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TIDBITS® EATS DONUTS

by Janet Spencer

It was once said that in order to make a donut, you take a hole and then put some dough around it. Come along with Tidbits as we eat donuts!

WHODONUT?

- Donuts, or items similar to donuts, have been part of the human diet for centuries. It's claimed that a sailor from Maine named Hanson Gregory invented the hole in the donut in 1847 when he stuck his cake onto the spoke of the ship's wheel during a storm. There's even a plaque in his honor. However, it has long been known that removing the middle of a fried cake would make the center crispier and less soggy.
- A petrified donut was found under layers of ash in the ruins of Pompeii. Another ossified donut was found in a cave in Oklahoma, made by an unknown prehistoric tribe. A painting created in 1627 shows a donut among other items of food and household objects.
- However, the American donut experience began with a Dutch immigrant in New York City. Anna Joralemon opened her donut shop in the year 1673, long before the United States was even a country. She is credited with bringing donuts to America, though claims that she "invented" donuts are false.

(cont)

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DONUT FACTS (cont)

- During WWI and WWII, ladies working as volunteers for the Salvation Army set up "soup kitchen" type outlets near the front lines to serve soldiers on duty. Instead of serving soup, however, they served hot sweet donuts, giving war-weary Americans a morale boost. When the war ended, men returning home clamored for donuts, contributing to their burgeoning popularity. Today, the Salvation Army continues to give out the Golden Doughnut Award to honor citizens who exemplify the good works of the Salvation Army.
- In 1920, the first successful donut-making machine was invented after a dozen unsuccessful models. The creator, a Russian immigrant named Adolph Levitt, dubbed the all-in-one contraption "the Wonderful Almost Human Automatic Donut Machine." Ingredients went in one end, and donuts came out the other. Crowds assembled in front of Levitt's New York bakery storefront to watch the spectacle, and he sold 128 of his machines in the first year. This was just the beginning of Levitt's donut empire. He sold thousands of the machines to corner cafes, roadside eateries, and local bakeries worldwide.
- It was Levitt who first made a concerted effort to change the spelling from "doughnut" to "donut." Many of his customers were not proficient in English and had trouble pronouncing "dough." Dunkin' Donuts adopted the simpler spelling for their nationwide chain of franchises. Today, both spellings are considered correct.



- Many people have written in the tip to use two similarly sized bowls, one larger than the other, to serve cold salads at picnics. You add a few cups of crushed ice to the larger bowl, then nestle the smaller bowl into it, making it "chilled." In any case, remember: Don't leave food out longer than two hours.
- If you are doing food platters for your barbecue, consider making several smaller platters instead of one large dish. The large ones are harder to store when you prep beforehand, but a better reason is that the items will not go stale/too warm/too cold quite as fast, and it's easy to switch out plates throughout the party.
- "Using plastic cups for a crowd? Remember to put out a permanent marker, colorful rubber bands or some other way to mark one's glass. It's sometimes hard to keep track when they all look the same." -- C.L. in Pennsylvania
- "Purchase a small cooler to use for large quantities of sides. I have a cooler advertised as fitting a six-pack of drinks. It's perfect for holding macaroni salad at our summer beach gatherings with family. I do not use it for anything else, and it retains its cold temperature despite the heat (when everyone remembers to keep the lid closed, of course)." -- R.R. in South Carolina

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps

AH, NICE JOB SHOVELING ALL THAT SNOW, YOUNG LAD. THAT BUILDS CHARACTER. AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE WITHOUT A SNOWBLOWER SAY.



DONUT FACTS (cont)

- Dunking donuts in coffee or milk came about as a result of an accident. Hollywood starlet Mae Murray dropped a donut into her coffee by mistake while dining out at an upscale New York eatery. Not wanting her to feel embarrassed, her companion dropped his into his cup as well.
- Clark Gable made dunking fashionable in a scene in Frank Capra's 1934 movie "It Happened One Night" in which he teaches actress Claudette Colbert how to properly dunk her donut in a cup of coffee.
- At one time, the Dunkin' Donuts chain offered a donut shaped like a Q, with a "handle" meant to facilitate dunking. It was discontinued because it had to be hand-cut and people tended to dunk the handle first.

WEIRD DONUTS

- Dolicious Donuts, a bakery in Canada, was once known for some of the world's most expensive donuts. The "Donutopia" was glazed with chocolate-balsamic vinegar icing, sprinkled with real gold flakes and sugar crystals shaped like diamonds, and filled with wine-infused cream. Even the water used to craft it, called Bling H2O, cost \$39 per bottle. The donuts sold for \$100 each and proceeds were "donutted" to a local soup kitchen. Unfortunately, the bakery is now defunct.
- Voodoo Doughnut in Portland, Oregon, used to sell donuts reputed to be glazed in NyQuil and others stuffed with Tums and Pepto-Bismol, until local health officials stepped in. They also made the "Tex-Ass," which weighed a half-pound, equal to six regular donuts. It was free if you could eat the whole thing within 80 seconds. When a man choked to death on it, the donut was discontinued.



Here's a puzzle where speed counts. Try this with your friends.

649 x 47 = P
649 x 46 = ?

- 1) P - 47
- 2) P - 649
- 3) P - 602
- 4) 47P - 648
- 5) 649 + (P - 47)

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BIGGEST OIL SPILLS in History

1. The Persian Gulf Oil Spill: 380-520 million gallons, 1991
2. BP's Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: 206 million gallons, 2010
3. The Ixtoc I Oil Spill: 140 million gallons, 1979
4. The Atlantic Empress Oil Spill: 90 million gallons, 1979
5. The Komi Pipeline Oil Spill: 84 million gallons, 1994
6. The ABT Summer Oil Spill: 80 million gallons, 1991
7. The Castillo de Bellver Oil Spill: 79 million gallons, 1983
8. The Amoco Cadiz Oil Spill: 69 million gallons, 1978
9. The MT Haven Tanker Oil Spill: 45 million gallons, 1991
10. The Odyssey Oil Spill: 40.7 million gallons, 1988

Source: Business Insider

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TIDBITS

NUGGET OF KNOWLEDGE

One wedding was featured in "People" magazine for having a 4-foot pyramid of 120 Krispy Kreme donuts instead of a three-tiered wedding cake.

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DONUT FACTS (cont)

- In a typical donut shop, it takes 55 minutes to create a donut from start to finish. It must fry for 85 seconds in hot grease.
- When it comes to dunking, a donut made of finely ground flour will hold more liquid than a donut made of course flour and will be less likely to break. Tip it in at an angle so the top remains dry, with just a quick dunk.
- Donuts are between 15 and 25% fat. Cake donuts are 15% sugar, while raised yeast donuts are only 3% sugar. The calorie count ranges from 200 for plain donuts (equal to toast with jam) to 500 for frosted or filled.
- The most popular donut in America is the cream-filled donut, followed by plain glazed donuts.

FUN DONUTS

- A donut-related puff pastry similar to a donut hole is very popular in France. It is so light and fluffy that it's named "pet de nonne" which translates as "fart of the nun."
- The Spudnut is a potato-based donut made with potato starch or mashed potatoes instead of flour.
- A Polish donut called the Paczki contains a regional vodka.
- The Donut Hole in La Puente, California features two gigantic fiberglass donuts set on end, with a drive-through donut factory connecting the two. Customers drive through the big donuts to pick up their favorite donuts. It's been an area landmark since 1968.
- Some astronomers have theorized that the Universe, instead of being infinite, is actually shaped like a donut.



By Lucie Winborne

- Shonda Rhimes got the idea for the TV series "Grey's Anatomy" after a doctor told her how hard it was to shave her legs in the tiny hospital shower.
- The first Hershey's chocolate bars with almonds were produced in 1908 because they were cheap to make. The nuts took the place of some of the more expensive milk chocolate, which meant Hershey's could keep the price of the candy at a nickel.
- A website called Myfridgefood.com lets you enter whatever ingredients you have in your fridge and tells you what you can make with them.
- One of the reasons your lungs feel refreshed when walking through a pine forest is because of an anti-inflammatory compound called a-Pinene, found in conifers. It is used as a bronchodilator in the treatment of asthma and is abundantly present in marijuana.
- An estimated 10% of Europeans are immune to HIV infection because they have an ancestor who survived bubonic plague, or "Black Death."
- The Hardy Tree in London's St. Pancras churchyard is named for Thomas Hardy. The Victorian author worked at the burial ground in the 1860s and rearranged tombstones around the base of an ash tree to make room for a railway expansion.
- If you're a man and pee on a pregnancy test and it's positive, you could have cancer.
- Because of the amount of granite in its construction, Grand Central Station produces more radiation than is allowable at a nuclear power plant.

Thought for the Day:

"A good example has twice the value of good advice." -- Albert Schweitzer

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Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Tail is moved. 2. Window is different. 3. Fingers are not showing. 4. Ear is larger. 5. Blinds are added. 6. Laces are added to shoe.

Laugh a bit with TIDBITS

Why do golfers love donuts? There's always a hole-in-one!

WORD LADDERS

Can you go from BLAME to STARE in 6 words?
Change one letter for each rung in the ladder.

BLAME

STARE

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SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Fury
GEAR

Mystery
GEMANI

Grimace
COWLS

Chaos
AMBLE

TODAY'S WORD

"Your clerk will be with you again as soon as we can coax him of the window _____"

KOVELS' ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

By Terry and Kim Kovel
 PHOTO CREDIT: Kovels.com
 PHOTO CAPTION: Repainting old furniture is nothing new. This cabinet was made around 1830, but the elaborate decorations were added later.



Altered Furniture

It's a current trend to buy inexpensive old furniture and alter it into something new. Some people may see this as disrespectful to history, but it's a practice that has been going on for hundreds of years. Historically, everyday items like furniture and clothing were made to last, handed down for generations and altered to suit changing fashions.

Furniture of the Victorian era (about 1830-1900) came in many styles, all of which were elaborately decorated. Sometimes, earlier furniture in simpler styles like Queen Anne or Chippendale was re-carved or had veneers or inlay added to fit newer, fancier fashions. More recently, the reverse has become more common: paint is stripped off or carvings are planed away to suit more modern, simpler tastes.

This secretaire cabinet, which sold at a Bonhams auction in London, is an excellent example of the earlier trend of making furniture more elaborate. It was made around 1830, during the reign of William IV, but the auction catalog's description included a salesroom notice saying, "the japanned decoration ... is evidently of a

later date." Japanning is a type of painted finish that imitates the lacquer used by artisans in China and Japan. It was often used with gilt and colorful decorations, as shown here. The added decorations may have contributed to the cabinet's appeal; it sold for 7,650 pounds, or about \$9,274.

Q: I have a clock left to me and we have to downsize, so I'd like to sell it. Can you help me?

A: A working clock always sells, whether it's to a homeowner looking to furnish a room or to a collector willing to pay for a rare piece. Find out as much as you can about your clock: its style, maker, material, approximate age, condition, etc. Look closely at the dial, including the edge, and at the backplate of the movement. A maker's name or mark, patent date or serial number are helpful details. There are many books about identifying antique clocks; look for them at your library. Once you have identifying information, check price guides like Kovel's or look at antique stores and shows or online auction results to see what similar clocks sell for. Clocks sell at most antique and estate auctions. If there is a clock repair service in your area, they may be able to help you. You may also want to contact the National Association of Watch & Clock Collectors (www.nawcc.org) for more information.

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Rug, Lilihan, red field, flower sprays, leaves, navy blue border, palmettes, wool, cotton, 60 x 42 inches, \$250.

Paper, magazine, Time, Martin Luther King Jr., signed, March 19, 1965, \$1,560.

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Screen star Lamarr
- 5 Abrupt turn
- 8 Wild party
- 12 Half a sextet
- 13 Equi-
- 14 Tennis great Arthur
- 15 Crystal-tapping sound
- 16 Solicit
- 18 Funnel-shaped bloom
- 20 Herrings' cousins
- 21 Squealer
- 22 Chemical suffix
- 23 Montana city
- 26 Scare badly
- 30 Buckeyes' sch.
- 31 Tibetan bovine
- 32 "Ulalume" writer
- 33 Dress store section
- 36 Broadway duds
- 38 Cat doc
- 39 Life story
- 40 Madonna role
- 43 "Cutie," e.g.
- 47 Peevish
- 49 Actor Jannings

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16			17				
18				19				20				
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23	24	25				26				27	28	29
30					31					32		
33			34	35				36	37			
			38					39				
40	41	42				43				44	45	46
47					48				49			
50					51				52			
53					54				55			

- 50 "No —!" ("Sure thing!")
- 51 Quibble
- 52 Sandwich option
- 53 "Auld Lang —"
- 54 Away from SSW
- 55 Ladies of Spain (Abbr.)
- DOWN**
- 1 URL opener
- 2 Toledo's lake
- 3 Force
- 4 Dairy case buy
- 5 "Hush!"
- 6 On the Aegean, say
- 7 Inherited
- 8 Tub user
- 9 China setting
- 10 Not barefoot
- 11 Coop group
- 17 "— It Romantic?"
- 19 Scot's refusal
- 22 "A spider!"
- 23 Jazzy style
- 24 Exploit
- 25 Boy king
- 26 Mas' mates
- 27 Wall St. debut
- 28 Dandy guy
- 29 "You bet!"
- 31 However
- 34 ICU hookup
- 35 Pond duck
- 36 In shape
- 37 Hermits
- 39 Davis of "Jezebel"
- 40 Actor Omar
- 41 Quite
- 42 Lay — the line
- 43 Nabokov novel
- 44 Love god
- 45 "— 18" (Uris novel)
- 46 Right angles
- 48 Raggedy doll

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- 1. TELEVISION: Which popular spinoff series originated with the drama "Breaking Bad"?
- 2. HOLIDAYS: What is another name for Three Kings Day, celebrated on Jan. 6?
- 3. LANGUAGE: What does the Latin phrase "bona fide" mean?
- 4. MOVIES: In the movie "Babe," what kind of animal is the title character?
- 5. MEASUREMENTS: How many grams are in a kilogram?
- 6. GEOGRAPHY: Which strait separates Saudi Arabia from Africa?
- 7. SCIENCE: What are the three layers that make up the Earth?
- 8. FOOD & DRINK: Which breakfast food is associated with the retro series "Stranger Things"?
- 9. MEDICAL: What is the common name for muscae volitantes?
- 10. LITERATURE: Which poet wrote a six-volume biography of President Abraham Lincoln?

Answers

- 1. "Better Call Saul."
 - 2. Epiphany.
 - 3. "Good faith."
 - 4. Pig.
 - 5. 1,000.
 - 6. Bab-el-Mandeb.
 - 7. Crust, mantle and core.
 - 8. Eggo waffles.
 - 9. Eye floaters.
 - 10. Carl Sandburg.
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"Unlike me, he's becoming more and more unbearable!"



The dog sitter's flea dilemma

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I am a brand-new pet sitter with four clients. I'm able to take one pet at a time into my home to care for them when their owners are traveling for long stretches, and I do home visits for the others. Well, the toy poodle I have in my care for the next three weeks brought an unpleasant surprise: fleas! Normally I would ask the client to clear up the flea problem before pet-sitting services can continue, but I'm already caring for the dog, so I'm stuck. What should I do? -- Jane H. in Wellesley, Massachusetts

DEAR JANE: Immediately contact the client to inform them. Then ask for their permission to treat the dog. If they only want you to use a specific treatment, follow their instructions. Save your receipts for any flea treatments purchased.

A flea infestation can spread to the other pets you care for, so follow these steps to reduce infestation:

- Isolate the dog from most areas of your home until he has completed treatment and you are brushing away only dead fleas.
- Mop and vacuum your entire home daily, especially the corners. (Hint: Put a brand-new flea collar inside the vacuum cleaner bag to kill the fleas that are sucked in.)
- Wash or steam clean area rugs and drapes, and the dog's bedding.
- Wash clothes that you have worn around the dog. (Hint: Set the clothes dryer to a medium or high heat setting, which will kill most eggs and fleas.)

This is a good time to review and update your pet-sitting contract. Add a clause requiring pets to be free of fleas, ticks and communicable diseases, as well as a clause that says owners must reimburse you for expenses incurred if their pet causes an infestation.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) It's a good time to take a much-needed break from your recent hectic schedule and spend some time in quieter surroundings. Important news could arrive early next week.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) The Taurean traits of reliability and thoroughness could be well-tested when decision-makers consider your proposals and/or requests. Be prepared to answer some probing questions.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) A sudden attack of boredom leaves you with some tasks undone. It's OK to take a short respite, but get back to work by week's end so that you have time for other projects.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Avoid prejudging a situation just because it looks bad. Facts could emerge that can make your position uncomfortable, to say the least. Meanwhile, a relative has interesting news to share with you.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) This is a good time to begin reassessing some of your recent decisions about your long-range goals to see if they still have merit. In addition, spend more time with loved ones this weekend.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) An unsettled situation at home or on the job early in the week could drain your energy levels, making it difficult to get your work done on schedule. But things improve by midweek.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A temporary setback could give you time to go over your plans to find weaknesses that you might have overlooked before. Also, a romantic getaway with a special person is favored this weekend.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Professional and personal situations benefit you once you set a positive tone in getting things off to a good start. Honest dialogue smooths over any occasional display of balkiness.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) A problem with workplace colleagues or family members seems to defy even your sage counsel. But be patient. Your words will eventually lead to a resolution.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Don't just wait out an unexpected and unexplained delay in your career move. You could gain added respect if you ask why it happened and what you can do to move things along.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Although your workplace strategies are usually accepted, you could be challenged by someone who isn't so favorably impressed. Be prepared to defend your positions.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) Your friendship circle expands with new people coming into your life at this time. Welcome them warmly, but don't neglect cherished longtime personal relationships.

BORN THIS WEEK: You love to search for knowledge and share it with others. You would make an especially fine teacher!

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Weekly SUDOKU

	6		3		8	7	
2		3				6	1
	8		6		9		2
	5		7		3	9	
			8	6			5
3			5	2	7		
6				7	8		
5	7		3				1
4	2			9			

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 3-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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TIDBITS presents **Quiz BITS**

1. What actress ate 20 donuts a day, jumping four dress sizes, in order to play the part of Bridget Jones?
2. Titanium dioxide, a white pigment used in paint, cosmetics, sunscreen, does what for donuts?

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: M equals B

HPCY YOCZ-XWZWTOE MCTTDOT
VDBPY JWVO QWZDXO MO
HTCQQDAB CTWLAE C XTDVO
JXOAO? XWTEWA MZLO.

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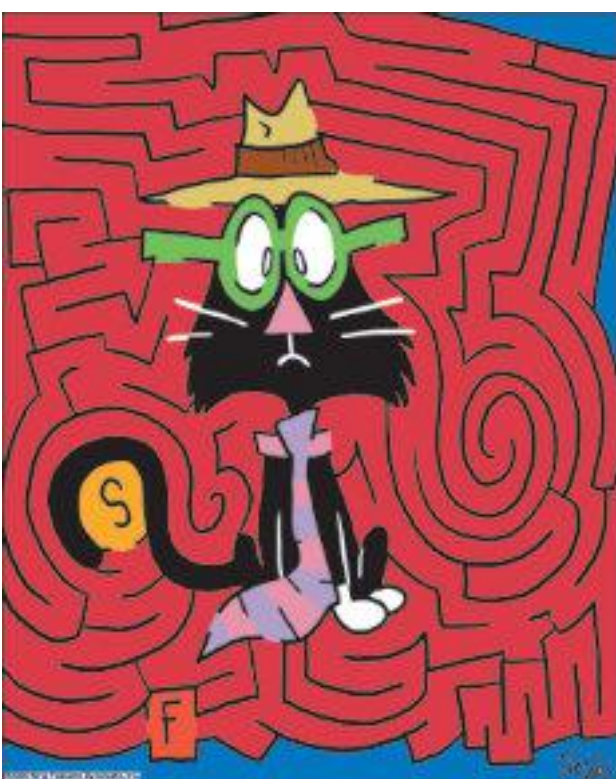
by Japheth Light

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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HealthBits

By Dr. Holly Carling

HEALTHY WEIGHT YEAR ‘ROUND – PART I

Here we go again! It’s the first of the new year and we are anxious to get on with our New Year’s resolutions. Number one on the list is generally to lose weight. It seems everyone thinks the only answer to losing weight is to eat less, eat healthier and exercise. However, there is more to it than that. Resolving it means being healthy all year long. But how?

First of all, we pretty much know if we weigh too much, or are a little puffer in the belly than we know we should be.

Sometimes it’s the opposite and we have a distorted view of what a healthy body should be. For instance, a woman who has had kids shouldn’t expect to look the same afterwards. Her bony structure is different, and her skin has stretched out. However, many women look amazing after childbirth. We shouldn’t expect to reach our high school weight when in our 50’s or 60’s or older – we would look malnourished. So how do we know what is healthy?

The “world” considers a weight of greater than 20% of “ideal” to be over-weight. But here is where it varies. From one organization to another “ideal” can be different weights altogether. Assessing BMI (body mass index) is certainly a more accurate way to determine that because they are measuring fat vs. muscle mass. But even that can differ. Another method of measurement can be waist circumference. Then we look at art from centuries ago, and a little fat

on the hips and waist was considered “healthy”. Where you hold your weight can be diagnostic. If you tend to gain weight in your thighs, in the hips, in the “tire” around your belly, the little pouch of your lower abdomen, or in your breasts - all may mean something different. If you have edema causing weight gain, that is yet another issue.

One of the most important parts of creating a lifestyle to bring your weight to a healthy place is to do the investigative work necessary to find out WHY you are gaining weight, or why you can’t lose it. Many people do “everything right” that should cause the weight to fall right off them, and it doesn’t budge, or they continue to gain weight. That’s why it’s so important to do some digging to figure it out from a deeper, causative layer.

For instance, you could have a problem with your endocrine system – the system that produces your hormones – not just sex hormones, but hormones related to sleep, inflammation, emotional health, digestion, energy, etc.

In Part II of Healthy Year ‘Round we will go into the details of more causes of weight control issues.

Learn more by attending our upcoming health class, 5 Keys to Getting Rid of Stubborn Weight, Wednesday, Jan. 18th 7:30pm. Fee: \$15. Attend in-person at Vital Health or online via Zoom. Learn more and register:

<https://vitalhealthcda.com/health-classes/>
 Want to hear more from Dr. Carling? Check out our podcast. Subscribe to VitalHealth4You on your favorite podcast listening app or go to vitalhealthcda.com/podcasts/



Dr. Holly Carling is a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, Licensed Acupuncturist, Doctor of Naturopathy, Clinical Nutritionist and Master Herbologist with over four decades of experience. Dr. Carling is a “Health Detective,” she looks beyond your symptom picture and investigates WHY you are experiencing your symptoms in the first place. Dr. Carling is currently accepting new patients and offers natural health care services and whole food nutritional supplements in her Coeur d’Alene clinic. Visit Dr. Carling’s website at www.vitalhealthcda.com to learn more about Dr. Carling, view a list of upcoming health classes and read other informative articles. Dr. Carling can be reached at 208-765-1994 and would be happy to answer any questions regarding this topic.

Medical/Health Disclaimer: The information provided in this article should not be construed as personal medical advice or instruction. No action should be taken based solely on the contents of this article. Readers should consult appropriate health professionals on any matter relating to their health and well-being. The information and opinions provided here are believed to be accurate and sound, based on the best judgment available to the author, but readers who fail to consult appropriate health authorities assume the risk of any injuries.

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VETERANS ★ POST ★

By Freddy Groves

Life insurance premium discount

If you have life insurance through the Department of Veterans Affairs, you'll be pleased about what's coming in 2025: a discount in your premiums.

Whether you are insured with Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI), Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) or Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI), your premiums will be discounted in varying amounts.

For veterans covered under VGLI, your costs will go down somewhere between 2% and 17%, with most averaging around 11%, depending on your age.

Spouses who receive coverage via FSGLI will see discounts between 11% and 22%, depending on age.

Active duty and those covered under SGLI will see a cost reduction of one cent per every \$1,000 of coverage, bringing the cost of maximum coverage (\$500,000) down to \$25 per month.

And no, you don't have to ask for it. These discounts will be automatic.

There are others types of insurance through the VA as well. See www.va.gov/life-insurance for information on eligibility, and the other forms of insurance that are available, such as mortgage life insurance (if you have a service-connected disability and a specially-adapted home), whole life insurance (if you have a service-connected disability), group life insurance (after you're out of the service) and Traumatic Injury Protection (if that ever becomes necessary after an injury). If you're already covered and want to check your policy, pay the premium, see the details of your insurance or change beneficiaries, you can do that online. However, accessing your policy online depends on the type of policy it is. See www.va.gov/life-insurance/manage-your-policy for the details about whether your access will be through the VA portal, through Prudential or via milConnect.

As of now, the VA's insurance covers over 5 million veterans, active duty and families, but there's always room for more. If you're not currently covered and you want to explore getting insurance coverage, see www.va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility for your options.

A heads up: You'll need to sign up for certain types of insurance in the first 120 days when you leave the service.

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PHOTO CREDIT: Donna Erickson

Prepare Homemade Gelatin Citrus Snacks

It's citrus time! Prepare for your family's next snack attack with 100% pure fruit juice that gets magically transformed into whimsical, eye-catching citrus bowls and slices. This recipe uses unflavored gelatin and scooped-out orange, lemon, lime or grapefruit halves.

Later, when you hear a midafternoon "I'm hungry" groan, say, "It sounds to me like it's time to eat some art."

Here's how to make the healthy sunshine snack:

HOMEMADE GELATIN IN CITRUS BOWLS

Citrus Bowls: First, prepare the scooped-out citrus halves. Choose two or more of the following depending on size: oranges, lemons, limes or grapefruit.

Cut fruit in half evenly lengthwise or around the circumference. Insert a paring knife just between the white pith and the fruit in each half, then remove the fruit pulp to form bowls. (Use removed fruit for salads or snacking as desired.)

For stability, set empty citrus bowls perfectly upright into small bowls or in sections of a muffin tin. If citrus bowls are wobbly, carefully trim a bit off of the base, being careful not to pierce all the way through. Set them aside while you prepare the gelatin.



Homemade Fruit Juice Gelatin:

Makes 4-6 servings

- 2 cups pure, 100% fruit juice
- 1-2 tablespoons honey
- 2 (1/4-ounce size) envelopes unflavored gelatin (such as the Knox brand)

In a medium-sized saucepan, heat 1 1/2 cups of juice. Bring to a boil and remove from heat.

While juice is heating up, stir remaining 1/2 cup of juice into two envelopes of unflavored gelatin in a medium bowl with a spout and let stand for 1 minute. Add the hot fruit juice and stir until the gelatin is completely dissolved. Then stir in honey.

Cool slightly and pour into the preprepared citrus bowls. Refrigerate until firm.

When set, serve with a spoon and eat the gelatin right out of the citrus bowl. Or slice into wedges with a sharp knife.

Alternate Idea: Use 1 (3-ounce) box of gelatin such as the Jell-O brand as an alternative to homemade gelatin. Use the Jigglers recipe on the side of the box for firmer gelatin.

Donna Erickson creates relationships and community through food and fun. Find more to nourish and delight you at www.donnaerickson.com.

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TIDBITS WORD POWER
Unscramble this word:

MOSSNIPS

An out-of-control train was once stopped in its tracks by a huge pile of donuts in this popular sitcom.

MINI SUDOKU

		1	2		3
			1		
		5	3	1	2
2	5		6		1
		3			5

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 6-box square contains all of the numbers from one to six.

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Micro Crossword By Elizabeth C. Gorski

Across	1	2	3	4	5
1 "Sons of Anarchy" actor Danny ___	6				
6 Everglades bird	7				
7 Ludicrous	8				
8 Related to birth	9				
9 Shiny lip application					
Down					
1 "Crazy Little ___ Called Love" (hit song by Queen)					
2 Of the kidneys					
3 Daughter of Zeus					
4 Polio vaccine developer Salk					
5 First-year students in a Scott Turow memoir					

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TIDBITS presents TRIVIA NEWSFRONT

1. What is the largest donut chain in America with over 9,000 outlets in the U.S. alone?
2. What donut chain invented the apple fritter?
3. What explorer took 100 barrels of donut flour with him to the South Pole?
4. What country has more donut shops per capita than any other country?
5. What U.S. city has more donut shops per capita than any other city?

****Fully Remodeled Home in Post Falls with a Partially Unfinished Basement - \$750,000****

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By Ryan A. Berenz

1. Rik Smits, known as "The Dunking Dutchman," spent his entire NBA career from 1988 to 2000 with what team?
2. Geoff Capes, World's Strongest Man champion in 1983 and 1985, competed for Great Britain at the 1976 and 1980 Olympic Games in what athletics event?
3. What Dominican infielder, whose career spanned 1982-2007, was the last active Major League Baseball player to have been born in the 1950s?
4. Golfer Peter Thomson, who won the Open Championship five times from 1954-1965, hailed from what country?
5. He played tight end for 11 NFL seasons, most notably for the New York Jets from 2000-2004. His son, Rocco, threw 23 touchdown passes for the 2023 Iowa State Cyclones. Who is he?
6. What American figure skater, 1995 U.S. women's singles champion, overcame drug addiction and later became a circus performer?
7. "Clean, Old-Fashioned Hate" is the name of the college athletics rivalry between what two teams?

Answers

1. The Indiana Pacers.
 2. The shot put.
 3. Julio Franco.
 4. Australia.
 5. Anthony Becht.
 6. Nicole Bobek.
 7. The University of Georgia Bulldogs and Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets.
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TIDBITS GOES LONG.....

A Krispy Kreme store in Britain gained some unwanted publicity when it advertised a new weekly children's program called "Krispy Kreme Klub Wednesday," shortened to "KKK Wednesday." After complaints were received, an apology was issued.

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Americanisms

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— Robin Roberts

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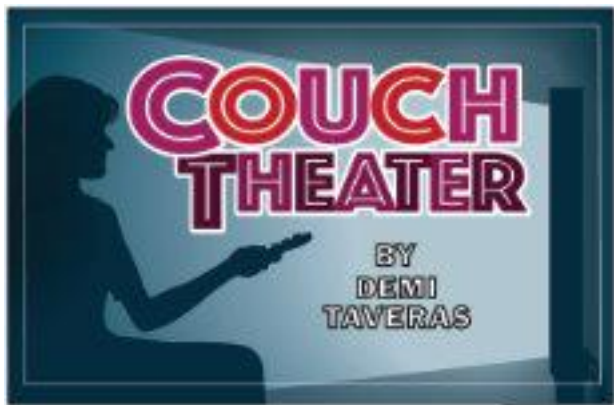
The Garden Bug

Hardiness zones

The U.S. government's online Plant Hardiness Zone interactive map can help you find the average annual extreme minimum winter temperature in any area of the U.S. by typing in a zip code. The areas are displayed as 10-degree F zones and 5-degree F half-zones designated as "a" and "b", and are keyed by color and number/letter combinations. Plants sold in catalogs and storefronts are often marked with which "zone" they tolerate, along with their needs such as required daily sun exposure, soil type, wind tolerance and best watering practices. - Brenda Meyer

Source: <https://planthardness.ars.usda.gov/>

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"Wicked" (PG) -- Universal Pictures' investment in adapting the Broadway musical "Wicked" paid off big time, with the first part of their two-part saga garnering \$586.3 million at the box office at the time of this writing. Director Jon M. Chu ("Crazy Rich Asians") assembled the perfect cast to bring the musical to life, including Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba, Ariana Grande as Galinda/Glinda, and Jonathan Bailey as Fiyero. Now viewers at home can get whisked away to the magical Land of Oz through the film's beautiful visual effects and iconic songs like "The Wizard and I" and "Dancing Through Life." Keep a close eye out for Idina Menzel and Kristin Chenoweth, both of the actresses who originated the roles of Elphaba and Glinda in the original production. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl" (PG) -- Those of us who were kids during the 2000s remember the comical shenanigans of Wallace and his dog, Gromit, in the film "The Curse of the Were-Rabbit" (2005). Almost 20 years later, the stop-motion animation studio Aardman Animations decided to develop a second feature-length film about their much-beloved characters. In "Vengeance Most Fowl," Wallace is still hard at work with his inventions,

much to Gromit's dismay, and creates a robotic gnome that can take care of gardens. However, the imprisoned penguin criminal Feathers McGraw, who was once captured by Wallace and Gromit, chooses this robotic gnome as his opportunity to exact revenge on his foes. Check it out now. (Netflix)



Photo Credit: Courtesy of MovieStillsDB
Photo Caption: Andrew Burnap, left, and Brandy Norwood star in "The Front Room."

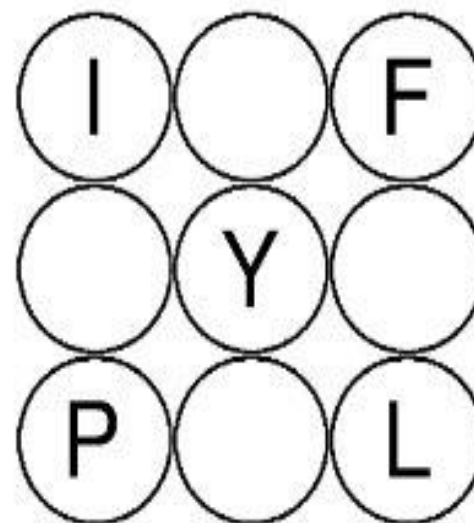
"The Front Room" (R) -- Singer/actress Brandy Norwood ("Descendants: The Rise of Red") is making her return to movies, and this psychological horror film directed by the Eggers Brothers was a solid attempt to get her feet wet again. Norwood plays pregnant anthropology professor Belinda, whose emotional baggage is only further weighed down by her and her husband Norman's (Andrew Burnap) financial woes. So, when Norman's estranged stepmother, Solange (Kathryn Hunter), offers them an inheritance in exchange for taking care of her during her final days, the couple jumps at the chance to get their lives back on track. But Solange has a deeply rooted history of religious abuse and racism that comes bubbling to the surface as Belinda gets closer to giving birth. Out now. (Max)

"The Golden Globe Awards" (TV-PG) --

Comedian Nikki Glaser hosts this year's Golden Globe Award ceremony, which is out now to stream after airing live on Jan. 5. The musical "Emilia Perez" starring Zoe Saldana leads the film nominations, followed by "The Brutalist" with Adrien Brody and "Conclave" with Ralph Fiennes. For the television nominations, the hit Hulu series "The Bear" continues to reign, followed by "Shogun" and "Only Murders in the Building." Viola Davis will be recognized with the Cecil B. DeMille Award, and Ted Danson will receive the Carol Burnett Award, although neither will be presented during the official ceremony. (Paramount+)

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WORD SPIRAL



Fill in the missing letters to reveal the nine-letter word that starts at one of the four corners and moves clockwise around the perimeter before ending in the center.

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TIDBITS QUOTE

"Many a sweet thing was whispered behind a doughnut." Anon

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 K A G N I B O R T S E R L J Y
 H P F N N E G N I K A B L C E
 B I I Z G N I R U O T N O C O
 G N I L P P I T S Y X A U V L
 G G E S A E R C T U C F T U A
 T R Q G N I T H G I L H G I H

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
 Unlisted clue hint: OVEN COOKING

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Contouring | Fallout | Highlighting | Stippling |
| Cut crease | Fan brush | Hitting pan | Strobing |
| Draping | Foiling | Overlining | Waterline |
| Face beat | Halo eye | Setting | |

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

By Matilda Charles

Heavy metals in our dark chocolate

It appears that our beloved dark chocolate candy bars can contain dangerous amounts of lead and cadmium -- the dark chocolate we intentionally chose for its health benefits like lower blood pressure and antioxidants that protect cells from damage.

Consumer Reports did research to test the levels of lead and cadmium in dark chocolate candy bars. Of the 28 different dark chocolate bars they tested, all of them had lead and cadmium. Specifically, their tests were to look for mercury, lead, cadmium and arsenic, all heavy metals. The result: 23 of the dark chocolate candy bars had enough heavy metal in them that eating just one ounce of the candy would be harmful.

For those of us who've believed that a little daily dark chocolate would benefit our health, it turns out all that heavy metal could lead to immune system suppression, kidney damage and more.

Still, there were the five remaining bars that had levels low enough to be safer. Not completely safe, but safer. They later did tests on an additional 48 chocolate products in several categories: chocolate chips, cocoa powder, brownie mixes, cake mixes and hot chocolate mixes. Of the 48 products, 16 of them had concerning amounts of heavy metals. However, they did find safer options for each item.

How do we get the benefits of dark chocolate without putting our health at risk from the heavy metals? Don't eat it every day, they say. Pick something with lower levels of the lead and cadmium.

I've long been a fan of Consumer Reports and have subscribed for years, now reading each issue online. With a yearly subscription, I have access to all of their past reports and research. To me, the cost is worth it. If you want to take a look, see www.consumerreports.org.

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5	3	5	4	3	8	5	3	6	4	2	7	3
A	A	C	B	C	N	H	T	G	I	G	A	I
5	6	2	4	2	5	3	2	3	5	6	4	8
A	O	I	N	F	N	V	T	I	G	A	D	E
6	8	6	8	2	4	2	8	4	6	7	6	3
L	W	S	F	F	I	R	O	N	N	M	O	T
8	5	6	8	2	6	3	5	2	8	6	2	5
U	E	T	N	O	A	Y	O	M	D	L	A	F
2	4	2	6	4	7	2	4	8	7	2	3	4
F	G	R	T	O	E	I	F	F	S	E	H	T
3	2	4	7	5	8	2	5	8	7	4	8	5
I	N	I	S	H	A	D	O	M	C	E	E	M
7	3	5	6	3	4	6	7	6	7	6	7	7
L	G	E	E	H	S	R	E	E	A	D	R	S

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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DOES MY DAD NEED ASSISTED LIVING OR MEMORY CARE?

Deciding between assisted living and memory care can feel overwhelming, especially when you're thinking about the well-being of someone you love or yourself. It's an emotional journey, but understanding the difference between these two types of care can help you make a decision that brings peace and comfort.

1. Balancing Independence with Support

Assisted living is designed for those who may need some help with daily tasks like dressing, bathing, or medication management but still value their independence. If your loved one enjoys being active and social but occasionally needs assistance, assisted living could be the perfect balance. It offers a supportive environment while still allowing them to lead a fulfilling and independent life with access to care when needed.

2. Focusing on Memory and Safety

Memory care is more specialized, offering a secure, compassionate environment for those living with Alzheimer's, dementia, or other memory-related conditions. If your loved one is struggling with memory loss, confusion, or disorientation, memory care provides a structured, nurturing space with professionals who understand their unique needs. These communities are designed to create a sense of comfort, safety, and stability for residents who

might feel anxious or disoriented in everyday environments.

3. Considering Safety and Peace of Mind

When safety becomes a concern—such as wandering or forgetting to turn off the stove—memory care provides round-the-clock support in a secure setting. Knowing your loved one is cared for in a safe, warm community can offer a sense of relief and peace.

4. Assessing the Level of Care

It's important to recognize when a bit of extra help is needed. A good place to start is by talking to your loved one's primary care provider. Share your concerns about day-to-day needs and let them help assess whether assisted living or memory care might be the better option. If your loved one is still able to communicate their needs, but could use assistance, assisted living is a great option. If they need more constant care and supervision, or have lost the ability to express their needs or desires, memory care is likely the best choice.

Trust your heart and the professionals to help guide you as to what your loved one needs. There are no right and wrong decisions, but educating yourself on the options

available will help you make the choice that feels right for their care and happiness.

Call me today for a free consultation in navigating assisted living and memory care options.



Becky Georgius
Sales and Marketing Director
The Lodge Assisted Living and Memory Care Communities
208-457-3403

Even Exchange by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

1. Banker, sometimes	___ N ___	First in line	___ A ___
2. Saunter	___ B ___	Plenty	___ P ___
3. Singer Gaye	___ V ___	Paper boundary	___ G ___
4. Disposed to	___ E ___	Fork tine	___ G ___
5. Military title	___ J ___	City official	___ Y ___
6. Vocation	___ R ___	Sway recklessly	___ N ___
7. New York island	___ L ___	King of rock and roll	___ V ___
8. "Go away, cat"	___ M ___	Morsel	___ P ___
9. Round map	___ B ___	Pitcher's mitt	___ V ___
10. Actor Gary	___ P ___	Not as hot	___ L ___

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GO FIGURE!

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	+		-		= 1			
+	■	+	■	+	■			
	+		+		= 14			
+	■	×	■	×	■			
	+		+		= 12			
=	■	=	■	=	■			
5	■	90	■	65	■			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

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TIDBITS Laughs!

I allow myself only one donut per year. This morning I had 433 B.C., 1962, and 2009.

THIS WEEK'S CELEBRITY BIRTHDAYS

Robert Duvall	1/05/1931
Rowan Atkinson	1/06/1955
Nicolas Cage	1/07/1964
Elvis Presley	1/08/1935
Joan Baez	1/09/1941
George Foreman	1/10/1949
Naomi Judd	1/11/1946

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Will They Hear Me Now?

Chances are you have known someone in your circle who has been in a medical crisis, needing help understanding what's happening. They might need help determining what choices are available, help making decisions, or simply want someone to listen. Perhaps you have found yourself in this difficult situation as well.

My name is Kathy Keppel-Colkitt and I am the author of my new book Will They Hear Me Now? Before my daughter passed away due to medical complications, she was faced with many difficulties. It became clear she needed someone to advocate for her when the time came that she couldn't do so for herself. I have been an advocate my entire life, so stepping into this role for my daughter was a given.

This book shares my daughter's visceral story. It also provides step-by-step instructions, suggestions, and procedures for advocating in the medical realm. It is both a guide and a workbook. This book is unique in that it empowers you to be an advocate when needed. It's a must read for medical professionals and institutions, first responders, chaplains, pastors, family, educators, and all those in service to help others.

I am confident that after reading Will They Hear Me Now? you will be empowered and prepared to be an effective advocate for any person in crisis. In doing so, you will make a difference in someone's life, and they will know that they were heard. The ripple effects are phenomenal.

Attached is my press kit that includes a summary of the book, an author bio, reviews, a list of suggested questions, and a PDF copy of the book for your reviews. I'm available for podcasts, radio and tv interviews, and print interviews.



Warm regards,
Kathy Keppel-Colkitt-
www.BMCEnterprise.org •
info@MMCEnterprise.org



1. Who had a hit with "Down Under"?
2. Which artist is known as the "Material Girl"?
3. Who wrote and released "Can't Fight This Feeling"?
4. Who came up with the term "rock and roll"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "A place where there's just loneliness, Where dim lights bring forgetfulness, Where broken dreams and memories meet."

Answers

1. *Men At Work, in 1981. The song topped the charts around the globe, including in Italy, Ireland and Denmark. It's full of Australian slang usually only understood in Australia, such as "kombi," which is a VW bus.*
2. *Madonna. The video of her 1985 song of that title copied the 1953 Marilyn Monroe performance of "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" in the film "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes."*
3. *REO Speedwagon. The song was one of two the group performed at the Live Aid benefit concert in 1985. Hooked up by satellites, concerts were held around the globe and likely watched by nearly 2 billion people.*
4. *DJ Alan Freed in the 1950s. He was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 1986.*
5. *"Lonely Street," by Carl Belew, in 1956. Andy Williams followed with the well-known cover in 1959. Since then, over a dozen artists have covered the song, including Patsy Cline, Bobby Vinton and the Everly Brothers.*

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1. Sonic the Hedgehog 3 (PG) Jim Carrey, Ben Schwartz
 2. Mufasa: The Lion King (PG) Aaron Pierre, Kelvin Harrison Jr.
 3. Nosferatu (R) Lily-Rose Depp, Nicholas Hoult
 4. Wicked (PG) Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande
 5. Moana 2 (PG) Auli'i Cravalho, Dwayne Johnson
 6. A Complete Unknown (R) Timothée Chalamet, Edward Norton
 7. Babygirl (R) Nicole Kidman, Harris Dickinson
 8. Gladiator II (R) Paul Mescal, Denzel Washington
 9. Homestead (PG-13) Dawn Olivieri, Neal McDonough
 10. The Fire Inside (PG-13) Ryan Destiny, Brian Tyree Henry
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CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

YBDG TSLGXR GY LJR IOTE
OVOWRTGTS. LJR XODHJ
VGTEY ODR LJR XUDTGTS
COVT. - IRVGY SDGKKODE

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TIDBITS PUZZLE ANSWERS

TRIVIA NEWSFRONT Answers
 1. Double Dimes
 2. The Boston's
 3. Andrew Richardson
 4. Canada
 5. Boston, MA

QUIZ BITS ANSWERS
 1. Oscar Schirmer
 2. Make pretend names of her

MINI BARRING
 Answer

5	4	1	2	6	3
3	2	6	1	5	4
4	6	5	3	1	2
1	3	2	5	4	6
2	3	4	6	3	1
6	1	3	4	2	5

SNOWFLAKES
 solution

WORD POWER
 ANSWER
 SIMPSONS

WORD LADDER
 Answer
 BLAME, FLAME, FLAKE,
 SLAKE, STAKE, STARE

Even Exchange
 ANSWERS
 1. Under, Under 2. Career, Career
 3. Arctic, Arctic 4. Slim, Slim
 5. March, March 6. Steam, Steam
 7. Pinks, Pinks 8. Glass, Glass
 9. Main, Main 10. Cooper, Cooper

Weekly SUDOKU
 Answer

9	6	5	2	3	1	4	8	7
2	4	3	7	9	8	5	6	1
1	8	7	6	4	5	9	3	2
8	5	2	1	7	4	3	9	6
7	9	4	8	6	3	1	2	5
3	1	6	9	5	2	7	4	8
6	3	1	4	2	7	8	5	9
5	7	9	3	8	6	2	1	4
4	2	8	5	1	9	6	7	3

MAKEUP TERMS

Go Figure!
 answers

3	+	7	-	9	=	1
+	■	+	■	+	■	■
2	+	8	+	4	=	14
+	■	×	■	×	■	■
1	+	6	+	5	=	12
=	■	=	■	=	■	■
5	■	90	■	65	■	■

Sticklers Answer
 The answer is 2) P - 649.

Word Spiral
 Answer
 PAINFULLY

CryptoQuote
 answer
 Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn. — Lewis Grizzard

CryptoQuip
 answer
 What teal-colored barrier might some police be wrapping around a crime scene? Cordon blue.

MINI SUDOKU
 Answer

5	4	1	2	6	3
3	2	6	1	5	4
4	6	5	3	1	2
1	3	2	5	4	6
2	5	4	6	3	1
6	1	3	4	2	5

Super Crossword
 Answers

G	A	L	A	S	R	I	P	S	A	W	S	T	S	N	O	S	H		
A	N	I	M	E	O	M	E	R	T	A	C	O	Q	A	B	L	E		
P	O	L	I	C	E	C	A	R	T	O	N	E	R	U	P	T	I	O	N
E	X	O	D	U	S	C	L	A	Y	T	O	N	T	A	R	G	E	T	S
S	L	A	B	W	E	S	T	I	E										
B	A	D	H	A	I	R	D	A	Y	T	O	N	M	O	B	I	L		
O	N	A	I	R	E	R	R	A	N	T	L	A	M	A	E	N	O		
R	O	M	P	S	T	O	C	K	T	O	N	A	N	A	L	Y	S	T	S
I	D	O	M	A	T	Z	O	O	U	T	S	A	I	R	E				
S	E	N	S	E	S	S	H	E	R	R	I	A	N	D	O	R			
A	D	A	N	O	C	O	O	P	E	D	E	L	I	S	H	A			
B	O	Y	D	D	I	N	O	I	G	N	I	S	T	B	S				
C	L	A	P	T	O	N	O	F	T	H	U	N	D	E	R	I	H	O	P
D	A	N	H	O	G	S	S	U	N	H	A	T	S	T	A	G	E		
E	N	S	U	E	N	O	B	O	D	Y	W	I	N	S	T	O	N		
P	R	A	I	S	E	T	A	I	S										
W	O	R	K	E	R	S	C	O	M	P	T	O	N	G	F	O	R	C	E
I	G	U	E	S	S	O	B	A	R	T	O	N	O	F	S	O	A	P	
T	R	E	E	O	U	R	A	R	I	O	S	O	L	A	I	N	E		
T	E	R	P	N	E	E	S	A	S	S	E	D	E	D	I	E			

King Crossword
 Answers
 Solution time: 23 mins.

H	E	D	Y	Z	A	G	B	A	S	H	
T	R	I	O	I	S	O	A	S	H	E	
T	I	N	G	P	E	T	I	T	I	O	N
P	E	T	U	N	I	A	S	H	A	D	S
R	A	T	E	N	E						
B	U	T	T	E	P	E	T	R	I	F	Y
O	S	U	Y	A	K	P	O	E			
P	E	T	I	T	E	S	F	L	O	P	S
V	E	T	B	I	O						
E	V	I	T	A	P	E	T	N	A	M	E
P	E	T	U	L	A	N	T	E	M	I	L
P	R	O	B	N	I	T	R	O	L	L	
S	Y	N	E	N	N	E	S	R	A	S	

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TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH
 By Dr. Keith Roach

MRI Reveals a Disease of the Blood Vessels in the Brain

DEAR DR. ROACH: A recent fall split the skin below my left eye. I went to the emergency room to see if it required stitches. Since I complained of a headache in the back of my head on the left side, they ordered an MRI, which showed "atherosclerotic vascular disease with mild small vessel ischemic disease." They also saw plaque within my internal carotid arteries.

The ER doctors said I should see a vascular specialist soon. Of course, I am scared. I am a 76-year-old woman on Bystolic, rosuvastatin, benazepril and thyroid replacement. I also take sulfasalazine for my inflammatory arthritis. I am thin, take many vitamins and supplements, and exercise four times a week.

Does the MRI mean I have dementia or Alzheimer's? What does it mean? -- R.M.

ANSWER: No, the MRI cannot make a diagnosis of dementia. Dementia is diagnosed presumptively by a clinical exam that notes impairments in cognitive functioning such as memory, language and attention. (A definitive diagnosis of Alzheimer's is made by a pathological evaluation of brain tissue, which is almost never obtained while a person is alive.)

What the MRI shows is a disease of the blood vessels of the brain caused by cholesterol plaque. High blood pressure, smoking, high blood cholesterol, a previous family history, and other factors put people at risk for this condition. Some, but not all, people with the kinds of blood vessel disease you have will develop dementia,

which is caused by cumulative damage to the brain tissue from multiple small strokes. In your case, both the large vessels (carotids) and small vessels are affected, suggesting that your cholesterol and blood pressure haven't been ideal.

Your doctor has already taken some steps to slow or prevent the worsening of this condition. Careful control of your blood pressure (with Bystolic and benazepril) is essential. A statin drug (rosuvastatin) has been shown to reduce stroke risk and your overall dementia risk. I don't know whether these are the best medicines for you or whether they are at the right doses, since only your doctor knows you well enough, but it is clear that your doctor is taking steps to protect your heart and brain.

Inflammatory arthritis (especially rheumatoid arthritis and lupus) increases the risk of blood vessel damage in the brain and heart, so early treatment is more important with people who have these conditions. Unfortunately, not all primary care doctors know how important inflammatory arthritis is when it comes to heart attack and stroke risk.

I do not believe there are any supplements or vitamins that are both safe and effective at preventing stroke, but there are a handful of people who may benefit from them. For example, people with high homocysteine in their blood may benefit from vitamin B12, folic acid, or their methylated counterparts.

A careful review of your overall health condition and diet is critical. You may be referred to a specialist for cognitive testing if there is any evidence of change in your thinking ability. A few blood tests will help further stratify your risk and may show a need for additional treatment.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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