

HEALTHY OUTCOMES

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**THYROID
AWARENESS MONTH**

Happy New Year
From the HCQU!



Happy New Year from the HCQU! Beginning left and around the table: Patty Brofee, Lesley Murphy, Laura Aungst, Amy Weidner, Demaree Koehler, Anne Crawford, Traci Dunkelberger, Carol Williams, Sandy Corrigan, Cheryl Callahan, Star Long, Kristy Campbell and Carol Sumner.

About Your Thyroid:

The thyroid is a small gland located below the skin and muscles at the front of the neck, just at the spot where a bow tie would rest. It's brownish red, with left and right halves (called lobes) that look like a butterfly's wings. It's light like a butterfly, too, and usually weighs less than an ounce.

As small as it is, though, the thyroid has an enormously important job to do. It manufactures the hormones that help control metabolism and growth. To do its job, the thyroid needs a chemical element called iodine that the body absorbs from the foods you eat and the water you drink. The entire body contains about 50 milligrams of iodine. About 1/5 to 1/3 of that supply (10 to 15 milligrams) is stored in your thyroid. The thyroid combines the iodine with tyrosine (an essential amino acid) to make important hormones.

Thyroid hormones are released from the gland and travel through the bloodstream to your body's cells. They help control the growth and the structure of bones, sexual

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Resolutions You Can Do In 10 Minutes!

by Berkeley Wellness

It's New Year's Resolution time, that stretch of days each year when many of us set our intentions for self-improvement in the weeks and months to come. But some of the most common resolutions—lose weight, exercise more, quit smoking—are big goals that can take a fair amount of time to realize. What about smaller changes you can make, even in just a few minutes a day, that can also pay big health dividends? Here are 10 quickie resolutions you can accomplish in 10 minutes or less.



1. Write down five things you're grateful for.

This simple practice, done daily or once a week, led to improved well-being, better sleep, and greater happiness in a set of experiments at the Uni-

versity of California, Davis. Other research has also confirmed the power of gratitude to boost happiness and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

2. Laugh, sing. Repeat.

Both laughter and singing have been shown to reduce stress and improve mood, among other benefits; some very preliminary research even suggests that singing can strengthen immunity. Other studies suggest that people tend to laugh more in groups, so surround yourself with others who laugh—it really is contagious.

3. Take a power nap.

Seriously: Even ultra-short naps—as little as 6 minutes—significantly improved memory in a small study of German college students. And a 10-minute nap was more effective than a 20- or 30-minute snooze for

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Did You Know... Typically, women are more prone to thyroid issues than men.

Is Sugar Ruining Our Health?

by Amanda Z. Naprawa

More than one-third of American adults are now classified as obese, meaning they have a body mass index of greater than 30—and putting them at increased risk for numerous health problems, including stroke, many types of cancer, and osteoarthritis. Obesity is also a key risk factor for type 2 diabetes, which in turn can lead to vision loss, kidney disease, and heart disease.

What is driving the increase? According to a panel of experts who gathered Sept. 13 at UC Berkeley to discuss the issue, there is growing evidence that sugar—specifically the sugar that’s added to packaged and processed foods and beverages—may be a significant culprit in our deteriorating health. This is true not just in the U.S., they suggested, but around the globe, where rates of both obesity and diabetes are mirroring the increases we’re seeing here.

Sugar and sickness

According to speaker Gary Taubes, author of *“The Case Against Sugar”* and co-founder of the Nutrition Science Initiative, where he serves as Senior Scientific Advisor, there is “powerful circumstantial evidence” that added sugar



is in fact making us sick. In fact, he stated that “sugar is the prime suspect on a worldwide level” when it comes to increased rates of diabetes and obesity. Taubes was joined in his assertion that sugar consumption is dangerous to our health by other nutrition and medical experts, including Ronald Krauss, MD, Senior Scientist and Director of Atherosclerosis Research at Children’s Hospital of Oakland Research Institute (CHORI); Janet King, PhD, Executive Director at CHORI and UC Davis Department of Nutrition faculty member; and Kristine Madsen, MD, Associate Professor at UCB School of Public Health.

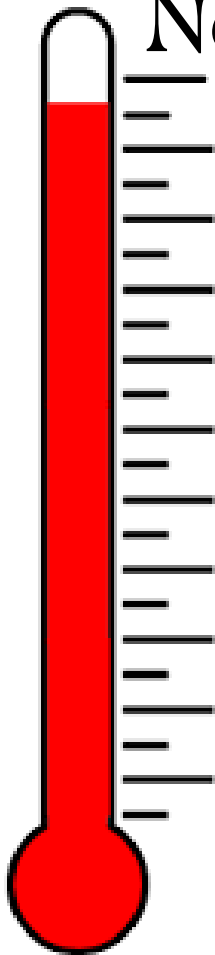
These experts have been exploring the fundamental question of which environmental and dietary triggers may be causing the obesity epidemic and related diseases. Dr. Krauss, whose interest lies in heart disease, noted that there is compelling evidence linking the consumption of added sugar to heart disease. There are physiological reasons for this connection, said Dr. Krauss. For one thing, the fructose in refined sugar and high fructose corn syrup targets the liver in a specific way that leads to fatty liver disease and metabolic syndrome—a cluster of cardiometabolic risk factors linked to heart disease. Note that this doesn’t apply to the naturally

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Did You Know... More than 27 million Americans have some sort of thyroid disease. About 13 million have no idea they suffer from a thyroid imbalance.

New Blood Pressure Guidelines: *The Numbers Game*

by Berkeley Wellness



In November, long-awaited revised guidelines about high blood pressure from the American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association (ACC/AHA) lowered the cutoffs defining hypertension and thus greatly expanded the number of Americans who officially have the condition—from 72 million under the old guidelines to 103 million now.

That's nearly half of all adults, including many under age 45, along with nearly 80 percent of those over 65. Two key changes are the elimination of the prehypertension

category, half of which is now included under hypertension, and an increased emphasis on lifestyle changes as the cornerstone of treatment.

The new categories

Normal blood pressure remains less than 120/80 (that is, 120 systolic and 80 diastolic).

Elevated blood pressure, a new category: systolic 120 to 129 with normal diastolic (that is, less than 80). This was previously categorized as prehypertension.

Stage 1 hypertension: systolic 130 to 139 or diastolic 80 to 89. This was also previously included under prehypertension.

Stage 2 hypertension: systolic 140 or higher or diastolic 90 or higher. Previously this was stage 1 and became stage 2

starting at systolic 160 or diastolic 100.

One rationale for the changes is the fact that cardiovascular risk starts to rise steeply at lower levels than the previous cutoffs suggested. Heart attack and stroke risk doubles at 130/80, for instance, compared to below 120/80, according to the AHA. Plus, recent research has demonstrated that having people with hypertension aim lower than the old cutoff of 140/90 greatly reduces heart attacks, strokes, and premature death, with little increase in adverse effects (such as fainting) from more aggressive drug treatment. The new goal is less than 130/80.

Despite the fact that the new guidelines will classify 31 million more Americans as having hypertension, the ACC/AHA estimates that only 4 million of them are likely candidates for drugs to treat the disorder. That's because people with stage 1 hypertension, like those with "elevated blood pressure," are advised to focus on lifestyle changes such as losing excess weight, exercising more, quitting smoking, limiting alcohol, and improving their diet (notably by reducing sodium, increasing potassium, and following the DASH eating plan).

People with stage 1 hypertension are candidates for medication only if lifestyle modification doesn't help enough and if they already have cardiovascular disease—or if they have a 10-year cardiovascular risk of at least 10 percent as evaluated by an online calculator. Since age is such a big factor in the calculator, nearly everyone over 65 will have a calculated risk that high.

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Did You Know... Stress is a major factor that adversely affects the thyroid.

About Your Thyroid...

(Continued from page 1)

development (puberty), and many other body functions. By helping your cells convert oxygen and sugar and other body fuels into the energy they need to work properly, these hormones are important in determining if your body will mature as it should.

Thyroid hormones also directly affect how most of your organs function. So if your thyroid isn't operating properly, you can have problems in lots of other parts of your body.

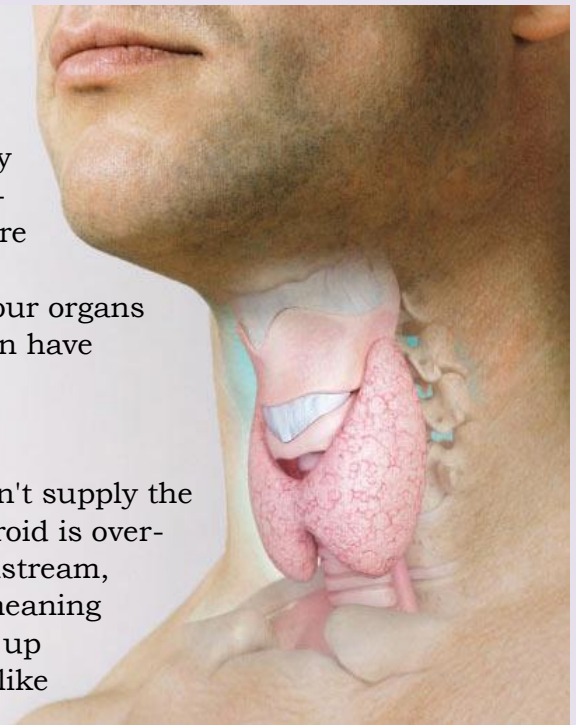
What Is Thyroid Disease?

Thyroid disease occurs when the thyroid gland doesn't supply the proper amount of hormones needed by the body. If the thyroid is overactive, it releases too much thyroid hormone into the bloodstream, resulting in hyperthyroidism. ("Hyper" is from the Greek, meaning "over" or "above.") Hyperthyroidism causes the body to use up energy more quickly than it should, and chemical activity (like metabolism) in the cells speeds up.

An underactive thyroid produces too little thyroid hormone, resulting in hypothyroidism. ("Hypo" means "under" or "below.") When the amount of hormone released into the bloodstream is below normal, the body uses up energy more slowly, and chemical activity (metabolism) in the cells slows down.

Although they are two different conditions, in both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism the thyroid can become larger than normal. An enlarged thyroid gland is a lump that can be felt under the skin at the front of the neck. When it is large enough to see easily, it's called a goiter.

People who don't get enough iodine in their diets also can get an enlarged thyroid, but this is rare in the United States because foods here usually supply enough iodine. ■



Resolutions...

(Continued from page 2)

improving alertness and vigor, boosting cognitive performance, and reducing fatigue in an Australian study of 24 sleep-deprived young adults.

4. Eat a handful of nuts.

In an analysis of data from more than 100,000 male and female health professionals, published in 2013 in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, those who regularly ate

nuts were significantly less likely to die from cancer, heart disease, respiratory disease, or other causes during the study period than those who ate no nuts. Participants who ate a serving of nuts (about 1 ounce, or 28 grams) every day had the greatest reduction in mortality—20 percent lower than non-nut eaters.

5. Meditate.

More than 30 years of research have linked regular meditation with a wide range

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Did You Know... Thyroid disease becomes more common as we age.



Wholistic Practices

COMMUNITY BODYWORK CLINICS!

As we further explore ways of helping everyone be more confident, healthful, & independent in their own life we are excited to continue to offer our popular Community Bodywork Clinics each month! Our specialty is offering helpful, calming, & educational treatments to people with disabilities; those in chronic pain, trauma, grief, or with ongoing illness; seniors; and caregivers.

During these Clinics, various body and energy work treatments will be available such as reiki, reflexology, massage, breathing exercises, meditation assistance, and more. 15 – 20 minute individual sessions as well as small group instruction are yours.... we just ask you consider making a donation to help our services be available to others. Our network of wholistic practitioners will assist you while you're giving back to others! **Call to make an appointment!**

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Resolutions...

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of health benefits, as well as reduced stress and improved well-being. The best-studied form of meditation is mindfulness meditation, in which you practice bringing awareness to the present moment. You can download free guided mindfulness meditations, ranging from 3 to 19 minutes, from the UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center. There are also short mindfulness podcasts on iTunes.

6. Wear a pedometer.

People who wore these simple step-counting devices increased their physical activity by 2,200 to 2,500 steps a day on average, and decreased both their body mass index (BMI) and blood pressure, according to a large review published several years ago in *JAMA*. The pedometers were most effective if the wearer aimed for a specific goal, usually 10,000 steps a day (about 5 miles). You can buy a good pedometer for as little as \$3, according to *Consumer Reports'* latest review.



7. Stand up.

Evidence continues to mount that prolonged sitting is one of the worst things you can do for your health, even if you exercise regularly. So be sure to break up long seated periods (at your desk, watching TV, on a plane) with short jaunts upright at least every hour. Research has shown that even a 5-minute walk is enough to help prevent or reduce sitting's adverse effects.

8. Chew a piece of gum.

Two recent studies have found that chewing (sugarless) gum may help to lower stress. Other research has linked gum chewing to enhanced alertness and mood.

9. Let your tea steep.

Studies of tea chemistry have found that steeping tea for at least 3 minutes increases the release of polyphenols, chemicals in tea that have antioxidant and other beneficial properties, and which may account for many of tea's health benefits.

10. Do a posture check.

Good posture has a bearing not just on your physical health but on your state of mind. (Have you ever seen someone project self-confidence while slouching?) Take 5 minutes to evaluate your posture when standing, sitting, or walking and make any needed corrections. Your body and your mind will thank you. ■

PPC Meeting

The next PPC Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2018 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Location to be determined.

The meeting will include a presentation by *Networks for Training & Development on Holistic Practices* by Jessica Stover and Rosa McAllister.

Did you know... Some experts say that if you're a woman over the age of 35, then your odds of developing a thyroid disorder are more than 30%.

Sugar...

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occurring fructose in fruit, which is not considered an added sugar.

Taubes asserted that sugar has a unique influence on health beyond the calories it contributes to the diet, stating that our previous understanding of a “calorie equaling a calorie” is “incomprehensibly naïve” when it comes to understanding the role of what we eat and obesity. According to Taubes, “different foods have fundamentally different effects on the body,” including the different hormones that tell our body to store and process fat. Dr. King further noted that foods high in sugar take the place of healthier foods, and that individuals with high-sugar diets tend to consume less of the recommended in-

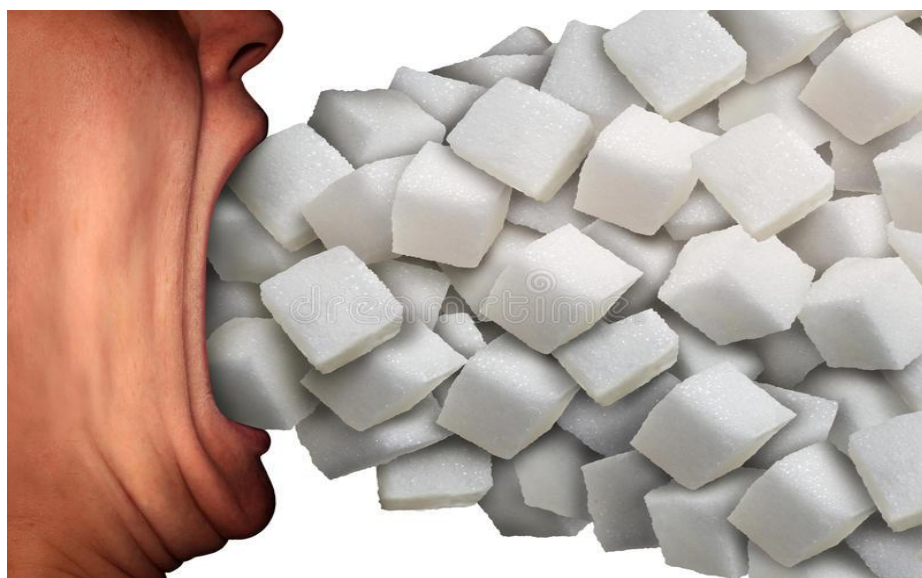
takes for vitamins, minerals, protein, and other important nutrients compared with those whose diets contain less added sugar.

Curbing our consumption of added sugars

The experts pointed to two factors needed to decrease the amount of added sugar being consumed in the U.S. and abroad: increased knowledge and public health initiatives. The panel agreed that upcoming changes to nutrition labels showing the amount of added sugar in a serving will provide some help, though it will be important for public health officials to help the public understand what those labels actually mean. (Companies have until 2020 to implement the new labels, pushed back from the original deadline of 2018.) Dr. Madsen noted that taxes

on sugar-sweetened beverages (also known as soda taxes) have been successful at reducing soda consumption in some areas where they’ve been implemented, including Berkeley. The effect appears to be particularly strong in low-income communities. A tax on soda, Dr. Madsen said, may be one way of competing against the profit-driven motives of the soft drink industry—which spends billions every year on advertising and marketing. Soda taxes, she added, are one of the few public health interventions that actually raise money instead of costing money.

The panel recognized that changing our national focus to the health effects of added sugar may be difficult. To the public, nutrition advice often seems to swing like a pendulum, and consumers may mistrust a focus on a “new” dietary villain after decades of hearing mainly about the evils of fat. The panel also pointed to a lack of understanding among the public about what constitutes “good science,” making it easy for industry to exert influence on public opinion. Public health officials and health workers can play a key role in helping communicate nutrition advice and health recommendations to the public, they concluded. ■



Did you know... In the U.S., one in 1,000 women have hyperthyroidism. It causes increases in metabolic rate, sensitivity to heat, restlessness and anxiety, goiters, and weight loss.

Blood Pressure...

(Continued from page 4)

People with stage 2 hypertension are advised to take medication (usually two drugs from different classes), along with making lifestyle changes.

Keep in mind that only half of people currently treated for hypertension under the old guidelines have been able to get it under control via lifestyle or drugs. The new goals will be even more challenging to achieve. Undoubtedly, by aiming for the new lower goals, more people will at least achieve the old goals.

It's vital for people to realize that high blood pressure poses great risks. There's no one-size-fits-all treatment, so working with your health care provider is key. The UC Berkeley Wellness Letter and BerkeleyWellness.com will continue to provide practical guidance on how to keep blood pressure in the healthy range and get it under control if it is elevated. ■



New Year's Day Black-Eyed Peas

The peas, since they swell when cooked, symbolize prosperity; the greens symbolize money; the pork, because pigs root forward when foraging, represents positive motion. Cornbread, which represents gold, also often accompanies this meal.

- 1 pound dry black-eyed peas
- 2 cups chopped cooked ham
- 1 pinch garlic powder
- 2 onions, diced
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can whole tomatoes
- Salt and pepper to taste

Place black-eyed peas in 8-quart pot. Add enough water to fill pot 3/4 full. Stir in ham and diced onions, and season with salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Place tomatoes in a blender or food processor, and blend until the tomatoes are liquefied. Add tomatoes to pot. Bring all ingredients to boil. Cover the pot, and simmer on low heat for 2-1/2 to 3 hours, or until the peas are tender.



Easy Cornbread Muffins

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 cup cornmeal | 1 cup flour |
| 1/3 cup sugar | 2 tsps. baking powder |
| 1/2 tsp. salt | 1 egg, beaten |
| 1/4 cup canola oil | 1 cup milk |

Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease muffin pan or line with paper muffin liners. In large bowl, mix cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Add egg, oil and milk; stir gently to combine. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups. Bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into a muffin comes out clean.