



NEWS FROM THE

World of Medicine

BY SAMANTHA RIDEOUT

An Easy Jet Lag Weapon

Sleeping pills, light-regulating apps, herbal remedies—there's enough jet lag advice to fill a 747. But one of the easiest tricks is to regulate your mealtimes. In a recent study of airline crew members on long flights, researchers found that travelers who eat at normal mealtimes in their destination time zone (as opposed to eating whenever they want) will likely experience fewer symptoms of jet lag—such as fatigue, moodiness, and brain fog. Fortunately, many airlines serve on-board meals according to the time at their final stop. Of course, that means you've got to eat when, as well as what, they serve you.

How Middle-Aged Memory Works

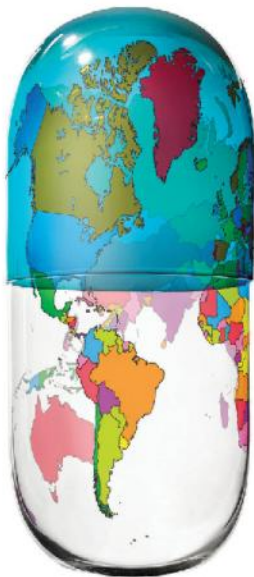
Researchers at McGill University used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to monitor the brain activity of people ages 19 to 76 as they viewed images on a screen

and then were asked to recall details. In general, participants 40 and older recalled fewer elements than younger people, but the lead author noted that this “may not be a ‘deficit’ in brain function.” Instead, as the fMRI data showed, middle-aged people tended to use a part of the brain involved with introspection, suggesting that older people were simply more inwardly focused than their younger counterparts. Mindful-

ness meditation, which trains the brain to pay more attention to the outside world, can help strengthen recall ability.

Taking Kidney Stones for a Ride

Doctors at Michigan State University's urology clinic love the Big Thunder Mountain Railroad at Walt Disney World. Why? Because a number of patients reported passing kidney stones after riding it. So the urologists put the roller coaster to the test. They used a 3-D printer



to create a model of a kidney containing urine and kidney stones, and then took it for a ride. The forces exerted by the coaster (which includes quick drops and sharp turns but does not turn upside down) did cause stones to dislodge, particularly when the model was placed near the back. Patients with kidney stones might get relief on a coaster ride, the lead researcher said.

Most Diabetes Patients Skip Sight-Saving Exams

Annual dilated eye exams can prevent 95 percent of diabetes-related vision loss from diabetic retinopathy and other serious eye diseases. Yet nearly six in ten Americans with diabetes don't get these tests regularly, according to a recent study of almost 2,000 patients. Seniors over 65 may be eligible to get free exams through Eye Care America (aao.org/eyecare-america).

Surprising Risk Factors for Dementia

About two thirds of a person's risk for developing dementia can be blamed on a combination of genes, lifestyle factors, and health conditions. The rest may be due to environmental triggers. In a review of 60 previous studies, analysts at the University of Edinburgh found that the strongest correlations were with air pollution, vitamin D deficiency, and occupational exposure to certain pesticides

(a concern for farmworkers but not for people exposed to trace amounts from produce). Want to see if you're in the clear? Vitamin D deficiency can be diagnosed using a blood test and treated with supplements. Visit airnow.gov to check your local air quality, and stay indoors when pollutant levels are unhealthily high.

Walk Faster for Your Health

You already know walking can help you lose weight and improve your health. But an article in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that steps taken at a brisk pace are particularly beneficial for cardio-metabolic fitness (insulin, body weight, cholesterol, and blood pressure). For healthy adults, a good target is 150 minutes per week at 100 steps or more per minute, the researchers said. Whatever your step count, more—and faster—is better.

Ticks and Meat Allergies

If you live in or visit a tick-infested area and eating a burger makes you sick, those ticks might be to blame. Research has found that in some people, a tick bite can lead to an allergy to red meat (and, more rarely, to dairy). It's caused when the bite triggers the immune system to view alpha-gal (a carbohydrate found in most meat) as a threat, causing congestion, hives, vomiting, cramps, and even anaphylactic shock. The allergy can be confirmed with a blood or skin test. **R**