



**spotlight on...**  
**Soda Addiction**

If you find yourself running to the vending machine for cola fixes throughout the workday, you may want to kick the habit—and fast. Two new studies link drinking regular soda with increased health risks in women. Women who down two or more cans per day are almost twice as likely to show early signs of kidney disease, according to one study from Loyola University Health System in Illinois. And another study, from researchers at Simmons College in Boston, found that daily intake of two or more sodas or other sugary drinks (such as those sweetened with fruit juice) upped women's risk of coronary heart disease by 35 percent. The likely culprit? The large amounts of sugar-based sweeteners contained in these beverages. If you're thirsty, drink more water. For added flavor without a ton of sugar, toss a lemon, lime or orange slice into a glass of water or seltzer—or dilute one part fruit juice with three parts water. Because Dr Pepper is one doc who will not improve your health.

**an ounce of prevention**

**The Breast Defense**

There's no better time than October, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, to check your breast health. While it's crucial to do self-exams regularly, it's also key to have a doctor monitor any changes in your breast tissue. Confused about which screens are right for you? Here's the 411 from Banu Arun, MD, an associate professor in the department of breast medical oncology at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

RISK FACTORS	SCREEN(S) TO CONSIDER	WHEN TO GET IT
None.	Clinical breast exam (CBE) and mammogram	Get a CBE every year if you're under age 40 and a yearly mammogram starting at age 40.
Your mother, daughter, sister or aunt had breast cancer before age 50.	Genetic counseling and testing (blood test that reveals if there is a mutation in the breast cancer genes BRCA1 or BRCA2), mammogram or MRI	After appropriate counseling, you may get genetic testing at any time. If it reveals mutation in a breast cancer gene, start yearly mammography or other screening (such as MRI). And even if you don't get genetic testing, start mammography ten years earlier than the age of your relative when she was diagnosed.
Mammogram or CBE reveals a suspicious lump or other change.	Ultrasound (a test that uses high-energy sound waves to form an image) along with mammogram and/or MRI	After your mammogram and CBE results.
Mammogram, MRI and/or ultrasound reveal suspicious changes that need further evaluation.	Thermography (medical infrared imaging) or a high-field-strength (3T) MRI (both approaches are considered experimental)	Thermography may be used in addition to other screens to detect suspicious areas. The 3T MRI—which is being researched now and available only in a few clinics—may find lesions that other screenings can't detect. Only a biopsy can confirm if tissue areas are cancerous.



FROM TOP: CLAIRE ARTMAN/PHOTOALTO/CORBIS; FOTOLIA

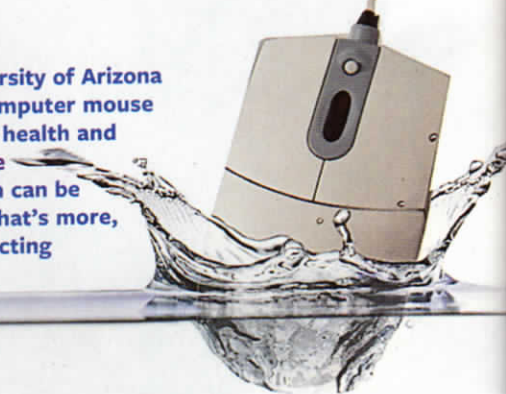


**body booster**  
**Get Fit with Fido**

A dog may be man's best friend, but this furry family member can be Mom's best workout buddy. "Dogs are great exercise partners and stress relievers," says Dawn A. Marcus, MD, author of *Fit as Fido: Follow Your Dog to Better Health*. Research suggests that owning a canine can improve cardiovascular health and help reduce blood pressure, stress level and loneliness. Dr. Marcus offers these pooch-proven tips: **Make your pup your walking partner.** Just three ten-minute walks a day can go a long way toward improving your overall health—and it will boost your dog's health, too. **Show him the love.** Petting a pooch can decrease your physiological response to stress. All it takes is a little downtime cuddling with your pup to help calm your nervous system. **Sleep like a dog.** Canines are champion nappers, while many people come up short in the snooze department. Since sleep deprivation is linked to a host of health problems such as obesity, high blood pressure and colds, take a cue from your canine pal and grab a midday siesta when you can.

**work and health**  
**Keep Your Computer Clean**

You're meticulous about hand washing in the office, but according to a University of Arizona researcher, you might not realize that the typical desktop, keyboard and computer mouse harbor far more bacteria than the average toilet seat. Gross! To guard your health and your hardware, try **SpillSeal Washable Corded Antibacterial Keyboard** and the corded **ScrollSeal Washable Optical Mouse** (\$46 and \$50, [unotron.com](http://unotron.com)). Both can be rinsed with soap and water or cleaned with a hospital-grade disinfectant. What's more, the antibacterial protection inside the plastic can help keep germs from infecting you—which could mean fewer sick days.



**bad, better, best**

**Breakfast on the Go** Yeah, yeah, breakfast is the most important meal of the day. But who has time to make it, never mind sit down and eat it? That's why carbohydrate-based, on-the-go breakfasts are so handy—and they can be healthy if you make the right choices. Here's help for picking the most nutritious portable morning meal from Lyssie Lakatos, RD, and Tammy Lakatos Shames, RD, authors of *The Secret to Skinny*.

**Bad**

**Bran muffin**

400 to 600 calories, 15 to 27 grams total fat, 0 to 1 gram fiber



Nutritionally, this is more like dessert than breakfast. It's mostly fiber-free, refined flour with just a sprinkle of bran.

**Better**

**Plain bagel with 1 tablespoon cream cheese**

350 to 430 calories, 6 to 7 grams total fat, 1 to 2 grams fiber



You'd do even better to choose a mini whole-wheat bagel, make the cream cheese light and add a piece of fruit.

**Best**

**Cereal bar**

150 to 200 calories, 1 to 5 grams total fat, 3 or more grams fiber



Look for a bar with these criteria on the nutrition label (also make sure it has no trans fats) for a good start to your day.

COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP: VEER, FOTOLIA (3)