

## HEALTH NUGGETS FEBRUARY 2017

- 1) Take aspirin immediately after a ministroke: It can cut the risk for a fatal or disabling stroke over the next few weeks by up to 80%, reports Dr. Rothwell @ Univ of Oxford, UK.
- 2) To kill ticks on clothing, put clothes in dryer on high heat for 6 min—than wash if clothes are dirty. Why? Ticks love water. 94% survived cold-water washes and 50% survived hot-water washes. Once clothes were wet, it took 50 min to kill the ticks in dryers on high heat.
- 3) Patients with an abscess recover better with a 7 day course of sulfa like Bactrim with 93% cure rate. Over 1200 patients were studied. It limits spread of MRSA. *NEJM*
- 4) Best way to stop smoking is cold turkey—almost 50% weren't smoking after 1 month. Only 39% of those who quit gradually were smoke-free.
- 5) Taking fish-oil pills with antidepressants was more effective than placebo with antidepressants. 8 large clinical trials were reviewed and difference was highly significant. *Amer Journal of Psychiatry*.
- 6) Reduce high-fructose corn sweeteners such as sodas and sweet desserts that are associated with diabetes, ADHD, Alzheimer's, and obesity. In a study in lab rats, 200 genes in the hippocampus, which is involved in learning and memory, had adverse changes. It also increases toxic molecules in the brain. Good news—Rats that consumed omega-3 fatty acids in fish, walnuts, and flaxseed appeared to be protected from brain damage. *EBioMedicine*.
- 7) Stroke damage may be reversed with stem cells injected into damaged areas of the brain. A larger study is in the works.
- 8) Gratitude boosts mental and physical health. Thankfulness improves sleep, lowers levels of inflammation, more adaptive immune function, and lower physical conditions such as high BP and stroke. Gratitude can also promote healing—patients with heart failure who kept a gratitude journal for 8 weeks had reductions in markers of inflammation and cardiac risk.
- 9) There is strong evidence that alcohol is a direct cause of at least seven forms of cancer: mouth and throat, larynx, esophagus, liver, colon, bowel, and breast.
- 10) Millions of people have early chronic kidney disease and don't know it. All it takes to find out is a blood and urine test.
- 11) If your trying to learn new information and you want it to stick in your mind exercise 4 hours later. With research in animals has revealed that

brisk physical activity heightens levels of brain chemicals that improve memory consolidation. *Current Biology*.

- 12) Lower than recommended BP if beneficial in type 2 DM: Compared with patients with systolic BP between 130-139, patients with BP between 110-119 had significantly lower risk for MI and CV disease.
- 13) 5 second rule debunked. Bacteria can contaminate food dropped in less one second.
- 14) 90% of strokes are preventable: Avoid this group of 10 controllable risk factors. The most important is high BP. Controlling BP alone would reduce stroke risk by 48%. The others, in order of importance, are: physical inactivity, 36%; elevated lipids like cholesterol and triglycerides, 27%; poor diet, 23%; obesity, 19%.
- 15) Our DNA is linked to depression: 15 regions of human DNA are associated with depression. Finding genes associated with depression should help make clear that this is a brain disease, which should decrease the stigma still associated with these kinds of illnesses.
- 16) Climb the stairs: In *Neurobiology of Aging* MRIs were used to scan the brains of 331 healthy adults. For those who regularly climbed stairs had more gray matter than those who take the escalator or elevator. For every flight of stairs climbed each day, the participants brain age appeared 6 months younger. Taking the stairs is something most older adults can and already do @ least once/day, unlike vigorous forms of physical activity.
- 17) How to age-proof your brain: 900 older adults were given cognitive tests and MRIs to scan their brains. 5 years later these tests were repeated. 10% were regular exercisers, but the 90% that had little or no exercise had experienced cognitive declines equal to an additional 10 years of aging. In *The Lancet* reported that physical inactivity accounts for 292,600 of new cases of dementia each year worldwide.
- 18) Big sugar conspired to conceal health risks. For decades the sugar industry paid off researchers to downplay the health effects of sweets and pin the blame for increased heart disease risk on saturated fat and cholesterol, a new study reveals. Combing over documents that date back to 1967. The Sugar Research Foundation commissioned a Harvard review to discredit claims about the harmful effects of sugar. These findings were published in the NEJM. In return the Harvard Researchers were paid the modern equivalent of about \$50,000. For next 50 years, millions of Americans opted for low-fat, sugary foods now associated with obesity and heart disease. They were able to derail the discussion about sugar for decades.

19) Dave's Killer bread