

## HEALTH NUGGETS NOVEMBER 2018

- 1) Hepatitis C screening: If you were born from 1945 to 1965 screening is recommended. Many do not they have the condition. It can remain undetected for years, eventually leading to cirrhosis, liver damage, and liver cancer.
- 2) New guideline: don't wait until you're 50 to screen for colon cancer. People at average risk should start at age 45. Talk with your physician about which screening option to choose. Continue screenings through 75. People ages 76-85 should talk with their clinician about the risks and benefits. Screenings should stop @ 85.
- 3) Are your potatoes turning green? Store them in a dark, dry, cool place, but not the fridge. To avoid food poisoning, cut away green flesh and any eyes or sprouts before cooking.
- 4) Some half-baked news bites: From Women's Health, "eating pasta can help you lose weight." First 21 of the 32 studies had no idea how much pasta people ate. BuzzFeed found that 3 of the scientists behind the study had financial conflicts including ties to the world's largest pasta company, the Barilla Group. Pasta is no magic weight-loss bullet. "Dark chocolate with high concentrations of cacao can have positive effects on stress levels, inflammation, mood, memory, and immunity" according to two new studies reported USA Today in April. I'm afraid the black-eye goes to Loma Linda University. It was led by Lee Berk, but it never measured stress, inflammation, mood, memory, or immunity—just brain waves and gene activity. The two studies only had 10 participants. The test chocolate was made by Parliament Chocolate, which is co-owned by Lee Berk's son Ryan. A large clinical trial is testing a supplement with cocoa flavanols on heart disease, stroke, and memory. Even if it helps, you'd have to eat some 600 calories' worth of dark chocolate/day. "The vindication of cheese, butter, and full-fat milk." This kind of study can't prove cause and effect. Replacing saturated fats like those in dairy and meet with unsaturated fats like those in nuts, most oils, avocados , and fatty fish lowers the risk of heart disease. That's based on numerous studies, including randomized clinical trials.
- 5) What about a low-dose daily aspirin? Don't take one if you're 70 or older and healthy, unless your doctor says otherwise. A low-dose daily aspirin may lower the risk of a heart attack or stroke in 50-69-year-olds, but only those at high risk.

- 6) Vitamin D does not improve your mood according to New Zealand researchers. They randomly assigned 152 healthy women aged 18-40 to either vitamin D or a placebo once a month. There was no difference in depression, anxiety, or mood.
- 7) The US FDA has granted emergency use of a new rapid antigen fingerstick test to detect ebola virus. It has a portable reader for quick results.
- 8) PPI's or proton pump inhibitors: Much in the news lately. These are medications for reflux, ulcers, & upper GI bleeds. Examples are Prilosec, Prevacid, and Protonix. There have been highly publicized serious adverse effects that are not based on demonstrable evidence. For long-term use, however, the PPI's should be used in the lowest effective dose. Much of this so called evidence has been derived from observational studies. Something like "fake news".