



Breastfed Babies Are Smarter



The American Academy of Pediatrics as well as the American Medical Association and the World Health Organization recommend breastfeeding for babies. Health experts claim breastfeeding helps defend against infections, prevent allergies, and protect against a number of chronic conditions.

A study in the journal "Pediatrics" found that babies who were mainly breast-fed for the first six months of life or longer, scored higher academically when they got older, than children who were not breastfed or breastfed over a shorter length of time. Colostrum is the thick yellow first breast milk that you make during pregnancy and just after birth. This milk is very rich in nutrients and antibodies that protect your baby.

"The biggest surprise was boys did better than girls if breastfed," noted lead author Dr Wendy Oddy, a researcher with Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Centre for Child Health Research, University of Western Australia. "Boys develop slower than girls and this may be due to neuro-protective effect of the female hormones (estrodriols) in girls. Breastfeeding may advance maturation in boys so they develop faster than if not breastfed."

What's in Your Tap Water?

Millions of Americans in at least 31 U.S. cities could be drinking tap water contaminated with the harmful chemical hexavalent chromium, according to a report released by the non-profit Environmental Working Group.



While the dangerous carcinogen, otherwise known as chromium-6, may sound foreign to most people, perhaps the name Erin Brockovich will ring a bell.

After chromium-6 was discovered in the Hinkley, California, Brockovich helped bring about a lawsuit that ultimately ended in 1996 with the utility company, Pacific Gas & Electric, paying more than \$330 million in damages.

Norman, Oklahoma; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Riverside, California, top the non-profit organization's list of cities with water supplies contaminated by chromium-6.

The Environmental Protection Agency has classified the toxin as "likely to be carcinogenic to humans" as part of a risk assessment the agency is currently conducting on total chromium. The agency says water utilities are required to test for total chromium levels in the water but not explicitly for chromium-6. Chromium-6 is a natural byproduct of total chromium.

"In order to protect people's health, EPA has had drinking water standards for total chromium, which includes chromium-6," the agency said in a statement to CNN. "When this scientific assessment is finalized in 2011, EPA will carefully review the conclusions and consider all relevant information, including the Environmental Working Group's study, to determine if a new standard needs to be set."

"I was expecting to find hexavalent chromium in some of the cities we checked, but I didn't expect it to be so widespread," said Rebecca Sutton, a senior scientist with the

Environmental Working Group and the lead author of the study. Sutton said there is a well-documented corollary between exposure to chromium-6 and a greater risk of stomach cancer in humans. Additionally, there is ample animal evidence showing a broad risk of gastrointestinal tumors in rats and mice exposed to the toxin, she said.

To conduct its test, the organization said it recruited volunteers in 35 cities to collect tap water samples "from unfiltered taps in homes or in public buildings such as hospitals, libraries and malls," the report said.

Here are the cities:

1. Norman, Oklahoma 2. Honolulu, Hawaii 3. Riverside, California 4. Madison, Wisconsin 5. San Jose, California 6. Tallahassee, Florida 7. Omaha, Nebraska 8. Albuquerque, New Mexico 9. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 10. Bend, Oregon 11. Salt Lake City, Utah 12. Ann Arbor, Michigan 13. Atlanta, Georgia 14. Los Angeles, California 15. Bethesda, Maryland 16. Phoenix, Arizona 17. Washington, D.C. 18. Chicago, Illinois 19. Milwaukee, Wisconsin 20. Villanova, Pennsylvania 21. Sacramento, California 22. Louisville, Kentucky 23. Syracuse, New York 24. New Haven, Connecticut 25. Buffalo, New York 26. Las Vegas, Nevada 27. New York, New York 28. Scottsdale, Arizona 29. Miami, Florida 30. Boston, Massachusetts 31. Cincinnati, Ohio

Exercise Before Breakfast Yield Best Results



For the study, researchers in Belgium recruited 28 healthy, active young men and began stuffing them with a truly lousy diet, composed of 50 percent fat and 30 percent more calories, overall, than the men had been consuming. Some of the men agreed not to exercise during the experiment. The rest were assigned to one of two exercise groups. The groups' regimens were identical and exhausting. The men worked out four times a week in the mornings, running and cycling at a strenuous intensity. Two of the sessions lasted 90 minutes, the others, an hour. All of the workouts were supervised, so the energy expenditure of the two groups was identical.

Their early-morning routines, however, were not. One of the groups ate a hefty, carbohydrate-rich breakfast before exercising and continued to ingest carbohydrates, in the form of something like a sports drink, throughout their workouts. The second group worked out without eating first and drank only water during the training. They made up for their abstinence with breakfast later that morning, comparable in calories to the other group's trencherman portions.

The experiment lasted for six weeks. At the end, the non-exercising group was, to no one's surprise, super-sized, having packed on an average of more than six pounds. They had also developed insulin resistance — their muscles were no longer responding well to insulin and weren't pulling sugar (or, more technically, glucose) out of the bloodstream efficiently — and they had begun storing extra fat within and between their muscle cells. Both insulin resistance and fat-marbled muscles are metabolically unhealthy conditions that can be precursors of diabetes.

The men who ate breakfast before exercising gained weight, too, although only about half as much as the control group. Like those sedentary big eaters, however, they had become more insulin-resistant and were storing a greater amount of fat in their muscles.

Only the group that exercised before breakfast gained almost no weight and showed no signs of insulin resistance. They also burned the fat they were taking in more efficiently. "Our current data," the study's authors wrote, "indicate that exercise training in the fasted state is more effective than exercise in the carbohydrate-fed state to stimulate glucose tolerance despite a hypercaloric high-fat diet."

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Placebo Research

Researchers at Harvard Medical School's Osher Research Center and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) have found that placebos work even when administered without the seemingly requisite deception.



The study is published December 22 in *PLoS ONE*. Placebos -- or dummy pills -- are typically used in clinical trials as controls for potential new medications. Even though they contain no active ingredients, patients often respond to them. In fact, data on placebos is so compelling that many American physicians (one study estimates 50 percent) secretly give placebos to unsuspecting patients.

Because such "deception" is ethically questionable, HMS associate professor of medicine Ted Kaptchuk teamed up with colleagues at BIDMC to explore whether or not the power of placebos can be harnessed honestly and respectfully.

To do this, 80 patients suffering from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) were divided into two groups: one group, the controls, received no treatment, while the other group received a regimen of placebos -- honestly described as "like sugar pills" -- which they were instructed to take twice daily.

"Not only did we make it absolutely clear that these pills had no active ingredient and were made from inert substances, but we actually had 'placebo' printed on the bottle," says Kaptchuk. "We told the patients that they didn't have to even believe in the placebo effect. Just take the pills."

For a three-week period, the patients were monitored. By the end of the trial, nearly twice as many patients treated with the placebo reported adequate symptom relief as compared to the control group (59 percent vs. 35 percent). Also, on other outcome measures, patients taking the placebo doubled their rates of improvement to a degree roughly equivalent to the effects of the most powerful IBS medications.

"I didn't think it would work," says senior author Anthony Lembo, HMS associate professor of medicine at BIDMC and an expert on IBS. "I felt awkward asking patients to literally take a placebo. But to my surprise, it seemed to work for many of them."

Doctor's comment: The above experiment shows how powerful the mind/body component is in combating disease. One thing I'd like to point is that IBS in particular, is associated with the mind/body connection. The more stress someone is under the more likely they are to have IBS flare-ups.

You can read more about IBS and how I treat it by visiting the link below.

[Irritable Bowel Syndrome](#)



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Have a Sore Throat? Gargle With Salt Water

In a randomized study published in The American Journal of Preventive Medicine in 2005, researchers recruited almost 400 healthy volunteers and followed them for 60 days during cold and flu season. Some of the subjects were told to gargle three times a day. At the end of the study period, the group that regularly gargled had a nearly 40 percent decrease in upper respiratory tract infections compared with the control group, and when they did get sick, "gargling tended to attenuate bronchial symptoms," the researchers wrote.

Each morning when I open my eyes I say to myself: I, not events, have the power to make me happy or unhappy today. I can choose which it shall be. Yesterday is dead, tomorrow hasn't arrived yet. I have just one day, today, and I'm going to be happy in it.

- Groucho Marx



Devil's Claw Potent Anti-inflammatory

Devil's claw (Harpagophytum procumbens), also known as wood spider and grapple, is a plant from South Africa named for the small hooks on its fruit. Known for its anti-inflammatory effects, it has been shown in recent years to work particularly well for chronic lower back pain. In several randomized, double-blind studies, scientists found that it worked better than placebo and was just as effective as roughly 12.5 milligrams of Vioxx when taken daily. Most studies suggest that doses of devil's claw from 50 milligrams to 100 milligrams are effective.

Devil's Claw is one of the key ingredients in the Essential Therapeutics Arthritis Formula.

[Read more about this powerful pain blocking formula here.](#)