everything that we “know” we need to do. Sometimes, it can all be overwhelming. See if incorporating these tips throughout the week can help you change your lifestyle for the better.

Meatless Mondays. Diets that are full of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low in processed meats can reduce risks of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer. There have been many studies that show too much red meat in your diet can have adverse health consequences. Eating less meat is also good for the environment. For these reasons, we should all strive to eat more fruits and vegetables. But how? Going meatless one day of the week is an easy step towards a healthier diet. You can substitute meat with beans and legumes and enjoy whole-wheat lasagna, pasta, and soups. You can even get more creative as you experiment with meatless products like tofu and seitan. Use Monday’s to lay off the meat and focus on eating healthier meals full of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains

Thoughtful Tuesdays. Researchers say that we have up to 70,000 thoughts every day and most of them are negative! It is no wonder that we feel stressed. Meditation has been a tool used for millennia by adherents of all faiths, to deal with this onslaught of negative thoughts. Meditation is simply an opportunity to slow down, disconnect from the constant bombardment of our thoughts, and become re-centered. There are different meditation practices, such as transcendental meditation, mindfulness meditation and focused meditation. There are thousands of online meditation tools to help you get started, like guided meditations by Sam Harris and Headspace. Spend time exploring different kinds of meditation, one size does not fit all. Be sure to be careful of any practice that seems too rigid or rules oriented. Meditation practice can and often is simply giving your mind rest. So take time on Tuesdays to give your mind a break from negative thoughts.

Walk It Out Wednesdays. Cardiovascular exercise is any movement that increases the heart and respiratory rate and increases the blood and oxygen flow throughout the body. Generally cardiovascular training improves heart and lung health, reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, boosts mood and self-esteem, while helping with weight management and improves sleep. A good goal is about 30 minutes of cardio every day, but if you’re not there yet, try once a week to start out. Dedicate Wednesdays, either early in the morning or in the evenings after work, to go on a brisk 30 minute walk.

Thirsty Thursdays. Water is our body’s principal chemical component and makes up about 60% of our body weight. We

depend on water to survive. Every cell, tissue and organ in our body needs water to work properly. It is easy to reach for something caffeinated for a boost of energy, but water might be what we actually need. Water fuels muscles by giving them the hydration needed to perform during physical exercise. Water also hydrates the skin, gives a mental boost and beats headaches. Staying fully hydrated helps digestion and keeps all major organs, particularly the liver and kidneys, operating as they should. Drinking lots of water also helps with weight loss goals because it helps you feel full. Many suggest starting every meal with a full glass of water. While no single formula fits everyone, most experts commonly recommend drinking eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day which equals about half a gallon. Dedicate Thursdays to making sure you are drinking enough water. You’ll feel the difference and want to make it an everyday habit.

Friendly Fridays. Friendships can impact health and well-being. Friends are there when you need someone to celebrate with you and there to walk with you through difficult times. Friends increase sense of belonging, boost self-confidence and help with traumas. Good friends may help encourage healthy living, while discouraging unhealthy habits. Some studies show that older adults with an active social life are likely to live longer than peers without strong connections. The beginning of the weekend is a great time to connect with or make new friends. Remember that the quality of friends counts far more than the quantity. If you are in need of good quality friends, make the effort to reach out to old friends that you’ve lost touch with or invite a new acquaintance with whom you have chemistry for an after work drink or dinner. You can also attend community events, volunteer or join a faith community.

Say “No” Saturdays. Greg McKeown in his book, “Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less” says that, “The ability to choose cannot be taken away or even given away—it can only be forgotten.” In today’s modern life, it seems that we have forgotten our ability to choose what we will spend our time upon. This seems particularly so for our weekends when we have various family, social, athletic and business obligations. Oftentimes, our free time does not appear to be so free. Start being jealous of your Saturdays. Consider what you can say “No” to that will allow yourself to spend time on the things that you enjoy. Life is short. Enjoy it.

Digital Detox Sundays. “Digital Detox” refers to a period of time when a person voluntarily refrains from using digital devices such as smartphones, computers and social media platforms. Overuse of digital devices can cause physiological psychological and relationship health issues. Some of these problems include reduction of the quality of sleep, vision problems, eyestrain, behavioral issues and feelings of detachment. Even God rested on the seventh day. Give yourself a break from technology on the Sabbath. Read a book. Take a walk. Hang out with your kid. The emails and the Facebook posts will be there in the morning. [IS](#)

Living Alone?

Tips to Stay Safe

by Rachel Gore





iving on your own? You aren't the only one. A growing percentage of people are living solo, with the U.S. Census Bureau reporting in 2019 that over one in four (28%) American households are single-person.

Altogether, that adds up to about 35.7 million Americans living independently.

This single-person household is appealing for a number of reasons. Among these include the ability to decorate however you want, plenty of personal space and not needing to cater to someone else's needs. On the other hand, living alone also means that no one else is around if a safety issue arises. Therefore, it's particularly important for those living alone to stay diligent with home security. Here are some tips on how to stay safe while living alone:

1 Invest in a security system.

Having a security system installed is a no-brainer when it comes to home safety. Security systems deter burglars, who are more likely to stop and think twice before targeting a home with a visible camera. Even if an incident does occur, security footage can serve as powerful evidence that someone engaged in dangerous or illegal behavior.

Security systems have a number of important safety features and can fit almost every budget, making them a worthwhile investment. On top of that, many modern security systems can sync with mobile apps, giving you 24/7 monitoring capabilities whether or not you're home.

2 Install motion sensor outdoor lights.

By installing motion sensor lights at the entry points of your house and in the dark sections of your lawn or property, you can give off the illusion that you're home, even if that's not the case. A visible light could also alert your neighbors to something going on, especially if they see an unfamiliar person lurking around your house. They may also be able to see identifying characteristics if the person tries to get in or engages in other questionable behavior.

3 Purchase a smart doorbell.

Smart doorbells sync to phones and tablets so that you are able to see who is at your door and interact with them without opening your door. Just like with motion sensor lights, this may give off the illusion that you're home, as you can communicate with them remotely without them

knowing. If you don't recognize the person, being able to interact with them remotely means you don't have to risk opening the door for a potential stranger or intruder.

4 Get to know your neighbors.

As great as technology is, don't forget about another safety asset you have just around the corner: your neighbors. By building relationships and a sense of trust with those who live around you, you are more likely to recognize if a person or vehicle isn't from the area. Neighbors are also likely to keep you informed if something suspicious happens in near your home. Even if you don't become friends, having neighbors as another safety net makes taking a few minutes to introduce yourself worthy of your time.

5 Get a dog (if you can commit to taking care of it properly).

Dogs' natural instinct to protect their loved ones and home are extremely valuable in unsafe situations. With their heightened sense of hearing and smell, dogs can detect a threat and alert you of danger before you notice it yourself. Additionally, someone is less likely to break in if they hear or see a barking, aggressive-looking dog inside.

At the same time, you should only do this if you have time, love and commitment to take care of a dog properly; after all, it will depend on you for a high quality of life just as much as you will depend on it for protection. Certain breeds, like Australian Shepherds, Boxers, Bullmastiffs and German Shepherds are especially protective and can make better guard dogs than smaller or more passive breeds.

6 Don't publicly announce that you're home alone or leaving town.

As exciting as it is to plan a vacation, the general public doesn't need to know what you're up to. You can still tell your friends, family and neighbors if you have plans to leave town, but do not make a publicly visible social media post saying the same.

Similarly, you may be tempted to send out a Snapchat or tweet out about how bored you are on a random Friday night at home, but reconsider before pressing send. At a minimum, choose your audience wisely so you don't accidentally reveal to the public that you are home alone—or that no one is home at all. [IS](#)



Creating the Right Conditions for Quality Sleep

by Emma Parnham

The importance of sleep and the impact of sleep deprivation is well documented. Nevertheless, when someone wants to 'get in shape' and perform at their best, the first thing that typically comes to mind is eating a healthier diet, quickly followed by the thought of working out. Sleep is often overlooked in the master plan to achieve peak performance. However, large volumes of research from all around the world prove that sufficient sleep is indeed one of the most important things one can do to maximize well-being and performance. In an era where we are more connected than ever before, and 'presenteeism' (being at work but unable to perform to one's full ability) is a real concern, sleep and sleep quality has become somewhat of a hot topic.

According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, our increasingly 24/7, globalized work world demands some people work at night, have extended work hours or rotate between working night, day and evening shifts. Nearly one-quarter of all workers have shifts that are not during the daytime, and more than two-thirds of these workers have problems with sleepiness and/or difficulty sleeping. In addition, according to the National Sleep Foundation, nearly a third of Americans report working 10 hours or more each

day. Such extensive work hours can affect how much time we have for sleep, as many on a limited time budget sacrifice sleep for needed leisure time, attention to domestic tasks, or multiple jobs.

The purpose of this article is to share some ideas on how to create an environment which optimizes the conditions for not only getting to sleep, but also getting into the stage of deep sleep where our bodies recover best. While the importance of sleep is a subject in its own right, below are some of the physiological effects of a lack of sleep and why it is so important for peak performance:

- » Puffy eyes, hunger pangs and aching muscles
- » Headaches and irritability
- » Reduced cognitive performance—confusion, memory lapses, impaired reaction times
- » Increased blood pressure and increased cortisol levels—which can put a person at higher risk for obesity, high cholesterol, hypertension, high blood sugar, and other metabolic disorders (NHBLI 2019)
- » Reduced immune system increasing susceptibility to illness

Getting to sleep

The most obvious and effective way to prevent sleeplessness is to reduce stress. Of course, in an era where we are more digitally connected than ever before and have competing work and social pressures, avoiding stress is challenging or nearly impossible. Exposure to long-term stress can be significantly reduced by eliminating stress factors and dealing with problems promptly. Making good choices and prioritizing recovery through sleep is an important first step in managing stress.

Work-life integration

Consider how you, as well as your employer, can address your work-life routine:

- » Depending on a number of factors, employers might consider individual and flexible work arrangements.
- » Employees may have to realistically assess their workload and find more efficient methods of organizing work better to keep work hours reasonable. There are numerous courses and self-help books which can help with organization and time management.
- » Both employers and employees should pay attention to health-promoting lifestyles. This might include regular exercise, healthy diet, good human relations. As well as finding ways to engage employees in programs such as yoga and meditation while forging meaningful relationships at work.

Promote positive sleep hygiene

A regular nighttime routine can help prepare the mind for rest:

- » Turn ALL screens off at least an hour before bedtime. The blue light emitted from any kind of screen (TV, computer, mobile device, video games) is known to suppress the body's release of the sleep-inducing hormone melatonin. Increased screen time throughout the day has been linked to insomnia and depression.
- » Keep screens out of the bedroom. Although it is tempting to use phones as alarms, invest in an alarm clock. Cell phones, laptop screens, and iPads are all too easy to watch last thing before bed and to check first thing in the morning. There are physiological effects of dopamine and cortisol released as a result of checking email and social media. Try reading a book or engaging in meditation before bed instead.
- » Take a warm bath or shower before bed. This increases the basal temperature and helps the body relax, making it easier to fall asleep.
- » With the body's basal temperature warm, the National Sleep Foundation recommends keeping bedroom temperature between 60–67 degrees
- » Try deep belly breathing whilst lying down, perhaps with feet slightly elevated. Use visualization techniques, body scanning meditations and gratitude meditations to help calm the mind, slow the pulse, and reduce cortisol levels; all of which help

to engage the parasympathetic nervous system, commonly known as our rest and digest system. If you find your mind wandering and find it difficult to quiet the voice in your head, don't give up; meditation does require practice. Given time, the mind and body learn to relax.

- » Ensure your bedroom is dark—use blackout blinds.
- » If you are typically a light sleeper and easily disturbed by traffic, early morning activity on the street or if you work night shift and need to reduce everyday noise, try ear plugs or a white noise machine. A white noise machine might also be beneficial if you struggle with 'dead quiet', as it can provide some relaxing background noise.
- » Consider using aromatherapy and essential oils. Essential oils have been used for centuries to promote relaxation and mental and physical wellness. Oils can be added to a bath or used in a diffuser. Essential oils that are commonly used to help with relaxation, reducing anxiety and enhancing sleep include lavender, vanilla, rose and geranium, jasmine, sandalwood and citrus.

Other lifestyle tips:

- » Our circadian rhythm is a natural, internal process that regulates the sleep-wake cycle and repeats roughly every 24 hours. Maintaining a regular and sensible sleep-awake rhythm promotes sufficient and good-quality sleep. While it might differ for everyone to a degree, the recommended sleep time is approximately 7-8 hours per night. Recent research has shown that an irregular sleep pattern can be just as detrimental to health as lack of sleep (NHBLI 2019).
- » Engage in exercise. There is scientific consensus that not only can regular exercise help sleep, but sufficient quality sleep can also help exercise. Regular exercise supports physical as well as mental health and wellbeing. A consistent exercise routine also increases the amount of time spent in restorative sleep—where immune function is boosted and stress and anxiety (and therefore cardiac health) are improved. Research recommends anything from 10 minutes to 60 minutes a day depending on physical health and intensity and the American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate activity per week.
- » The quality of our nutrition can also support getting to sleep and into restorative sleep. Food sources should be as natural as possible and it might prove helpful to avoid eating sugary snacks close to going to bed or overeating at dinner time.
- » Many adults enjoy a glass of wine or other alcoholic beverage in the evenings. Be mindful that alcohol may impair deep sleep and can be detrimental to the body's ability to repair itself, particularly if immunity is low or recovering from injury.

There are some great resources at our fingertips about the importance of sleep. Overall, to allow our bodies and minds to repair, help prevent disease, reduce weight gain and improve overall performance, sufficient quality sleep is a must. [IS](#)

The Cheapest States for a Better Retirement

by Margie Coghill

Are you pondering retirement? If so, trying to balance a fixed income with an enjoyable retirement can be difficult. Therefore, it is a crucial to consider the cost of living, because if your daily expenses exceed your budget, you won't be left with much extra money to afford anything fun, and your peace of mind may suffer. More than 67% of people

say they would move to a less expensive location if it meant having a more financially comfortable retirement.

Here are five States that offer below-average living cost for retirees. These affordable places to retire are spread out across the nation, offering many options for your retirement destination.



Everything is bigger and better in Texas! Texas lands in the top 10 most affordable states to live in based on three categories: senior care, cost of living and elderly and family caregiver support services. The average yearly cost of a nursing home in Texas is \$54,750.00 which is \$31,000.00 less than the national average.

Texas is famous for its steaks, barbequed ribs and Mexican food. The immense size of Texas offers many attractions and things to do. Try visiting San Antonio's River Walk, the Space Center in Houston or Padre Island in Corpus Christi.

It is easy to see why the sunshine state shows up on so many people's lists of top retirement destinations. Warm sandy beaches, sunny weather, no state income tax and countless facilities tailor-made for retirees make Florida an ideal location for retirement. There are 3.5 million Florida residents over 65 and plenty of restaurants and bars that are frequented by senior citizens.



Retirees are sure to love the Heart of Dixie. Alabama has low income tax rates ranging from 2% to 5% and Social Security benefits are tax exempt. Alabama's current rental rates are below the national average.

Alabama's winters are mild and warm, for those who do not like the cold. There are also plenty of beaches and harbors to visit while enjoying the states warmer weather. Alabama has tons of great food and is known for its fresh Gulf Seafood, BBQ, burgers and specialty sandwiches.



The Grand Canyon State has a retiree-friendly climate and beautiful natural scenery. Just like Alabama, Arizona is very tax friendly to retirees. Social Security is not taxed, and property taxes are substantially lower than the national average. Arizona also offers the Arizona Commodity Senior Food Program that provides a food package once a month to eligible people over 60 years of age.



Iowa has always been a great state for friendly neighbors, low crime rates and very little traffic. The cost of living is 11% below the national average and Social Security is not taxed. This state's residents can experience all four seasons. Retirees can spend time watching the snow fall, smelling the spring air, basking in the summer sun and taking a walk on a crisp fall day.

For retirees who enjoy the outdoors, Iowa has many places to explore that include rolling hills and over a thousand lakes.

Retiring is a major lifestyle change and it is important to consider factors such as finances, recreational interests, hobbies, comfort, healthcare needs and proximity to family and friends. [IS](#)



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Intermittent Fasting Diet: What is it?

by Justin Curcio

Intermittent fasting is exactly what it sounds like—fasting intermittently. Experts have praised the healthy benefits of intermittent fasting, which include weight loss, increased energy levels and improved digesting. By limiting your body's caloric intake for an extended period of time you allow your body to fully digest what you have eaten and burn stored fat for energy.

How it Works

Researchers believe that intermittent fasting begins to work around the sixteen-hour mark and experts recommend that this is a good starting point. This means that you have an eight-hour window to eat and a sixteen-hour window when no calories are absorbed. Intermittent fasting for a minimal of sixteen hours a day provides the body a break from digesting and focuses it on burning fat, increasing muscle mass, reducing inflammation and increasing cardiovascular stamina. A sixteen-hour fast window is only the baseline of when people start seeing the benefits of intermittent fasting. Studies have shown that for some individuals, it is better to fast for eighteen to twenty hours a day based on age and sex, but for those who are just starting out, begin at sixteen hours and work from there.

Dr. Monique Tello, clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School, describes this process in his article "Intermittent Fasting: Surprising Update". He explains that "The food we eat is broken down by enzymes in our gut and eventually ends up as molecules in our bloodstream. Carbohydrates, particularly sugars and refined grains (white flours and rice), are quickly broken down into sugar, which our cells use for energy. If we don't use all this energy our body stores it in our fat cells, as well, fat.

Yet, sugar can only enter our cells with insulin, a hormone made in the pancreas. Insulin brings sugar into fat cells and keeps it there. Therefore, in fasting between meals, as long as we don't snack, our insulin levels will go down and our fat cells can then release their stored sugar to be used as energy. We lose weight if we let our insulin levels go down. According to Dr. Tello, "the entire idea of intermittent fasting is to allow insulin levels to go down far enough and for long enough that we burn off our fat."

In short, reducing caloric intake to a small window of time will assist in weight loss and increase physical fitness and energy

levels. This is done by forcing the body to break down the fat for energy it already stored instead of breaking down the latest meal that is currently being digested for energy. Thereby, leaving the stored fat as just that—stored fat.

What to Do/ What Not to Do

Intermittent fasting is a simple idea, but it does take discipline and persistence. It is easier if you fast for the same time periods each day to get your body acclimated to its new routine. For instance, if your last meal for the day is 6 p.m., you would not eat any calories until 10 a.m. the next day. Try to keep whatever time frame for your fasting consistent throughout the week.

Drink plenty of water. Keep your body hydrated! This is not just a rule for intermittent fasting but a rule of life. Drinking a half-gallon of water throughout the day improves cardiovascular circulation, helps balance your blood sugar levels and hydrates your muscles.

Don't stop your exercise routine. While you may see weight loss results relatively quickly, do not slow down your normal workout regime. Exercise goes hand-and-hand with proper nutrition, so stick with whatever exercise routine you have been doing and enjoy the improved results!

While intermittent fasting, you may have the urge to eat more in your eight-hour window than you normally would have eaten throughout the entire day. If your average calorie consumption increases while you intermittently fast compared to when you do not, you will not get the results you want.

Coffee and Tea. Good news! You can still have your caffeine fix without breaking your intermittent fast. The caveat: You CANNOT add milk, sugar or any other sweeteners. Intermittent fasting is restricting the calories you absorb to a certain window of time. Black coffee and tea will help maintain your prior energy levels during intermittent fasting, just remember to steer clear of artificially flavored teas that may contain calories.

Gum. You may be tempted to chew gum during your intermittent fast, but be aware that most gum, even sugar free gum contains calories. So you'll want to avoid this when fasting.

As with any new diet, consult a doctor if intermittent fasting may be right for you. Especially if you are diabetic, take daily medications or have any specific dietary restrictions. [IS](#)



I See You: Foods that Protect Your Vision

by Melissa Jabour

Your diet has a significant impact on your overall health, including your vision. According to the Age-Related Eye Diseases Study, funded by the National Eye Institute, as well as professional organizations such as the American Academy of Ophthalmology, foods rich in vitamins A, C and E, zinc and omega-3 fatty acids are good for eye health. These nutrients are linked to lower risk for age-related macular degeneration, cataracts and dry eye. Research supports the following nutrient-rich foods for eye health:

1 Nuts and Seeds

Nuts and seeds are rich in omega-3 fatty acids and contain vitamin E, which can protect the eye from age-related damage. Nuts that are good for eye health include almonds, walnuts, Brazil nuts and cashews. Seeds that are good for eye health include chia seeds and flax seeds, as well as sunflower seeds. In fact, just one ounce of sunflower seeds has half the amount of vitamin C that is recommended for adults each day.

2 Dark, Leafy Greens

Leafy green vegetables are rich in vitamins C and E, as well as lutein and zeaxanthin, which are good for eye health. Leafy greens, like spinach, kale and collard greens, reduce your risk of long-term eye diseases, such as age-related macular degeneration and cataracts.

3 Raw Bell Peppers

Bell peppers give you the most vitamin C per calorie, which is good for blood vessels in the eyes. Cooking will break down vitamin C, so raw veggies are best. Brightly-colored peppers also contain vitamins A and E.

4 Fish

Many fish are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Your retinas need two types of omega-3 fatty acids to function properly. Both of these types of omega-3 fatty acids are found in salmon, tuna, trout, sardines, anchovies and herring. Omega-3 fatty acids

also protect against age-related macular degeneration and glaucoma, as well as dry eye.

5 Orange-colored Fruits and Vegetables

Beta-carotene is a form of vitamin A, which helps with night vision. Orange-colored fruits and vegetables, including carrots, cantaloupe, mangos, apricots and sweet potatoes are rich in beta-carotene. One sweet potato also has more than half the amount of vitamin C adults need per day.

6 Beef and Poultry

Beef, pork and chicken are all good sources of zinc. The eye itself contains high levels of zinc, particularly in the retina. Zinc has been shown to delay age-related vision loss and macular degeneration.

7 Beans and Legumes

For those that prefer a vegetarian, high-fiber source of zinc, choose chickpeas, black-eyed peas, kidney beans and lentils.

8 Eggs

Eggs, particularly their yolks, are a valuable source of lutein and zeaxanthin, which can reduce the risk of age-related vision loss. Those compounds block harmful blue light and protect against damage to your retina. Eggs are also a good source of zinc, which helps your body use the lutein and zeaxanthin from the yolk.

9 Citrus Fruits

Citrus fruits, including lemons, oranges and grapefruits, are full of vitamin C, which helps to defend against macular degeneration and cataracts.

10 Broccoli

Broccoli is rich in lutein and zeaxanthin, which act as protective pigments in the back of the eye. Broccoli is also a valuable source of vitamins C and E. [ls](#)



Sugar Belly: Should You Cut Down on Sugar?

by Rachel Gore

Sugar is a component of a well-balanced diet, but too much can have a negative impact on your health by leading to conditions like unstable blood sugar, obesity, and increased risk of heart disease. If you're anything like the average American consumer—I know I am—you're probably eating more sugar than you think. Here's an overview of the problem, a handful of negative impacts too much sugar can have on your health and steps you may want to consider to cut down.

How much sugar do Americans consume?

Americans are notorious sugar lovers, with the American Heart Association (AHA) finding that adults in the U.S. consume an average of 77 grams of sugar per day. American children consume even more sugar, with an average of 81 grams per day. This means Americans of all ages are eating an average of 60-65 pounds of added sugar every year.

That sounds like a lot on its own, but just how much higher is it than the recommended amount? The AHA recommends men consume no more than 9 teaspoons (36 grams) of added sugar per day, and that women limit themselves to just 6 teaspoons (25 grams) per day. In other words, the average American adult is packing down over three times the recommended amount of added sugar for adult women.

Naturally occurring vs. refined sugars

Sugar isn't all bad—you need it to survive. Your body breaks carbohydrates down into sugar during digestion, which is turned into glucose that is either converted into energy or stored for future use. Too much sugar, however, can negatively affect your health in a number of ways.

Additionally, you are best off fueling your body with naturally-occurring sugar, which is found in fruits, dairy products and some vegetables. Natural sugar is digested slower than refined sugar, keeping you comfortably full for longer. Naturally occurring sugar also tends to be present in foods that come with other valuable nutrients, vitamins and minerals, which isn't usually the case for refined sugar.

Your body converts refined (or processed) sugar into the same glucose that it does natural sugar, but is instead found in higher-calorie, less nutritionally beneficial options like sodas and juice, packaged foods and pastries. Food packaging with ingredients like high fructose corn syrup, brown sugar, fructose, processed artificial sweeteners, white flour and instant starches contain processed sugar.

Negative effects of too much sugar

Excess sugar consumption can lead to a number of adverse health impacts, including the following:

- 1 **Unstable blood sugar.** Refined sugar found in processed foods spikes your blood sugar level, which is then followed by a sugar crash that causes an abrupt loss of energy. The

resulting fatigue can impact your productivity and mood for the rest of your day.

- 2 **Obesity.** Consuming excessive amounts of refined sugar in beverages like soda, juices and sweetened teas don't fill you up and are packed with calories. Too much sugar can also affect your body's production of leptin, which is a hormone that regulates your hunger. This can lead to even more over-eating, and if your caloric intake is too high, cause you to put on excess weight.
- 3 **Heart disease and premature death.** Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, and a sugar intake that is too high is linked to cardiovascular health issues. One 2014 study published in JAMA Internal Medicine found that among study participants observed over a 15-year period, a high intake of added sugar increased the risk of dying from cardiovascular disease.
- 4 **Brain health.** Research has also linked diets high in added sugars to impaired self-control and cognitive skills. Sugar produces feel-good chemicals in the brain that make you crave more sugar, resulting in over-eating. This overeating can rapidly raise glucose levels and cause the previously mentioned sugar crash. On top of drastically decreasing your energy level, this crash can cause other uncomfortable symptoms like anxiety, difficulty concentrating, headaches and irritability.

The verdict? You may want to consider reducing your sugar intake

If you're anything like the typical American consumer, then cutting down on refined sugar is probably a good idea. Here are some small changes you can introduce into your diet to do so:

- 1 Say goodbye to soda. **Consider swapping it out for flavored seltzer or sparkling water** infused with fruit to fill your craving for a carbonated, sweet and refreshing beverage.
- 2 **Reduce your intake of white and brown table sugar, honey, molasses, and syrups in your meals.**
- 3 **Cut the sugar called for in recipes.** In many recipes, you probably won't even taste the difference.
- 4 **Add fruit to your plate instead of packaged or baked goods.** While this doesn't necessarily reduce your sugar intake, naturally occurring sugars are still a better option for good health.
- 5 **Learn what words mean "sugar" on food labels.** Nutritional labels won't always say "sugar", but that doesn't mean it isn't there. According to the University of California San Francisco, 74% of packaged foods contain added sugar—which has at least 61 different names. Sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, maltose, lactose and rice syrup are some of the most common names you'll see. [IS](#)



Chickpeas Are Good for More Than Just Hummus

by Rakin Hamad

Hummus, a popular Middle Eastern dip, has turned into a mainstay in grocery stores and homes across the nation. From jalapeno hummus to dessert hummus, hummus products have transformed from one flavor to an almost endless variety of flavors. The magic behind all these hummus products is the chickpea.

In addition to hummus, the chickpea is also the base product in falafel. Falafel, a popular fried vegetarian option, consists of ground chickpeas that are mashed into little balls or patties. Falafel is usually served in pita bread as a sandwich or as a standalone option.

Falafel and hummus are two extremely popular products that originate from the chickpea. However, many people are not aware of the health benefits of the chickpea. The chickpea is part of the legume family and is cultivated in the Mediterranean Basin, Asia and Australia. First, chickpeas are rich with fiber and plant-based protein. Chickpeas contain almost all of the essential amino acids and are rich in unsaturated fatty acids such as linoleic and oleic acids.

In a one ounce serving of chickpeas, there are 46 calories, 8 grams of carbohydrates, 3 grams of protein, 2 grams of fiber, 12% of the recommended daily intake of folate, 4% of the recommended daily intake of iron, 5% of the recommended daily intake of phosphorus, 5% of the recommended daily intake of copper and 14% of the recommended daily intake of manganese.

In addition to this notable nutrient profile, chickpeas can also

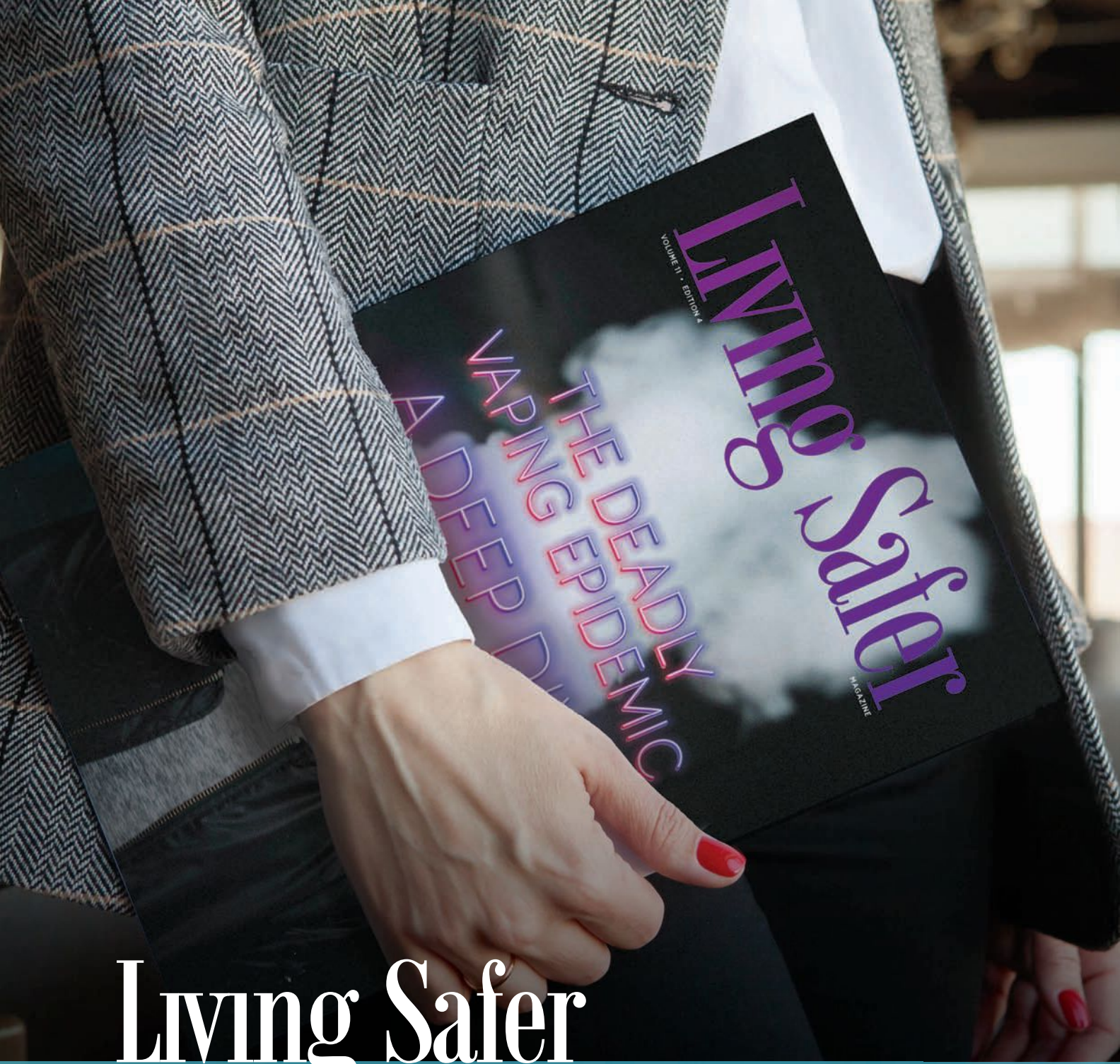
help consumers manage their blood sugar levels. According to the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, chickpeas have a low glycemic index and promote a steady rise in blood sugar levels rather than a sudden spike.

While hummus and falafel are two effective ways to incorporate chickpeas into your diet, there are also a variety of other ways to prepare chickpeas. The simplest way is to drizzle olive oil on a batch of chickpeas and to bake them in an oven until they turn a golden-brown color. Roasted chickpeas are a quick, simple way of creating a healthy crunchy snack. Another alternative is to insert the chickpeas in a salad as a substitute for croutons. Chickpeas can also be used in combination with quinoa to make a variety of other healthy snacks.

By using a food processor, chickpeas can also be made into chickpea flour. Chickpea flour can then be used to create pancakes, omelets, brownies and an assortment of other products. Chickpea flour can be purchased at grocery stores, but if you are attempting to make the chickpea flour yourself it is important to note that you will need dry chickpeas.

The chickpea is an underutilized food in American culture. This nutrient-rich, high protein and high fiber legume can be incorporated in your diet as a standalone snack, as an addition in your salads or as a substitute for flour. While hummus is a great snack, the chickpea is good for much more than just this delicious dip. [LS](#)





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Has *Zantac* Harmed Public Health?

The Alleged Connection Between Ranitidine and Cancer

by Eric Chaffin and
Roopal Luhana



The FDA,” she said, “once the gold standard, has failed to act on ranitidine. As I have seen for far too long, the FDA often errs on the side of the industry at the expense of public health.

After Decades of Use, How Much Has Zantac Harmed Public Health?

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDKD) estimates that 60 to 70 million people are affected by digestive diseases in the U.S. These include serious conditions like gallstones, ulcers and diverticular disease, as well as more common ailments like chronic constipation, heartburn and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

Many considered it a blessing of modern medicine when the antacid medication Zantac was approved as a prescription drug in 1983. Part of a class of medications known as histamine H2-receptor antagonists (H2 blockers), Zantac was designed to decrease the amount of acid produced in the stomach and was used to treat gastric ulcers, heartburn, acid indigestion, sour stomach and other gastrointestinal conditions.

Blockbuster Sales

Zantac was wildly successful, reaching \$1 billion in annual sales by the end of 1986. It became available over the counter a decade later, with generic versions (ranitidine) appearing the following year. The public considered Zantac safe enough for pregnant women and children. Despite competition from generics, Zantac remained one of the top antacid tablet brands in the U.S. Thousands made the medication part of their daily lives, using it to manage their digestive conditions on an ongoing basis.

The Recalls

Then on September 13, 2019, the FDA released a statement that shocked the nation. The agency warned healthcare providers and patients that some ranitidine medications, including Zantac, contained a carcinogenic chemical called N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA) at “low levels.” NDMA is a known environmental contaminant, but its discovery in this common antacid medication came as a surprise to the public.

The warning raised concerns among hundreds of thousands of people. Did this mean Zantac and generic ranitidine could increase the risk of cancer? Was the presence of NDMA an “impurity” as the FDA termed it, found only in some lots because of a manufacturing issue, or was there another, more potentially dangerous explanation?

And perhaps the most unsettling question: Was this just a recent fluke, or had the NDMA been present in Zantac from the start?

What is NDMA?

NDMA is a chemical that was used years ago to make rocket fuel but was discontinued after traces were found contaminating the environment around the rocket fuel manufacturing plants. Today, it is commercially produced only for use in laboratories as a substance meant to induce cancer in animal studies.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have classified NDMA as probably carcinogenic to humans, based on evidence gleaned from animal experiments. The World Health Organization (WHO) states that the studies that have been done so far can’t be used to “derive a quantitative risk of cancer,” though they do support the assumption that NDMA is positively associated with at least gastric or colorectal cancer.

“The presence of the potentially cancer-causing NDMA was unexpected,” the FDA stated, “and the agency believes the NDMA is related to changes in the way the active substance was manufactured.”

Though NDMA is no longer produced in the U.S. outside of the research lab, it can still be formed as a byproduct of industrial processes in tanneries, pesticide manufacturing plants, rubber and tire manufacturing plants, fish-processing facilities, foundries and dye manufacturing plants. It is also an unintended byproduct from chlorinating wastewater and drinking water at plants that use chloramines for disinfection.

It’s not a comforting thought that we might be eating and drinking a potential carcinogen. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), humans can be exposed to NDMA through the environment, tobacco smoke and chewing tobacco, toiletry and cosmetic products, household items like detergents and pesticides, certain foods, including cured meats, beer, fish, cheese and other items. Similarly, the EPA explains that NDMA exposure may occur in the human diet by ingesting food, that contains nitrosamines, including smoked and cured meats and fish, food that contains alkylamines, contaminated water and malt beverages, like beer and whiskey.

Considering what we already know about diet and NDMA, one might think that consumers should have been warned that the ranitidine molecule itself—the active ingredient in Zantac—contains an alkylamine, or potential NDMA-forming agent. It’s called “dimethylamine (DMA),” and it’s naturally present in the molecule, along with a nitrite. Combine the two and what do you get? NDMA.



Online Pharmacy Finds NDMA in Zantac Samples

Online pharmacy Valisure was the first to detect NDMA during routine testing of Zantac samples. The company notified the FDA of its findings in June 2019, but the FDA did not release the information to the public at that time.

On September 9, 2019, Valisure submitted a Citizen's Petition to the FDA, urging the agency to recall all forms of ranitidine and Zantac from the market. Valisure CEO, David Light, explained in the petition the reasoning behind the request: "Valisure has detected NDMA in excess of 3,000,000 ng [nanograms] per tablet with analyzing ranitidine products, likely due to an inherent instability of the ranitidine molecule."

Light went on to show that ranitidine itself could produce NDMA: "The ranitidine molecule contains both a nitrite and a dimethylamine ('DMA') group which are well known to combine to form NDMA."

Valisure's tests suggested that ranitidine could "react with itself" under standard conditions resembling those that occur during digestion to produce NDMA at levels higher than the acceptable daily intake. The FDA's current acceptable daily limit is 96 ng/day—much lower than the 3 million ng Valisure detected during testing.

The FDA later questioned Valisure's test results, stating the company used heat, which can generate unnaturally high levels of NDMA from ranitidine products. The FDA conducted its own tests on the products, using liquid chromatography-high resolution mass spectrometry (LC-HRMS). Though the results showed much lower levels of NDMA than those seen in Valisure's tests, levels were still higher than the FDA's acceptable limit.

The FDA advised manufacturers to test their products using the LC-HRMS method, and many product recalls followed.

Generic manufacturer Sandoz was the first to pull 14 lots of prescription ranitidine from the market, followed by generic manufacturer Apotex Corp., which withdrew products labeled by Walmart, Walgreens and Rite-Aid.

In October 2019, Zantac manufacturer, Sanofi, initiated a voluntary recall of all Zantac over-the-counter products in the U.S. The company stated on its website, "Sanofi has made the decision to conduct the voluntary recall as the investigation continues."

Meanwhile, the FDA continued to label NDMA as an "impurity," while Valisure argued that its testing combined with other scientific research indicated the drug produced NDMA "in the conditions representative of those in the human body and builds a compelling case for ranitidine being a likely human carcinogen."

Where Is the NDMA in Zantac (Ranitidine) Coming From?

The FDA has yet to state what's causing the NDMA to show up in Zantac and generic ranitidine. In its communications, the word "impurity" is used repeatedly, perhaps because of a similar series of cases in 2018, when the FDA detected NDMA in blood pressure medications. However, studies seem to support that the ranitidine molecule itself may be to blame.

Back in July 2018, the FDA released a statement alerting health care professionals and patients of a voluntary recall of certain medications containing the active ingredient valsartan, used to treat high blood pressure and heart failure. NDMA had been detected in some but not all of the products. The FDA labeled the carcinogen an "impurity" because its presence seemed to be related to changes in the way the active pharmaceutical substance (API) was manufactured.

Among those recalling valsartan medications included Major Pharmaceuticals, Solco Healthcare and Teva Pharmaceuticals





Industries, Ltd. The FDA later explained that a Chinese company, Zhejiang Huahai Pharmaceuticals (ZHP), had manufactured the valsartan in these products.

“The presence of the potentially cancer-causing NDMA was unexpected,” the FDA stated, “and the agency believes the NDMA is related to changes in the way the active substance was manufactured.” The impurity may have been in the valsartan products for as long as four years, with FDA scientists estimating that if 8,000 people took the highest valsartan dose (320 mg) of the recalled batches daily for the full four years, there might be one additional case of cancer among those people.

To calm consumer worries, the FDA subsequently published a list of products not affected by the recall and continued to update the public on those companies that did recall products. The agency advised manufacturers to evaluate their manufacturing processes and any changes to those processes to detect any unsafe impurities.

On August 30, 2018, FDA Commissioner, Scott Gottlieb, M.D., issued a statement concerning the agency’s ongoing investigation. He noted that four manufacturers using valsartan from ZHP had been identified and contacted about testing for NDMA. At that time, the FDA continued to believe that the impurity was the result of changes made to ZHP’s manufacturing process.

Soon, other nitrosamine impurities were discovered in other lots of another blood pressure medication—losartan—which again, had been manufactured by ZHP. On September 28, 2018, the FDA placed ZHP on “import alert,” and in December 2018, sent a warning letter to company management, outlining several manufacturing violations at the Chuannan facility.

In January 2019, Commissioner Gottlieb issued another statement reiterating the fact that only some of these medications contained the NDMA impurity, and that overall exposure “appears to be small.” Investigations had determined that the impurities “may be generated when specific chemicals and reaction conditions are present in the manufacturing

process of the drug’s API, and may also result from the reuse of materials, such as solvents.”

The FDA continues its investigation to this day and has sent additional warning letters to other companies supplying these drugs for violating current good manufacturing practices. The agency also continues to update the public with a list of recalled and safe medications.

Thus, it was with this background that the FDA approached the discovery of NDMA in Zantac and generic ranitidine. So far, however, no manufacturing process or supplier of the drug has been identified as being linked to the source of the problem. Instead, studies seem to support what Valisure has said all along—that the ranitidine molecule itself may be to blame.

Evidence Shows that Ranitidine Breakdown Produces NDMA

Valisure CEO, David Light, argued that ranitidine was unstable, and could break down to form NDMA during human ingestion. He referred to supportive evidence from a 2016 study conducted at Stanford University.

Previous studies demonstrated that amines could form N-nitrosamines when exposed to nitrite in the stomach. Similar N-nitrosamine formation from ranitidine, however, had not been demonstrated under these conditions, so the scientists at Stanford decided to test it.

First, they performed laboratory studies that confirmed the production of NDMA when ranitidine broke down under conditions similar to those present in the human digestive system. Then they went a step further and tested their theory in actual humans.

For the experiment, they recruited five female and five male volunteers. They collected urine samples from those volunteers both before and after consumption of 150 mg ranitidine. Results showed that following ranitidine intake, the urinary NDMA

excreted increased 400-fold from 110 to 47,600 ng, while total N-nitrosamines increased 5-fold.

The actual exposure to NDMA, the scientists added, was likely much higher, since most NDMA is metabolized in the body, with only a small percentage excreted in the urine.

In its petition to the FDA, Valisure also referred to a 2003 study in which researchers examined NDMA as a drinking water contaminant, resulting from reactions occurring during chlorination or from direct industrial contamination. In that study, the scientists noted other potential sources of NDMA contamination, including fungicides, herbicides and ranitidine, with Zantac mentioned specifically by name.

Even as far back as 1983, published studies provided evidence of the carcinogenic nature of ranitidine. In one animal study published that year in *Carcinogenesis*, scientists theorized about the possible formation of nitrosamines during ranitidine digestion, noting that doses of 175 mg ranitidine

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and higher resulted in DNA fragmentation in the liver or digestive system—fragmentation that could lead to cancer.

Despite these and other scientific publications, neither the public nor the FDA ever received warnings from Zantac manufacturers about the potential dangers associated with ranitidine.

Public Understandably Concerned About Zantac Risks

A series of recall announcements coupled with reports from the FDA and the media have brought attention to the potential

risks associated with Zantac and ranitidine medications and they’re understandably upset about it.

Many individuals who took Zantac for years and were then diagnosed with cancer have filed lawsuits against the manufacturers. Others have filed class-action cases seeking compensation for individuals who took the medication and must now undergo additional medical monitoring just to be safe.

Manufacturers are feeling the heat, and though many have withdrawn their products from the market, some ranitidine remains available in the U.S. The FDA does not have the authority to force all manufacturers to recall the drug. Considering the potential dangers, some lawmakers now want to change that.

Lawmakers Seek Action on Ranitidine

At a recent press conference at the U.S. Capitol, Valisure CEO David Light spoke in favor of a bill proposed by U.S. Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT). Called the “Recall Unsafe Drugs Act,” it would give the FDA mandatory recall authority over drugs. Representative DeLauro introduced the bill back in 2017, but after the news about Zantac, reintroduced it on January 10, 2020, while calling on the FDA to ban sales of ranitidine.

“The FDA,” she said, “once the gold standard, has failed to act on ranitidine. As I have seen for far too long, the FDA often errs on the side of the industry at the expense of public health.”

The month before, DeLauro sent a letter to Dr. Stephen Han, the current FDA commissioner, expressing her concern about ranitidine. “Valisure’s data,” she wrote, “in combination with four decades of scientific research, strongly suggests that ranitidine is a fundamentally unstable molecule and all products containing this drug have a risk of cancer.”

Valisure has remained at the forefront of the issue, and together with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Stanford University, recently worked on a new study that was scheduled to be published in the scientific journal *JAMA* on January 10, 2020. That study, however, which concerned the potential connection between ranitidine and NDMA, has been withheld for further review—a highly unusual move, according to Light.

DeLauro echoed Light’s concern, stating she “would be disappointed” if it should be later discovered that *JAMA* management was being “inappropriately pressured” to withhold the study. A statement from *JAMA* on the action read, “Further review of the paper is needed.”

Zantac Lawsuits Increasing with New Centralized Litigation

Meanwhile, litigation against Zantac manufacturers is growing, and on November 4, 2019, plaintiffs filed a motion with the U.S. Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation (JPML) to consolidate all federally filed Zantac lawsuits into one court for more efficient pre-trial proceedings. The defendants agreed that consolidation would be prudent, though the parties disagreed on the best location for the potential MDL.

The JPML heard arguments regarding consolidation on January 30, 2020, in Tampa, Florida, and on February 6, 2020, ordered that all Zantac federally filed lawsuits be centralized in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, under the direction of District Judge Robin L. Rosenberg. The Order included the transfer of 15 pending cases, with the parties identifying an additional 126 related actions pending in 21 districts.

Meanwhile, the FDA continues to provide updates about ranitidine recalls. On January 8, 2020, the agency notified the public that Appco Pharma LLC and Northwind Pharmaceuticals were recalling prescription ranitidine medications. To date, there has not been a nationwide recall of all ranitidine drugs in the U.S. Other countries have taken that step, including Canada, France, Italy, Germany, Pakistan, Switzerland and Egypt.

According to a report in USA Today, the FDA conducted tests on how ranitidine reacts with fluids in the stomach and intestines but did not find evidence that Zantac formed carcinogens. Janet Woodcock, director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, told the House Committee on Energy and Commerce back in October that the agency's chemists believe the carcinogen is formed when the ranitidine molecule reacts with something during the manufacturing process, in the finished dosage form or during storage.

This remains a possibility. Testing by an Alameda, California-based independent laboratory called Emery Pharma showed that a combination of heat and time can raise levels of NDMA in ranitidine, according to a report in Bloomberg. Emery CEO, Ron Najafi, noted in a phone interview that the more Zantac is exposed to heat, the more NDMA it can generate, raising concerns that the drug could develop NDMA while in transport, in a hot car or delivery truck or even while sitting in a cupboard at someone's house.

In response to the findings, Emery also filed a Citizen's Petition with the FDA, asking the agency to suspend sales of all products containing ranitidine and to recall those already on the market to require stability testing. The Lab suggested the medicine be shipped in temperature-controlled vehicles, and that the product label alert users to the possibility of the drug producing potential cancer-causing byproducts if exposed to heat.

Individuals who took Zantac products for years and then developed cancer, along with those concerned about their future health, may seek compensation in court, where discovery processes are likely to reveal exactly what the manufacturers knew and when they knew it.

It does bear considering that Zantac has been on the market since 1983. If, as Valisure and others believe, NDMA has been present in the drug since that time, what compensation is enough for all the thousands of lives that may have been affected? As the litigation progresses, consumers will hopefully get an answer to this question and also how it is possible for a gold standard drug like Zantac to be on the market for so many years and taken by millions of people without the companies addressing this issue and disclosing that its ingredients could convert to such high levels of the carcinogen NDMA. [IS](#)

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An overhead view of a family of three in a living room. A woman in a red shirt sits on a grey sofa using a laptop. A man in a blue shirt sits on the same sofa, also using a laptop. A young girl in a blue shirt sits on the floor next to the sofa, using a tablet. The room has light wood flooring and a beige rug.

Talking to Your Kids About Internet Safety

by Abby Salazar

There is no denying that the Internet has evolved since its early years in the 1980s, expanding throughout our professional and personal lives as an integral part of modern society. The Internet's pervasiveness reaches far beyond the public sphere and into our homes. As such, most children in the United States today have free and easy access to the Internet. Amid this Digital Era, children are constantly exposed to potential dangers online, from malware and cyberbullying, to privacy and self-esteem. Therefore, it is crucial to establish open and honest communication with your kids about online safety.

Set A Good Example

Children are a parent's pride and joy, and it is tempting to share all their milestones, accomplishments and adorable moments on social media for long-distance loved ones to see. Reflect on what information you may unintentionally be sharing to your own profile that online predators could seek out. For example, posting "First Day" pictures in front of your children's school may seem innocent, but all it takes is a quick Google search (or even a click if you "check in" to a location on social media) of the school's name for a complete stranger to know exactly where your children are during school hours.

Furthermore, make sure your children understand what kind of information is okay to share online and what kind isn't. Explain to them why they should not share private information, such as their home address, with strangers.

Establish Healthy Boundaries

With public libraries, friends' cellphones, and devices provided by schools throughout the country, children will have access to the Internet whether parents provide it themselves or not. Parental controls are a good way to manage what children have access to at home. Most smartphones offer the ability to limit the use of certain apps and overall screen time. It may also be helpful to talk to your kids about why these limitations are in place so they can make responsible decisions when they have opportunities to access the Internet outside of the home. Use age-appropriate analogies about the physical, mental and social repercussions of overindulging in internet browsing.

Web Threats

Learn about malicious software programs such as malware, viruses and worms that can be installed on devices without the user's

knowledge. Keep anti-virus software up-to-date, and make sure that children understand what safe and trustworthy websites look like. Ensure that they ask permission before downloading anything on their devices.

Social Media

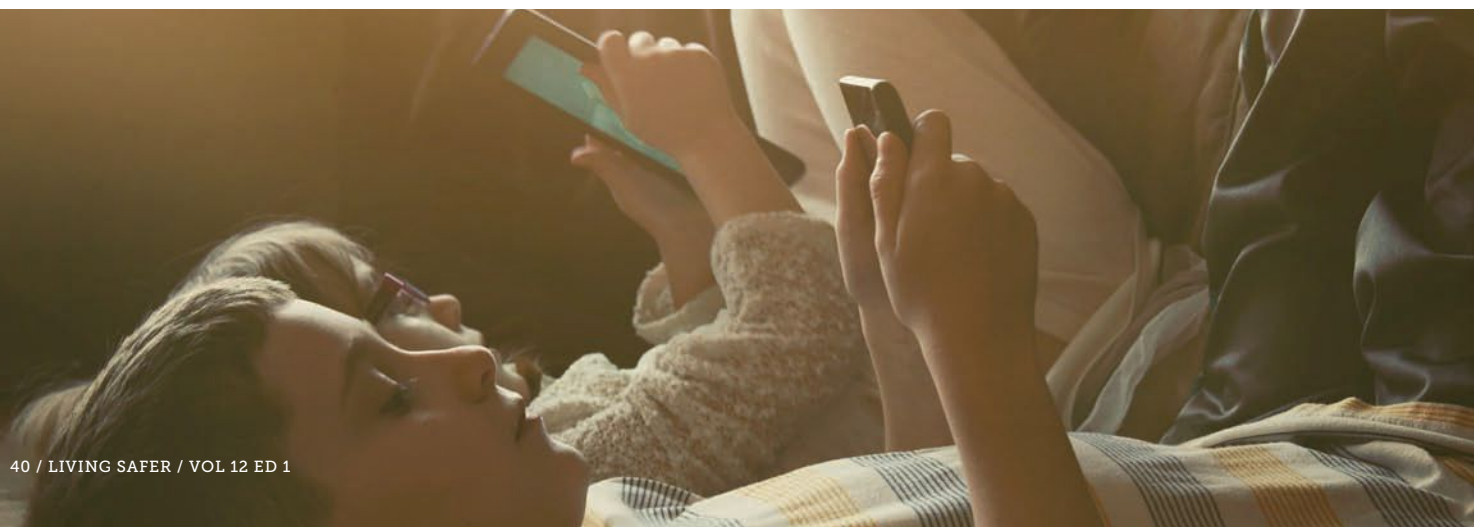
Social media has revolutionized the way people communicate throughout the world. It is important to build trust with your children so they feel comfortable talking about what is going on in their online social networks. Listen to them as they share silly videos and memes from Instagram or TikTok and show interest in the different trends that captivate them. Talk about cyberbullying and the different ways it can be handled. Learn about how to keep profiles and information private. Communicate to them that things posted online can always be found later. Employers and future connections can view things that users have posted in the past, and no matter how long ago it has been posted, it can still reflect poorly on one's character.

The reality is communicating with other people online is exciting, but it can also be dangerous. Make sure that children understand that people behind a screen can be very different from who they are in real life. Educate them on catfishing, the act of establishing a fake identity online, usually to target vulnerable users for abuse, deception or fraud.

Talk to them about how harmful it can be to compare themselves to celebrities, public figures and even their peers, because people often only post the best parts of their lives. Their online profile isn't giving them the full picture. Show them examples of how different angles and lighting can make anyone look different from their real-life persona. Encourage self-love and self-confidence in their everyday lives outside the Internet so they do not rely on "likes" and comments for validation.

The Bottom Line

The Internet and social media offer vast resources that allow children to learn more about the world around them. Unfortunately, there will always be risks when engaging with this vast online network. Be patient and open with your children so they feel comfortable and safe talking to you. Netsmart, an online safety education program, offers age-appropriate videos and resources that will help you and your children understand the digital space together. You are the biggest advocate for your child's safety, and it is never too early to start talking about the steps they can take on their own to deal with the dangers online. [IS](#)





Preparing for A New Driver in the House

by Matthew Devoti

Your child is nearing a landmark birthday. In a handful of months, she'll be eligible to obtain her permit to drive. She's already talking about taking the family car to school, her weekend job and to meet friends across town.

You're anxious. And, you have every right to be concerned. Car collisions are the leading cause of death for teens age 15 to 20 years and teens crash at three times the rate of more experienced drivers. Yes, a car provides a tremendous amount of freedom while opening doors to opportunities but, a vehicle also introduces our children to dangers and threats they've not previously faced.

How can you prepare for this moment? What must you consider

before handing the key fob or family car key to your child? And, what can you do to minimize risk, while empowering your children and protecting your family?

Steps may be taken to prepare your young adult to drive. These steps include:

Consider the vehicle you plan to entrust to your teen.

Jamie Dunphy, a St. Louis insurance agent, says: "Safety first! Bigger isn't better though newer may be, depending upon the car's safety features." Dunphy suggests checking safety data for any car you plan on purchasing for your teen and looking for cars equipped with such add-ons as side airbags and backup cameras.

Enroll your teen in a formal drivers' education program.

A qualified program will be one that involves parents, guides your teen through the learning process by not putting them on the road before they're ready, while including "behind-the-wheel" training. Many public school districts offer a drivers' education course to their students. Private schools may offer the program at a price. Reach out to your insurance agent or state highway patrol for other options available in your area. Natalie Bess, another St. Louis-area agent, says: "Always opt into the teen driver program any insurer offers" as successful completion of the program often results in a discount on your premium.

Practice with your teen.

Sit beside your teen while they drive, both before and after they earn their full license to check on their progress and developing driving habits. Many states have mandatory, minimum hours of supervised driving which a new driver must accumulate before qualifying for a full license. According to Dunphy, parents should make sure that they supervise their teens in a number of different conditions before letting their teen drive solo; these circumstances include:

- » Traffic
- » Rain and wet pavement conditions
- » Snow and ice conditions
- » Night-time and after dark
- » Highway, parkway and interstate driving
- » Construction

Set a good example by driving the way you want your teen to drive.

Teen drivers mimic your behaviors—both good and bad. Show your teen how one should drive a vehicle by following traffic laws, avoiding aggressive driving, and not driving distracted, including driving while eating, grooming, texting, placing or taking calls or otherwise using your cellular phone. Teens who see a parent driving distracted are two to four times more likely to also drive distracted. "Do as I say, not as I do" is not an option.

Sign a Parent-Teen Agreement.

These agreements set expectations for your teen and you. Typically, the teen driver makes promises consistent with good driving habits, such as pledging to not operate a phone in any way while driving, always wearing a seat belt and obeying all traffic laws, including speed limits and traffic control signs and devices.

Set a rule limiting the number of passengers in your teen's car.

The fatality risk for teen drivers is 3.6 times higher when teens drive with passengers. Teens must be aware of the risk posed by passengers acting in a way that distracts them while driving. Many parents immediately set rules requiring their teen obtain parental permission before driving with others in their car.

Make your teen earn their driving privilege.

Driving a car is a privilege, not a right. Forcing your teen to earn the privilege helps them understand both the responsibility and value of driving.

And, of course, communicate with your insurer about your new driver.

Bess instructs: "It is always a great idea to report to your agent when your new driver gets their permit. This will allow the agency to be able to help guide you to prepare for the new driver." Guidance provided by your insurer includes identification of available discounts, the costs to insurer specific vehicles your family may add to accommodate your new driver and the inevitable rate changes associated with adding a new driver to any policy. Bess adds: "Call your agent to get a quote before you buy a car. This way you know fully what the cost of the new driver and new are going to be."

Dunphy's final word: "Teen drivers are inexperienced and may have trouble making decisions. The more education and practice, the better." [LS](#)



ONE Second IS NOT A VERY LONG TIME.

But when you're behind a steering wheel and your eyes leave the road—that ONE single second can change a life.

ONE second is all it takes to be distracted.

When you are driving, it should not be a secondary task—it should be the only task.

EndDD.org (End Distracted Driving) was established to raise awareness and generate action against the epidemic of distracted driving.

DISTRACTIONS INCLUDE:

Visual	Taking eyes off the road
Manual	Taking hands off the road
Cognitive	Taking mind off the road

While texting and talking on the phone are both mental and physical distractions, cellphone use is attributed to 18% of fatalities in distraction-related crashes.

What makes up the other 82%?

- » Putting on makeup
 - » Reaching to grab a drink
 - » Changing the music
 - » Dealing with the GPS
 - » Eating on the go
- The distractions are endless.
But they don't have to be.

The Core Mission of EndDD

Our core mission is to preserve life and promote safety on a large scale through advocacy, education and action. It is our hope that we can prevent families and friends from suffering the loss of a loved one because of distracted driving.

Together, let's work to prevent distracted driving from claiming another life.

VISIT US ONLINE

web: endDD.org

twitter: [@end_DD](https://twitter.com/end_DD)

facebook: [EndDistractedDriving](https://www.facebook.com/EndDistractedDriving)





Cleaning Tips and Tricks That Save You Time

by Elizabeth Rossbach

Everyone enjoys a clean-living space, but we don't always have the time to give our homes the deep cleaning they deserve. Cleaning can be a time-consuming hassle, especially if, as most people do, you've let little things build up here and there until it feels like it will take weeks to get the house back to being clean. Though cleaning is a process that will inevitably take time, here are some tips and tricks that can help speed up the process.

- 1 **Schedule a set time to clean.** Carve out a time during the week devoted solely to cleaning. It will take you less time if you just buckle down and clean all at once rather than doing a little here and there. This way your house gets a thorough uninterrupted cleaning all in one day and the rest of your week is free.
- 2 **Prepare before you vacuum.** Inevitably, you will have to move furniture in order to vacuum a room completely. Do this before you start vacuuming. This will save you time spent pausing, turning off the vacuum and continuously moving furniture around. Another suggestion for preparing a room for vacuuming is to dust before you vacuum. This prevents the vacuum from stirring up dust or simply pushing excess dust around the room.
- 3 **Do your best to clean things as you go,** such as clutter and dirty dishes and wipe down counters and stove top as you cook rather than leaving it for later. In doing this you'll keep your home tidy so when it's time to clean surfaces they will already be clear rather than having to declutter them and then wipe them down. Keeping clutter in check and cleaning the kitchen as you cook will help prevent cleaning from becoming overwhelming and drastically cut down the time it takes to fully clean a space.
- 4 **Shut out distractions.** You've carved this time in your busy schedule for cleaning, so make it about

cleaning. Put your phone on silent, turn it off or leave it in another room while you're cleaning. Continuously stopping to answer texts or phone calls significantly adds to the time it takes to finish cleaning your home.

- 5 **Plug your vacuum as close to the center of your house as possible.** This seems like an obvious one, but it is important and can save you quite a bit of time. Plug your vacuum into a spot that is optimal for your house and allows you to reach as many spaces as possible before having to return to plug in elsewhere.
- 6 **Space out your cleaning.** If you are overwhelmed by the amount of cleaning and time it takes to thoroughly clean your entire home just focus on cleaning one room each week. This will help make cleaning less of a painstaking task and allow you to really devote your attention to each room in your home, and before you know it your entire home will be clean.
- 7 **Avoid recleaning by cleaning top to bottom.** Because dust settles downward it is more efficient to clean a room from top to bottom. If you clean the floors first, they will likely be covered in dust all over again by the time you've cleaned the rest of the room, and then you'll have to clean the floors a second time.
- 8 **Wipe down or rinse your shower after each use.** Wiping your shower down after each use will help prevent the buildup of grime that you'll have to scrub off later.
- 9 **Carry a bucket with cleaning supplies.** Put all your cleaning supplies in one easy to carry item. This can be a bucket or an apron or something else that can hold all the things that you'll need for that cleaning session. Gathering these supplies beforehand and being able to easily move them from room to room will greatly cut down on your cleaning time. [IS](#)

Gardening for Heart Health

by Kevin Coluccio

The connection between physical activity and a lowered risk of cardiovascular disease is well-established. Research shows that as little as 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity on most days supports heart health. Among effective—and enjoyable—forms of exercise is gardening.

Pulling weeds, planting flowers and mowing the lawn provide a light-to moderate cardiovascular workout. Coordinated upper and lower body movement improves mobility, flexibility and endurance. Bending and squatting strengthen major muscles groups such as glutes, hamstrings and quads. Each of these actions increases metabolic rates and temporarily raises a person's heart rate in healthful ways. Gardening regularly and over time slows one's resting heart rate.

A 2019 study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine tracked nearly 90,000 adults in the U.S., aged 40 to 85 years for 11 years. Participants engaged in "leisure time physical activity"—brisk walking, dancing or gardening—for 10-59 minutes per week. The study showed that participants had an 18% lower risk of death from any cause. Moreover, the risk of death from cardiovascular disease, including a heart attack or stroke, dropped by 12%. Adults who performed 2.5 to 5 hours per week of moderate physical activity had a 31% lower overall risk of death.

The psychological and nutritional benefits of gardening are equally beneficial to staving off a heart attack or stroke. Spending time in nature—digging in the dirt or harvesting vegetables from the vine—boosts one's mood and lowers anxiety. As gardening reduces stress, it helps to release endorphins and lower blood pressure. Moreover, eating fresh fruits and vegetables has shown to decrease the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and some cancers.

In emphasizing its many benefits, gardening expert Joe Lamp'l asserts that people of all ages and skill-levels can be successful. "Knowing where to start is half the battle," says Lamp'l.

Here are fundamentals for getting started:

- » Start with a basic understanding of the immediate environment, exposure and conditions. In order to choose what to plant, it is important to know factors that will inform about light, temperature, space requirements, water usage needs, soil quality, etc. Whether one decides to grow flowers or vegetables, "putting the right plant in the right place" is key.
- » Generate a broad plan and refine slowly. For example, an edible garden can contain vegetables, flowers, berries, herbs, seeds—essentially plants that can be consumed. The garden does not need to be particularly large; it could start in a window box or clay pots. So long as the plan seems manageable and enjoyable, it is a good place to start.
- » Use high quality soil. The most successful gardens are ones with the healthiest soil. According to Lamp'l, feed the soil, and let the soil feed the plant. Use organic fertilizers, compost and mulch to build healthy soil, and in turn nutritional food.
- » Grow plants that are pleasing to eat, see or smell. The added incentive to care for vegetables, fruit and flowers that one enjoys is helpful to maintaining a successful garden. Low-maintenance and fast-growing plants can be especially gratifying to the beginner!
- » Spend at least a small amount of time every day to observe how the plants are doing. Lamp'l asserts that *proactive gardening* includes doing the important things to ensure the health of the garden *before* problems arise. Providing the best possible growing environment can circumvent more serious problems down the road.

This same message resonates from a heart health perspective: one reaps the benefits every day from sowing a garden. Growing and harvesting plants leads to a bounty of healthy rewards. [LS](#)





8 Indoor Plants for Lower Light Conditions

by Rachel Gore

Is anyone else still waiting for their green thumb to sprout? I know I am. For those that can relate, but are still determined to successfully grow a plant indoors, consider trying out one of the following plants, all of which can thrive in lower light conditions:

1 Golden Pothos (Devil's Ivy)

The Golden Pothos, or Devil's Ivy, got its nickname because it is almost impossible to kill. This vine can grow up to 40 feet long in the wild, while indoor plants typically grow up to 8 feet in length unless they are pruned. The vines produce heart-shaped, waxy, bright yellow and green leaves that can reach up to 4 inches in length. Indoors, it is best off in areas with filtered sunlight or bright artificial light.

2 Lucky Bamboo

Too much direct sunlight can cause lucky bamboo leaves to burn, making it better off in low to medium indirect light conditions. Lucky bamboo can be grown in water or in soil within a container with good drainage. As your bamboo grows, more water will be needed to cover its roots and keep it alive.

3 Japanese Sago Palm

If you've ever wanted a palm tree of your own, a Japanese sago palm is a great plant to invest in. Though they can grow in full sun exposure, they prefer partially shaded areas of indirect sunlight. As with the Lucky Bamboo and many others on this list, too much sunlight can burn the foliage. A pot with well-drained soil is a must for sago palms.

4 ZZ Plant

ZZ Plants are known for being resilient, easy to grow, indoor plants. ZZ plants are versatile. They do best in moderate to bright indirect light but are just fine in extremely low levels of light. A ZZ Plant is a good option for windowless offices or bathrooms where it will receive small amounts of artificial light. ZZ Plants should be watered weekly to bi-weekly, as they can develop problems if their potting soil is over-saturated.

5 Snake Plant

Snake plants can grow in light levels from low to high. Higher light levels will allow a snake plant to grow quicker, but strong direct sunlight can burn the leaves. The most important factor to get right when growing a snake plant is water, as overwatering can kill them quickly. Due to their susceptibility to overwatering, snake plants should only be watered once their soil is nearly dried out.

6 Spider Plant

Spider plants thrive in moderate to bright indirect light but will do just fine in lower light conditions as well. They will also do well in strong artificial light, which makes them a good option for those trying to liven up their cubicle or office.

7 Chinese Evergreen

This tropical forest plant does best in filtered light to partial shade, and can be grown indoors or in shady, frost-free areas outside. It is known for being durable, as it can tolerate dry air, drought and poor light conditions better than most other plants.

8 Heart-leaf Philodendron (Sweetheart Plant)

This popular house plant is known for its glossy, heart-shaped leaves that have earned it the nickname the Sweetheart Plant. It is considered easy to grow and maintain—in fact, it's considered one of the easiest plants there is, making it ideal for beginner planters. Sweetheart plants can tolerate a range of light, including shady areas in your home that other plants could not.

Hopefully this list has convinced you that there's no need to be afraid to grow a plant just because your home or office doesn't have that much direct sunlight. Even if it takes a couple tries to keep a plant alive and well, sooner or later, that green thumb will sprout.

Note: Some of these plants may be toxic to cats and/or dogs. Make sure you research an option that's safe for your furry companion or find a spot they can't access if you plan on growing a plant at home. [↗](#)



Implementing Remote Work: How to Make the Transition to Working From Home

by Elizabeth Rossbach

In light of the current situation with the Coronavirus outbreak, keeping yourself, your employees and others safe has required that many of us work from home. Many offices with little to no experience with remote work have been forced to change the way their business functions. The task can be challenging and overwhelming, to say the least. Here are some suggestions for making the change to remote work while keeping your company running smoothly.

- » Have a checklist of things your employees need to be able to work from home, such as computers, monitors, high-speed internet or any other technology that your employees use daily. Perhaps allow employees to take any technology, equipment and office supplies home that will enable them to work remotely more effectively. Keep a record of any equipment taken home so it can be verified when it is returned.
- » Make sure all employees have any software that will streamline their remote work experience. Consider implementing software that allows employees to easily share documents and projects. There are many cost-effective options like Office 365, Google Suite and Dropbox that will help with this endeavor.
- » Make sure your employees have the right tools to be able to effectively communicate remotely. Employees should have a phone with reliable service that they can be reached during regular business hours. Furthermore, try implementing apps and software like RingCentral, Slack and Microsoft Teams to allow employees to easily contact each other via phone or online chat.



Zoom and Go-To-Meeting are also useful for video meetings and web conferences.

- » Ensure that any video conferences look and sound good. Therefore you'll want to make sure you have the technology, equipment and space to accomplish this, such as lighting equipment and quality cameras like Aver or Owl Labs. Also, your camera should be steady and positioned at an effective angle.
- » Brief your employees on proper work from home clientele privacy and security practices. No privileged information should be stored on personal computers or other devices accessible to non-employees. Advise your employees to password-protect their computers and lock them whenever they are away. Any phone calls related to clients should be made privately, and not around any non-employees to protect client confidentiality. Remind your employees that their home is not considered a secure environment and it is important that they follow these practices.
- » Come up with a working remotely policy that details what is expected from employees and outlines what sort of software and equipment they should have at their disposal.

With the right equipment and thorough communication practices, it is possible to achieve a productive work environment from home. Hopefully these suggestions have given you a solid foundation for going remote with your workplace. [IS](#)

Things to Do While Being Shut in

- » Complete a puzzle. Whether it's a tabletop puzzle, a Rubik's Cube or a Crossword, puzzles are a good way to pass the time and stimulate your brain
- » Take the time to learn something new. Learn a software program you've always wanted to know how to use, or if you're looking for a break from screens, practice playing an old instrument that's lying around the house.
- » Write. Start a journal or blog. Maybe try your hand at writing creatively.
- » Watch a movie or TV show you've been wanting to watch
- » Read that book you never got around to.
- » Try some yoga and/or meditation to get some exercise and soothe mental stress.
- » Play a board game with your family or roommates.
- » Declutter and/or clean up your home, maybe even tackle that dreaded junk drawer.
- » Try baking. Look up some recipes and give them a shot.

Dos and Don'ts of Recycling

by Elizabeth Rossbach

DO



Empty all containers completely. All food and beverage containers must be totally empty before they can be recycled.



Remove plastic wrap or magnets from magazines and phonebooks. If you are planning on recycling magazines, phonebooks or junk mail make sure to remove any magnets or plastic wrapping.



Breakdown cardboard boxes. All cardboard boxes should be flattened and broken down into pieces smaller than 2 feet by 2 feet. This helps to maximize space in recycling bins and collection trucks. If you do not flatten your boxes or they are bigger than 2 feet by 2 feet, they will not be collected for recycling.



When it comes to glass only recycle bottles and jars. Window glass, vases, stemware and drinking glasses are made of different materials that will contaminate the recyclable glass.



Check the number printed on your plastics. Certain plastics are collected curbside and some are not. Recycle numbers 1 and 2 are the most widely accepted plastics for curbside recycling. Other numbers may need to be recycled differently.



Check your local requirements and options. Every area is different, so check out the recycling options near you. There may be places to recycle other types of plastics, glass or other materials.

DON'T



Put plastic shopping bags in recycling bins.



Place plastic containers with numbers 3, 6 or 7 on them. These plastics are typically not accepted for recycling.



Put used pizza boxes in the recycling bin. Though cardboard is recyclable, used pizza boxes have too much leftover grease, cheese and whatever other toppings were on the pizza to be recycled. All this leftover food on the cardboard contaminates it for recycling.



Leave any food in containers you are trying to recycle. Make sure you rinse your food containers thoroughly before recycling.



Recycle a lot of loose shredded paper. Most resident recycling carts only allow a minimal amount of shredded paper and all shredded paper must be placed inside a labeled paper bag that is either folded or stapled closed. Overall, it is best to recycle full sheets of paper rather than shredded.



Flatten cartons or bottles. People used to be strongly encouraged to flatten their bottles and cartons to save space in recycling bins. However, today's high tech sorting devices identify the type of container by its shape, so it's important that these containers retain their recognizable form.



Zantac and Potential Cancer Claims

In October 2019 drug manufacturer, Sanofi conducted a voluntary recall of the drug Zantac (ranitidine) due to possible contamination with a cancer-causing (carcinogenic) compound, called N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA). The drug which is used for heartburn and stomach ulcers, was recalled in the USA after the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued public statements in September that they found “unacceptable” levels of the carcinogen in the medicine.

NDMA is classified as a Class 2A carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the cancer research arm of the World Health Organization (WHO), meaning it’s a probable human carcinogen. exposure to NDMA is thought to cause cancer in a variety of organs, including gastric or colorectal cancer. It is extremely toxic to the liver. Even small amounts can be linked to liver damage.

Zantac is a histamine-2 blocker, which decreases the amount of acid created by the stomach. Ranitidine is available both over-the-counter (OTC) and as a prescription drug. Over-the-counter ranitidine is approved to prevent and relieve heartburn associated with acid indigestion and sour stomach. Prescription ranitidine is approved for treatment and prevention of ulcers of the stomach and intestines and treatment of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

Several manufacturers and retailers have voluntarily recalled Zantac. The FDA has advised companies to recall their ranitidine if testing shows levels of NDMA above the acceptable daily intake (96 nanograms per day or 0.32 parts per million for ranitidine). The NDMA in Zantac can be present due to contamination as well as formed in the stomach under acidic condition when nitrites are present, leading to dangerous levels of this carcinogen.

DO I QUALIFY FOR A ZANTAC CANCER LAWSUIT OR SETTLEMENT?

To qualify for a Zantac cancer lawsuit or settlement, first you

have to prove usage of the brand name Zantac. This is because due to a U.S. Supreme Court decision, manufacturers of generic drugs cannot be sued for the harm caused by their drugs. To qualify for this litigation, you must have taken brand name Zantac prescribed and dispensed by the pharmacy, or the OTC form of Zantac. While OTC Zantac made by brand-name manufacturers like Sanofi will qualify if you can prove their usage, unfortunately generic ranitidine usage does not qualify for this litigation. If you have taken prescription, brand-name Zantac, you can just ask for a copy of your pharmacy records. If you purchased Zantac over-the-counter, you can prove use through receipts, medical record notes by your doctor or any other records (containers, pictures of container, etc.)

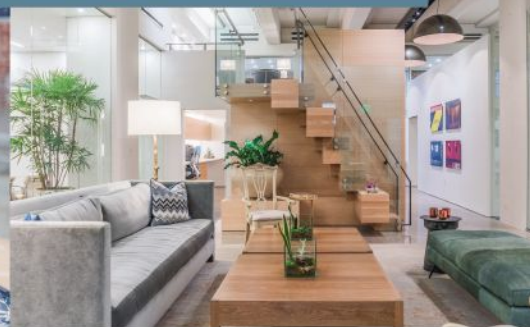
Second, to qualify for a law suit, an individual will need to show that they have been diagnosed with one or more of the primary cancers linked to the drug. Below are some of those:

- » Esophageal cancer
- » Throat, nose or stomach cancer
- » Colon or rectal cancer
- » Prostate cancer
- » Testicular cancer
- » Brain cancer
- » Bladder cancer
- » Pancreatic cancer
- » Kidney cancer
- » Liver cancer
- » Lung cancer

Third, cancer does not develop overnight and some continuous exposure to a carcinogen is normally required. Thus, you need to show that you have taken Zantac for a period of time (longer than 6 months) and that cancer was diagnosed after exposure to Zantac. ■



A DIFFERENT APPROACH. BIG CASES, WITHOUT BIG EGOS



ACCIDENTS

- Trucking
- Aviation
- Heavy Equipment & Machinery
- Rollover
- Gross Negligence

CLASS ACTIONS

- Oil & Gas Royalty
- Wage & Hour
- Consumer Protection
- Environmental
- Whistleblower

SERIOUS HARM

- Birth Injuries
- Brain & Spinal Cord Injuries
- Amputations & Burns
- Wrongful Death
- Negligent Care & Abuse

PRODUCT LIABILITY

- Roundup® – Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma
- Talcum Powder – Ovarian Cancer
- Power Tool Injuries
- Vehicle Defects
- Consumer Product Defects

PHARMACEUTICAL & MEDICAL DEVICE

- Hip Implant Failures & Revision Surgeries
- Taxotere® – Permanent Alopecia
- Abilify® – Compulsive Gambling
- Hernia Mesh Defects
- Opioid – Addiction Epidemic

INSURANCE COVERAGE & BAD FAITH

- Automobile Policy Disputes
- Storm Damage Claims
- Life Insurance Disputes
- Fire Damage Claims
- Health Insurance Fraud



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