



Health Beat

The Official Wellness Newsletter of Plasterers Local 200

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Serving All of Southern California

2nd Quarter 2018

California Needs To Stop Saying Everything Causes Cancer

You may have heard that coffee gives you cancer. Or that everything gives you cancer—if you live in California.



The reason: Proposition 65. It's a California state law that requires businesses with 10 or more employees to provide reasonable warning about the use of any chemicals the state has decided could cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm. One of these chemicals is acrylamide, which a rodent study pinned as a possible carcinogen. It's found in almost everything that's cooked at a high temperature. And because a particularly litigious law firm recently sued the state for not properly warning residents about acrylamide in coffee, California is now on the verge of requiring all coffee shops and manufacturers to include a warning on the beverage that it may cause cancer.

The problem, of course, is that coffee doesn't cause cancer. Acrylamide might cause cancer at very high doses, but the amount that you'll find in your food is harmless. You've actually been unintentionally eating it for your whole life, because it's in everything from potato chips to roasted asparagus. When the media world exploded about the acrylamide in french fries last year, we quoted Professor of the Public Understanding of Risk

at University of Cambridge David Spiegelhalter thusly: "Adults with the highest consumption of acrylamide could consume 160 times as much and still only be at a level that toxicologists think unlikely to cause increased tumours in mice." The American Cancer Society agrees. Most of the hoopla about acrylamide comes from a single rodent study that found it caused a few more cases of cancer than baseline when given in extraordinarily high doses. No human studies suggest it's carcinogenic at any realistic dose. The most dangerous thing about a fried potato is the high calorie count.

Some people have argued that Prop 65 is just being cautious, and that can't possibly be a bad thing. Many, many others have countered that, in fact, over-warning the public is itself a danger. If every coffee shop has a warning telling you that a cup of joe might cause cancer, you'll probably just stop paying attention to the warning, which defeats the whole point. There are legitimately carcinogenic chemicals that people should be avoiding—but acrylamide isn't one of them.

This is, however, pretty much in line with California's general attitude toward labels and warnings. Their Department of Public Health also warned parents about the radiation from cell phones causing cancer, even though countless international public health institutions say that it doesn't. The same thing happened with glyphosate, a popular herbicide, which they thought was carcinogenic even though thorough reports have shown it's safe. The state has a history of taking one or two studies to inform their better-safe-than-sorry stance, even if the overall body of evidence contradicts those reports.

By California's logic, all sorts of things should have warning labels. We wanted to make a joking list of ridiculous items that would need a cautionary sign according to Prop 65—but then we did our research. Turns out the state of California already slaps a warning on just about everything.

7 FOODS YOU HAD NO IDEA WERE LOADED WITH SUGAR



WHOLE-GRAIN BREAD

The danger with eating foods high in sugar stems from their effects on blood sugar, says Perlmutter. “Foods are rated in terms of how they elevate blood sugar by their glycemic index,” he explains. “The higher the glycemic index, the higher the blood sugar elevation and the length of time the blood sugar will remain elevated.” When those levels skyrocket, it can lead to health complications like heart disease and diabetes. So while it’s still better to opt for the whole-grain version of bread over the white variety, you don’t want to chow down on sandwich after sandwich—it clocks a 71 on the glycemic index, while a Snicker’s candy bar, shockingly, has a lower rating of 51, according to the Harvard School of Medicine.



BALSAMIC VINEGAR

“Creamy dressings often create a high sugar impact, but balsamic can contain just as much,” says JJ Virgin, celebrity nutritionist and author of JJ Virgin’s Sugar Impact Diet. The reason: A lot of American-made balsamic vinegar is made

with caramel coloring and cornstarch—two sugary substances—with the vinegar base being white wine vinegar. Why? The authentic, Italian versions require a 12- to 25-year aging process that negates the need for coloring and thickening additives, but not everyone wants to pay—or wait—for those products to be imported over. So if you’re ordering a salad in a restaurant, Virgin advises against their version of balsamic. “Instead, ask for extra-virgin olive oil and red wine vinegar for all the flavor without the sugar impact.”

OATMEAL

Here’s the good news: Not all oatmeal is on the too-much-sugar list. But those who rely on the take-along pouches (or have an aversion to waiting for a pot to boil) are most likely beginning their day with a serious blood sugar kick. “It seems like most everyone agrees that oatmeal is a good choice for breakfast,” says Perlmutter. But in actuality, many instant



packets contain 13 grams or more of the sweet stuff because of all the additional flavorings (think maple and brown sugar, apples and cinnamon). If you’ve got the time, opt for steel-cut oats for a higher dose of fiber. Otherwise, you can still choose the quick-cooking variety, just grab the plain packet and add a dollop of almond butter—which research shows can help stabilize

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blood sugar throughout the day—for flavor, protein, and healthy fats.



GLUTEN-FREE FOOD

Hyman refers to this group—the one with gluten-free cookies, cakes and processed food—as junk food. “Just because it’s gluten-free doesn’t mean it’s healthy,” he says. “Gluten-free cakes and cookies are still cakes and cookies,” which means they’re made with sugar. In fact, most contain excess sugars and gum to make up for the missing ingredients, and those are even more difficult for the body to break down. When you’re craving something sweet, but still want to follow a low- or gluten-free plan, Hyman suggests playing with natural fruit instead. Grilling or broiling stone fruit, like peaches and plums, will bring its natural sugars to the forefront, giving you that sweet bite sans sugar crash.



FRUIT JUICE

Bummer: One of the most popular breakfast drinks in America isn’t doing wonders for your waist. “A 12-ounce glass of orange juice contains about 36 grams, or seven teaspoons, of sugar,” says Perlmutter. “Almost all fruit juices are concentrated sources of sugar” because they strip the fiber out of the fruit when it’s sent through a juicer. Now, it probably won’t kill you if you sip a 4-oz.

glass of juice in the a.m. (and you’re still getting a dose of healthy veggies if you grab a green juice), but it is something you need to keep track of so you don’t go overboard throughout the day. Because doing so—like drinking a glass at breakfast, a green juice after your workout, and a soda in the afternoon—can send sugar directly to the liver, says Hyman. “It turns off a fat storage machine, which can lead to dangerous belly fat. [These juices] also don’t help you feel full, so you end up eating more all day and craving more sugar and carbs,” propelling you into that sugar-cycle that’s hard to break.

YOGURT

Yes, even though Greek yogurt is a fabulous source of protein, calcium and probiotics, not all varieties are created equal. Some contain naturally occurring sugars, while others—those with fruit on the bottom, dessert-like flavorings, or mix-in nuts, for example—have extra doses added. The American Heart Association recommends women only eat 30 grams of sugar a day, but some of these contain 24 grams or more per serving—meaning you could be downing your entire sugar quota at breakfast. But all this doesn’t mean we want you skipping out on those healthy benefits we mentioned before. Just think simple—or plain—when it comes to yogurt, and forego the extra flavorings. If it’s too tart for your taste, stir in fresh fruit for a natural hit of sweetness.



DIET FOODS

Many foods labeled as a “diet” product, like 100-calorie snacks and desserts, are anything but because of their fake sugar content, says Hyman. “We’re surrounded by low-calorie, ‘health-conscious foods’ and diet soft drinks that contain sweeteners,” he says. “As a result, the number of Americans who eat products that contain sugar-free sweeteners grew from 70 million in 1987

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to 160 million in 2000. At the same time, obesity in the United States has doubled from 15 to 30 percent.” That’s because the sugar substitutes, such as aspartame, acesulfame, saccharin, and sucralose, confuse your body. Research shows that these non-calorie, sugar-like imitations increase appetite and interrupt the body’s ability to regulate blood sugar, which causes a metabolic change that could lead to diabetes. “If you have a desire for something sweet, it’s better to have real, naturally-occurring sugar than the imitation stuff in ‘fake foods.’ In other words, grab that big bowl of fresh, delicious fruit and enjoy.



11 Horrible Body Language Habits That Are Hard To Quit But You’ll Be Glad You Did

- Body language is a major part of how we communicate.
- It’s important to cultivate positive body language habits and avoid other behaviors that diminish how you appear to others.
- Slouching, shuffling, and aggressive eye contact are all body language habits that are best to drop.

It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it.

It’s a cliché, but it’s true. Body language is a crucial part of communicating. The way you act can warp the entire meaning of what you’re saying.

That being said, bad body language habits are the often hardest habits to break. We become so accustomed to slouching, averting our eyes, or folding our arms that we barely even notice what we’re doing.

Here are several body language mistakes that are going to be tough to ditch. Still, if you’re able to quit them, you’ll definitely thank yourself later.

1. FIDGETING

If you’ve gotten into the habit of fidgeting, it can be difficult to snap out of it. But it’s important to take steps to reigning in this nervous habit.

Fidgeting demonstrates nervousness and a lack of power, as body-language expert and “The Power of Body Language” author Tonya Reiman previously told Business Insider.



2. PLAYING WITH YOUR HAIR



Leave your hair alone. Constantly running your hands across your scalp and twirling your locks is pretty distracting. Plus, as ABC reported, it can damage your

hair overtime. It can be hard to quit, so try playing around a stress ball instead of your hair.

3. ADOPTING A DEFENSIVE POSE

Many people naturally cross their arms or hunch over a bit just because they don’t know what to do with their hands.

However, this posture can make you look uncomfortable, defensive, or untrustworthy.

“You should always keep your hands in view when you are talking,” Patti Wood, a body-language expert and author of “SNAP: Making the Most of First Impressions Body Language and Charisma,” previously told Business Insider. When a listener can’t see your hands, they wonder what you are hiding.”



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4. DOING WEIRD THINGS WITH YOUR HANDS

To gesture or not to gesture? That is the question.

Some people keep too still while speaking, while others flail all over the place.

As The Washington Post reported, behavioral consultant Vanessa Van Edwards notes that using hand gestures while speaking is actually an effective way to engage your audience.

The trick is, avoiding the hand gestures that will trip you up. Don't point, don't pretend to conduct an imaginary orchestra (seriously), and don't get too choreographed.



5. SHUFFLING INSTEAD OF WALKING

Humans are pretty judgmental creatures. We think we can tell a lot about someone based on snap judgments over something as simple as their manner of walking.

BBC reported that how we walk can actually determine our risk of being mugged. Criminals are less likely to target people walking with an air of confidence.

It can be hard to change up your walk once you've fallen into bad habits, but it's important to walk with confidence and coordination. Don't shuffle through life.



6. FORGETTING TO SMILE



Reiman previously told Business Insider that smiling demonstrates confidence, openness, warmth, and energy.

"It also sets off the mirror neurons in your listener, instructing them to smile back. Without the smile, an individual is often seen as grim or aloof," she explained.

7. APPEARING DISTRACTED

There's nothing more irritating than talking to someone who's clearly not paying attention to you.

Some people are just naturally distracted or busy, so it

can be tempting to check your phone or watch at every available moment. Still, you've got to keep this impulse in check when you're around others. Otherwise, you'll just come across as a rude and uncaring person.



8. SLOUCHING

Stand up straight. Terrible posture is easy to develop, especially if you're slouched over a desk for the majority of the day.



Slouching doesn't just make you look un-confident, writes Catherine New for Psychology Today, it's also bad for your back. Improve your health and the image you present to the world by standing up straight.

9. NONEXISTENT OR AGGRESSIVE EYE CONTACT

Here's another body language pitfall where moderation is key.

"What Your Body Says (And How to Master the Message)" author Sharon Sayler previously told Business Insider that the ideal amount of eye contact should be "a series of long glances instead of intense stares."



Overly long stares can make whoever you're talking to pretty uncomfortable. On the other hand, averting your eyes indicates disgust or a lack of confidence.

10. BEING TOO STILL

It's definitely good not to be jumping all over the place, constantly. However, you don't want to be too eerily calm during conversations. This may make people feel uneasy, or that you're not interested in what they're saying.

Instead, try to mirror the person you're speaking with. Don't mimic them - they'll probably get offended



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by that - but subtly copy some of their gestures and expressions.

Writing for *Psychology Today*, Dr. Jeff Thompson notes that mirroring will leave people perceiving you as positive and persuasive.

It can be tough to break out of your poker face, especially if you're just naturally not that expressive - but it's worth trying, since it can improve how you're perceived.

11. MISMATCHING VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

You might be saying all the right things - but if your body language doesn't match up with your words, you might end up rubbing people the wrong way.

In fact, researchers at Sacred Heart University devoted an entire study to this phenomenon. Their subjects were married couples, but their finding was pretty universal - when verbal and non-verbal messages do not align, "nonverbal signals carry the brunt of the emotional message."



6 Reasons You're Gaining Back All the Weight You Lost



It's a conundrum most people face: You've started exercising regularly and overhauled your diet. After a few months, you finally reach your weight loss goals, whether you're down 10, 20, or 30 pounds. But slowly, the number on the scale starts to creep back up, and you end up right back where you started. What's going on?

The truth is that your body quite literally fights against losing weight, explains Bruce Y. Lee, M.D., executive director for the Global Obesity Prevention Center at Johns Hopkins University. That's because when you start dropping pounds, your body perceives it as a threat to your survival. In order to "protect you," it slows your metabolism down to fight the weight loss, he explains.

It goes way back to our caveman days, when food was more scarce, says Wendy Scinta, M.D., president of the Obesity Medicine Association. The part of your brain that controls your appetite has been around for a very long time, while obesity, in comparison, is a new epidemic that our bodies haven't evolved to fight just yet.

Research suggests that losing weight, especially very

quickly, can easily lead to weigh re-gain, says Dr. Lee. "If you rapidly lose weight, you can rapidly gain that weight back," he adds.

The good news is, there are some things you can do to combat the vicious cycle. Here are six reasons why the pounds are piling back on—and what you can do to get back on track right now.

1. YOU'RE NOT PRIORITIZING MUSCLE

Trying to maintain weight loss with a slower metabolism can, understandably, be a battle since you'll have a harder time burning calories.

Even if you're careful about eating enough protein while you lose weight, it's still likely you'll lose some muscle as you drop weight, which is a problem, says Dr. Scinta. Muscle is metabolically active tissue, so you'll burn more calories at rest. In fact, gaining muscle mass is one of the only ways you can boost your metabolism, she says.

The fix: Cardio can certainly help you shed pounds, but strength training should be added into the mix. Aim for a minimum of three days of resistance training per week, Brad Schoenfeld, Ph.D., C.S.C.S., an assistant professor in exercise science at Lehman College, told *Men's Health* recently. This will help preserve, or even increase, your lean mass while you eat fewer calories.

Eating enough protein is crucial, too. It keeps you feeling fuller for longer and has a greater thermic effect, meaning your body burns more calories digesting it than carbs and fat, he said. Shoot for roughly 1 to 2 grams of protein per kilogram of bodyweight, says Dr. Scinta, and spread your intake throughout your day, aiming for about 30 grams per meal. (You can easily

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get that through a few eggs and some Greek yogurt at breakfast, a cup of beans in your salad at lunch, or 3 ounces of beef at dinner.)

2. YOU'RE EATING MORE THAN YOU REALIZE

When you lose weight, your hunger hormones, like ghrelin, increase, while the hormones that make you feel full, like leptin, take a dip, says Dr. Scinta. So along with your slower metabolism, you'll feel ravenous, too.

And if you loosen the reins on the diet that helped you lose weight, you can easily gain pounds back after you give up on it, especially if you followed a strict eating plan says Dr. Lee. You'll likely go right back to your old eating habits or indulge in foods you couldn't eat on your diet.

The fix: If you step on the scale and notice it's up even just five pounds, that can quickly escalate, says Dr. Scinta. If you think what you're eating is the culprit, try logging your meals in a journal or use an app like *MyFitnessPal* to start keeping track of your intake again. This will help you figure out where you're slipping up.

3. YOU'RE SKIPPING BREAKFAST

It's called the most important meal of the day for a reason. Eating breakfast helps keep your metabolism chugging along throughout your morning, says Dr. Scinta. The longer you wait, the more your blood sugar levels will dip, she explains, which means you'll likely reach for refined carbs and sugary foods, like bagels or soda, later on in the afternoon.

The fix: In a study published in the journal *Obesity*, researchers found that downing a protein-rich morning meal not only fills you up, but also makes you less likely to snack by squashing your cravings, too.

Try to eat something simple that you can take on the go, suggests Dr. Scinta. If you're not one to whip up a bowl of oats or scramble up some eggs, glug a shake that includes at least 30 grams of protein, she says. This will help stabilize your blood sugar and keep you feeling full until lunch without the hassle of prepping a sit-down meal.

4. YOU'RE NOT SLEEPING ENOUGH

Sleep affects the number on your scale, says Dr. Scinta. In fact, an analysis of 28 studies published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that that people who slept an average of 3 to 5.5 hours a night ate an extra 385 calories the next day compared to people who got 7 to 12 hours of shuteye—and the foods they tended to pick were high in empty calories.

That's because the less you sleep, the higher your hunger hormones get. "Now, your ghrelin is already higher, so when you don't sleep it gets even worse, and you're going to go through the day even hungrier," she says.

Plus, when you don't snooze for long enough, your body doesn't restore its serotonin levels, a hormone that keeps your mood in check. "When it's low, you're going to try and replenish it with foods that make you feel good, like refined carbs and sweets," says Dr. Scinta.

The fix: Your body optimally needs seven to nine hours of sleep per night, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

5. YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY ARE BAD INFLUENCES

Your surroundings have a huge influence on your eating habits, and that includes the people you interact with every day, says Dr. Lee, like your friends, family, coworkers, and significant other.

"We tend to be more likely to eat what they eat," he says. "If, for instance, you are on a healthy diet or you want to be a vegetarian, but all your friends are not vegetarian, it's really hard to go against the grain like that."

The fix: "Look at the people around you and see if they will change their habits with you," says Dr. Lee. "If the people around you are doing the same thing and can offer support or reduce the temptation, that can go a long way."

Plus, studies have shown that when you hold yourself accountable with another person, you're more likely to maintain your weight loss, says Dr. Scinta. So, if your spouse loves to go out to eat, try telling him/her you'd like to start cooking at home as a way for both of you to make better choices. If you make it clear that it's important to you, she'll be game.

6. YOU'RE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF

Your weight is bound to fluctuate a bit, even after you've met a certain goal, says Dr. Lee, but that shouldn't frustrate you to the point of calling it quits.

"Many times, people lose weight and starting regaining a bit, and they go through these psychological cycles that impede them," he says. "They think, 'Oh my goodness, I'm a failure,' and then they just give up." Once you fall into that mindset, you'll eventually get right back to your starting point, he says.

The fix: Reevaluate why you want to lose weight in the first place, says Dr. Lee. Instead of nailing your goals down to the pound, think about the overall direction you want to go and what motivates you to keep going. Losing weight will make you look great, sure, but your health should always be your main priority, he says.

"If you're yo-yoing back and forth, you may not get the benefit of reducing your risk of cancer, heart disease, joint problems, and other chronic diseases linked to obesity," he says. The thought of a longer, healthier life? That will help you focus.



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Why the Liquid on Top of Your Yogurt Matters

You sit down at your desk, grab a yogurt container from your lunchbox, carefully pull back the foil lid, and see a familiar sight. A thin layer of clear liquid is sitting on top of the creamy goodness below. You have two options here: pour it out or mix it in. So what do you do?

Although it may gross you out, what you should do is grab that spoon and stir it all together, and here's why. That liquid is known as whey (yes, like Little Miss Muffet's curds and whey). Although it consists mainly of water, whey also contains a little bit of protein, potassium, and calcium. Stirring in the whey not only adds nutrition to your yogurt but also offers a creamier consistency.

If you don't like seeing the whey separated at the top, try this instead. Before pulling off the lid, shake the container, like you do with orange juice. Then when you open it, the whey and yogurt will already be mixed up for you. This is also a good trick if you prefer yogurt with fruit on the bottom. Then just scrape the lid on the edge of the container to avoid wasting any yogurt.

