

Health Nuggets November 2020

- 1) Alzheimer's disease research has taken a giant leap forward. A blood test that was the focus of an international clinical trial showed remarkable promise in telling the difference between people with and without Alzheimer's and other brain disorders. Just a clarification of terms. Dementia is the umbrella and under that are Alzheimer's, Lewy Body dementia, Parkinson's dementia, Supranuclear Palsy, Pick's, and Creutzfeldt Jakob are a few. Alzheimer's is 60-80% of all cases. There are over 50 million people living with dementia around the world, with a new case every 3 seconds. It will likely be another 2 years before the blood test will be available in doctors' offices.
- 2) Shingles or herpes zoster is a painful rash. If you have shingles the rash never crosses the spine. If you ever had chickenpox, you can get shingles. The rash is preceded by pain. The rash usually clears in 2-4 weeks, but some people have pain for months, even years. This long-lasting pain is called postherpetic neuralgia. You can get it again if you had postherpetic neuralgia, your immune system is compromised, you are female, and you were 50 or older when you had shingles the first time. If you're over 50 please get the Shingrix vaccine and you need two doses.
- 3) Some fascinating fruit facts: A strawberry isn't an actual berry, but a banana is. Apples, peaches, and raspberries are all part of the rose family. The world's most popular fruit is the tomato. The pineapple is a berry. Strawberries have more vitamin C than oranges.
- 4) Prostate cancer: A new type of test uses complex sugars combined with serum PSA to detect prostate cancer earlier, and with greater accuracy. Only 4 sugars or glycans are associated with prostate cancer.
- 5) Flu vaccine: Fact vs fiction. Fiction: the flu vaccine can give me the flu. Fact: The injected flu vaccine contains a dead virus that cannot give you influenza. If you feel achy or slightly feverish, it is a normal reaction of the immune system to the vaccine, and generally lasts only a day or two. Fiction: the flu vaccine can cause severe side effects. Fact: The flu vaccine is proven to be safe. Severe side effects are extremely rare. One in a million people may get Guillain-Barre Syndrome which causes muscle weakness and paralysis. Fiction: I had the vaccine and still got the flu, so it doesn't work. Fact: Several flu viruses are circulating all the time, which is why people may still get the flu despite being vaccinated since the vaccine is specific to one strain. Being vaccinated improves the chance of being protected from the flu and your illness is likely to be less severe than if you had skipped the shot. In fact, it will be shorter, and you're much less likely to get pneumonia.
- 6) Artificial sweetener: Sucralose or Splenda (yellow packet), aspartame or equal (blue packet), and saccharin or Sweet n' low (pink packet). These sweeteners should be avoided, because they cause cancer in mice. The safe one Stevia. Monk fruit has been barely tested. However, you would have to use 500 packets/day to cause cancer.
- 7) Cranberry juice or cranberry supplements and UTI's: An 8 oz glass of cranberry juice dumps 5 and 1/2 teaspoons into your body. Want to curb your risk of a UTI. Drink more water or other calorie-free beverages.

- 8) Frozen Bowls are full of the healthiest stuff in the freezer. Usually foods have too much sodium. The ones I mention have 450 mg or less of sodium. They're packed with whole grains, and low in saturated fats. Rabbit Food Redux-Lemon Feta Frenzy. Green Riot Verde. 2 Healthy Choice brands are Power Cauliflower Curry and Simply Unwrapped Burrito. One Lean Cuisine made it-Korean Style Rice and Vegetables. Kashi has 3: Black Bean Mango, Sweet Potato Quinoa, and Creamy Cashew Noodle. Luvo has the most: Here are 3-Hawaiian Un-fried Rice, Quinoa & Veggie Enchilada Verde, and So Cal Kale & Bean. Most of Amy's are too salty or cheesy, but here are 4: Brown Rice & Vegetables (Light in sodium), Black-Eyed Peas and Veggies, Light & Lean Quinoa & Black Beans, and Mexican Inspired Veggies & Black Beans.
- 9) Have you discovered kohlrabi yet? It's cruciferous. Remove the outside and eat the edible bulb inside. Grate it, cut into large match-sticks for hummus, roast with olive oil, or saute.
- 10 Global measles deaths increased 50% from 2016 to 2019 with more than 200,000 deaths last year. The WHO stated there are 869,770 cases world -wide in 2019. Most were unvaccinated.
- 11 Texas becomes first state to surpass 1 million COVID-19 cases. On Tuesday there were more than 10,800 new cases. The true number is higher because many people haven't been tested.
- 12 New CDC guidance issued Tuesday: face masks can protect wearers as well as others from contracting the coronavirus. Multi-layered cloth masks blocks virus particles exhaled by others. Recent studies show a reduction by more than 70% in some cases. Fauci said that, "You protect others, their mask protects you, and your mask also protects you.
- 13 Melatonin usage may help prevent COVID-19 according to PLOS Biology published today. First, PLOS is an artificial intelligence platform to identify possible drugs for COVID-19. This does not mean to start taking melatonin without consulting your physician. Large scale observational studies and a randomized controlled trials are needed.
- 14 Pfizer's vaccine has to be kept at -70 degrees C, and Moderna's vaccine has to be stored at --20 C. Academic centers such as Wake Forest Baptist Health are purchasing ultra-cold freezers. But that would leave rural hospitals unable to afford these freezers at \$10,000 to \$15,000 each. However the CDC has advised state health departments against purchasing them. Other vaccines with less demanding storage requirements will be available soon.

The promising results were met with both encouragement and skepticism by the broader scientific community. First and foremost, the results are interim and still await full trial results, meaning that these are non-peer-reviewed findings that were published midway through the clinical trial.

The study protocol document is 123-pages. More than 43,000 participants were described as "ethnically diverse," but they do not specify such details as age or co-morbidities. The participants are between 18 and 85. However, individuals with a high risk of severe infection were excluded from the first phase of testing and the preliminary findings did not determine how long the vaccination lasts. We also know nothing about the safety information yet.

Pfizer plans to file an emergency use authorization later in November. At that point, researchers will have collected two months of safety data.

Just 94 of the nearly 44,000 trial participants had contracted COVID-19 and the study is expected to continue until at least 164 people test positive.

The manufacturers could produce globally up to 50 million doses in 2020 and up to 1.3 billion doses in 2021.

- 15 Duke Hospital is using a new process for heart transplants using a donor's heart after it stops beating. Duke was the first in the US to perform this type of heart transplant. They keep the donor hearts warm and oxygenated using perfusion devices and not storing them on ice.