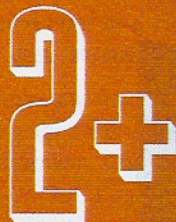




## BEAT BLADDER PROBLEMS

CONSTANTLY running for the loo? Recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs) may be to blame, according to a new study from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. Researchers found that women who'd had at least three urinary tract infections within a year needed to go sooner and averaged nearly twice as many pit stops as those who didn't get repeat infections. Over time, the inflammation and irritation from recurrent UTIs may make bladder nerves "so sensitive, they behave like there's an infection when there isn't," explains lead study author Lily Arya, MD, chief of urogynecology and reconstructive surgery at the university. If you've had three UTIs in the past year, Arya suggests seeing a urogynecologist or urologist to make sure your infections aren't being caused by polyps or stones in the bladder or kidneys. Prevent further flare-ups by consuming four to six ounces of cranberry juice daily (any more irritates the bladder) and urinating post-sex to flush bacteria from the urethra and bladder.



» THE NUMBER OF GLASSES OF WATER A DAY THAT WILL REDUCE YOUR ODDS OF DEVELOPING PREDIABETIC BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS. According to a French study, people who quaff a half liter or more of water daily lower their risk by 21 percent. Water dilutes levels of the hormone vasopressin, which can lead to elevated blood sugar.

## FAST TAKES

1/

**LIVE ALMOST A YEAR LONGER...** by taking blood pressure medication if it's prescribed for you. A study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that people who had been on blood pressure drugs for up to 22 years lived a day longer for every month they took their meds. If you start in your fifties, that could add nine months to your life.

2/

**QUICKLY CURE CRAVINGS...** for something sweet. The next time you're jonesing for a treat, step away from the vending machine and keep going. People who took a brisk 15-minute walk before doing assigned work ate half as much chocolate as those who remained sedentary, according to a new study from the University of Exeter in the U.K.

3/

**TIME A BREAST REDUCTION RIGHT...** by doing it early. Women over 50 have nearly triple the risk for minor surgical infections as women under 40, according to research conducted by board-certified plastic surgeon Michele Shermak. Declining hormone levels may be responsible. "Estrogen makes skin more resilient, which speeds healing," Shermak says.

## [TRUE OR FALSE?]

### CHEESE IS DEADLY FOR YOUR HEART.

❖ **FALSE.** Cheese contains a ton of saturated fat, which typically raises unhealthy blood cholesterol levels and contributes to arterial plaque buildup. But Danish researchers found that eating cheese has a neutral effect on LDL ("bad") and total cholesterol blood levels, possibly because of the way it's digested by the body. The finding, however, does not give you the green light for reveling in Welsh rarebit and fondue: Cheese is loaded with calories (for instance, 114 for one tiny ounce of Cheddar).



## TESTS YOU MAY POSTPONE

> **PAP SMEAR** If your annual Pap tests have consistently come back normal, you can wait three years between tests, say new cervical-cancer-screening guidelines recently released by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

> **PELVIC EXAM** While gynecologists routinely perform these, "no U.S. guidelines recommend pelvic exams as a screening tool for cancer or other conditions, since there is no evidence that asymptomatic women benefit from this procedure," says Analía R. Stormo, a research fellow with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "If you feel fine, ask your doctor whether you really need a pelvic."

> **COLONOSCOPY** Get the all clear on this colorectal-cancer test at 50, and the American Cancer Society says you can wait 10 years before you need a follow-up (and another 10 if your test at 60 goes well). "Since the procedure carries slight risks for bowel perforation, you shouldn't get them more often than you need them," says James Goodwin, MD, a gerontologist at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. However, if your doctor finds polyps, you'll need to get tested every three to five years, depending on the size and prevalence of the growths. ❖