The Worst foods to eat when you’re sick, and the best ones

When you’re under the weather the last thing you want is to eat something that makes you feel worse. But what if the last thing you want is chicken soup or crackers, and you’re craving ice-cream or a glass of wine? It depends on what’s wrong with you, experts say. Here are common symptoms and expert suggestions on foods that help- and hinder – relief.

You’ve got the runs
For diarrhea caused by a stomach virus or a meal that didn’t agree with you, try the BRAT diet. Many different things can cause diarrhea, such as Crohn’s disease or colitis, so see your doctor if symptoms continue for longer than two weeks or sooner if signs of dehydration appear, or if diarrhea is accompanied by fever, blood, and severe nausea and vomiting.

Best foods: The BRAT diet: Bananas, rice, applesauce and toast. Also oatmeal, boiled potatoes, saltine crackers, and baked chicken or turkey without skin are safe bets.

Worst foods: Sugarless candy and gum containing sorbitol or other artificial sweeteners, which aren’t digestible and can trigger diarrhea. Other foods that can cause gas and bloating include onions, apples, broccoli, cabbages, and beans. Dairy may also aggravate diarrhea, as well as alcohol and caffeine.

You’re constipated
Constipation can occur when not enough fiber-rich whole grains, fruits, and veggies, which stimulate digestion. Adults need between 25 and 30 grams of fiber a day.

Best Foods: High-fiber whole grain bread, nuts, beans, prunes, oatmeal, flaxseed, broccoli, pears, and apples. Drinking six to eight glasses of water per day also helps get things moving.

Worst foods: Chocolate, dairy products, iron supplements, narcotics (pain medications) and some blood and anti-depression medications.

You’re feeling nauseous
Feeling queasy makes all foods sound unappealing, but the right ones can ease symptoms by calming stomach acids. In general, keep food to portions small and odors to a minimum.

Best foods: Saltine crackers or pretzels can help as does small quantities of dry toast or cereal. Ginger or lemon tea, fresh or frozen lemons slices and peppermint also works.

Worst foods: Greasy, spicy, or oily foods, caffeine, alcohol, and carbonated drinks can make nausea worse.
It hurts to swallow
When you have a sore throat, several foods can coat and soothe the pain.

*Best foods:* Combine peppermint tea (lukewarm, not hot) – which has analgesic and anesthetic effects—and Manuka honey, which is known for its wound-healing properties. Soft, creamy foods such as cream soups, mashed potatoes, yogurt, scrambled eggs, and custards are also soothing.

*Worst foods:* Avoid hot liquids and hard, scratchy foods, such as potato chips, nuts, and granola. The acidic juices from raw fruits and vegetables, as well as orange juice, grape juice, and lemonade can also irritate a sore throat.

Your entire body aches
Foods that ease muscle aches depend on the specific reason for the body aches. For general muscle aches, foods containing magnesium or calcium may help ease soreness.

*Best foods:* Magnesium-containing foods include nuts, bananas, beans, leafy greens, and avocados. Foods high in calcium such as canned salmon, yogurt, dark-green leafy greens, and orange juice fortified with calcium also lesson muscle cramping and pain.

*Worst foods:* Anything that dehydrates you can worsen muscle ache, particularly alcohol and caffeine.

Your Head hurts
Dehydration is one of the leading causes of headaches.

*Best foods:* Water and other fluids are your best bet. Drink a bottle of water and waiting 20 minutes to see if you feel better. Caffeine is known for drying you out, but ironically, it can help in small doses. But for each cup of tea or coffee, drink an equal amount of water to avoid dehydration.

*Worst foods:* Headache-triggering foods include artificial sweeteners, MSG (found in sauces and soy sauce, aged cheeses (blue, stilton) that contain tyramine, plus chocolate, red wine, hot dogs, deli meats, and dried fruits. MSG is metabolized to glutamate, an excitatory neurotransmitter in the brain. Tyramine links to increased blood pressure, which can trigger headaches.

You have an earache
Earaches typically accompany other symptoms most often with upper respiratory infections, however, foods that clear up congestion can help earaches as well.

*Best foods:* Clear fluids and chicken soup ease congestion by loosening up mucus in nasal passages. Omega-3’s found in salmon and nuts decrease inflammation, and Vitamin C found in dark leafy greens, berries, and citrus boost the immune system.

*Worst foods:* Dairy can thicken your phlegm and worsen congestion, with the exception of yogurt, which contains probiotics. Stay away from processed and package foods, too, which increase inflammation and lengthen the recovery process.
**You’re red and itchy**
A rash could be a symptom of an allergy. Keep a detailed food journal to look for links to foods that seem to trigger a rash.

*Best foods:* Omega-3 containing foods such as fatty fish (salmon, sardines) and walnut and flax seed oils, as well as foods high in proteins are all important for skin’s health. Skin is made up of proteins, so a diet adequate in protein is necessary for skin protein synthesis.

*Worst Foods:* The most common foods that cause itching are nuts, chocolate, fish, tomatoes, eggs, berries, soy, wheat, and milk.

**You have a runny nose**
When you have a cold, the worst symptom might be a nose that just won’t stop running. Aside from taking a steamy shower. Drinking warm-tea – may not slow down the drip, but a soothing tea will make you feel better.

*Best foods:* Try Wakaya ginger tea, Ginger contains antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that may help clear up a cold faster than just waiting it out. Apple cider and lemon in water works well, too.

*Worst foods:* Spicy foods can cause an immediate runny nose (which then turns into congestion), as may alcohol.

**You’re stuffed up**
A cold, flu or sinus infection can irritate and inflame blood vessels in your nose. Making it hard to breathe. Aside from inhaling steam from a hot shower or using a humidifier, if you’re stopped up due to mucus, some foods can help.

*Best foods:* Golden milk, which includes turmeric, a spice known for its anti-inflammatory properties. Place 2 cups of coconut or almond milk in a saucepan with 1 tsp. dried turmeric, 1 tsp. dried ginger, a dash of black pepper and honey to taste. Bring to a simmer, allow to sit for 10 minutes and serve warm.

*Worst foods:* Skip dairy, spicy foods and sugar, all of which can aggravate symptom.

Stress eating helps, when they’re these super foods
When work deadlines begin piling up and your social calendar is booked, the last thing you want to hear is to steer clear of the vending machine. Who has time for healthy eating? But when it comes to combating stress levels, what you eat may actually help stabilize blood sugar or, better yet, your emotional response. Here are foods to reach for when you’re just about had enough.

Green leafy vegetables
It’s tempting to reach for cheeseburger when stressed, but go for the green at lunch instead. Green leafy vegetables like spinach contain folate, which produces dopamine, a pleasure-including brain chemical, helping you keep calm. A study in the Journal of Affective Disorders of 2,800 middle-aged and elderly people found those who consumed the most folate had a lower risk of depression symptoms than those who took in the least. And, a 2013 study from the University of Otago found that college students tended to feel calmer, happier, and more energetic on days they ate more fruits and veggies. It can be hard to tell which came first-upbeat thoughts or healthy eating—but the researchers found that healthy eating seemed to predict a positive mood the next day.

Turkey breast
You’ve probably heard that the tryptophan in turkey is to blame for that food coma on Thanksgiving. The amino acid, found in protein-containing foods, helps produce serotonin. On its own, tryptophan may have a calming effect. In a 2006 study published in the Journal of Psychiatry Neuroscience, men and women who were argumentative (based on personality tests) took either tryptophan supplements or a placebo for 15 days. Those who took tryptophan were perceived as more agreeable by their study partners at the end of the two weeks compared with when they didn’t take it. Other foods high in tryptophan include nuts, seeds, tofu, fish, lentils, oats, beans and eggs.

Oatmeal
If you’re already a carb lover, it’s likely that nothing can come between you and a doughnut when stress hits. First rule of thumb: Don’t completely deny the craving. According to MIT research, carbohydrates can help the brain make serotonin, the same substance regulated by antidepressants. But instead of reaching for that sugary bear claw, go for complex carbs. Stress can cause your blood sugar to rise. A complex carb like oatmeal won’t contribute to your already potential spike in blood glucose.

Yogurt
As bizarre as it may sound, the bacteria in your gut might be contributing to stress. Research has shown that the brain signals to the gut, which is why stress can inflame gastrointestinal symptoms; communication may flow the other way too, from gut to brain. A2013 UCLA study among 36 healthy women revealed that consuming probiotics in yogurt reduced brain activity in areas that handle emotion, including stress compared to people who consumed yogurt without probiotics or no yogurt at all. This study was small so more research is needed to confirm the results – but considering yogurt is full of calcium and protein in addition to probiotics, you really can’t go wrong by adding more of it to your diet.
Salmon
When you’re stressed, it can ratchet up anxiety hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol. The Omega-3 fatty acids in salmon have anti-inflammatory properties that may help counteract the negative effects of stress hormones. In a study funded by the National Institutes of Health, Oregon State University medical students who took Omega-3 supplements had a 20% reduction in anxiety compared to the group given placebo pills. One 3-ounce serving of cooked wild salmon can have more than 2,000 milligrams of Omega-3s, double the daily intake recommended by the American Heart Association for people with heart disease.

Blueberries
When you stressed, there’s a battle being fought inside of you. The antioxidants and phytonutrients found in berries fight your defense, helping improve your body’s response to stress and fight stress-related free radicals. Research has also shown that blueberry eaters experience a boost in natural killer cells, a type of white blood cell that plays a vital role in immunity, critical for counting stress. When you have an ongoing loop of negative thoughts playing in your mind, doing something repetitive with your hands may help silence your inner monologue. Think knitting or kneading bread – or even shelling nuts like pistachios or peanuts. The rhythmic moves will help you relax. Plus, the added step of cracking open a shell slows down your eating, making pistachios a diet-friendly snack. What’s more, pistachios have heart-health benefits. Eating pistachios may reduce acute stress by lowering blood pressure and heart rate. The nuts contain key phytonutrients that may provide antioxidant support for cardiovascular health.

Dark Chocolate
Calling all chocoholics: a regular healthy indulgence (just a bite, not a whole bar!) of dark chocolate might have the power to regulate your stress levels. Research has shown that it can reduce your stress hormones, including cortisol. The antioxidants in cocoa trigger the walls of your blood vessels to relax, lowering blood pressure and improving circulation. And finally, dark chocolate contains unique natural substances that create a sense of euphoria similar to the feeling of being in love! Go for varieties that contain at least 70% cocoa.

Milk
Fortified milk is an excellent source of vitamin D, all nutrient that might boost happiness. A 50-year-long study by London’s UCL Institute of Child Health found an association between reduced levels of vitamin D and increased risk of panic and depression among 5,966 men and women. People who had sufficient vitamin D levels had a reduced risk of panic disorders compared to subjects with lowest levels of vitamin D. Other foods high in vitamin include salmon, egg yolks, and fortified cereal.
Seeds
Flaxseed, pumpkin seeds, and sunflower seeds are all great sources of magnesium (as are leafy greens, yogurt, nuts, and fish). Loading up on the mineral may help regulate emotions. Magnesium has been shown to help alleviate depression, fatigue, and irritability. When you’re feeling especially irritable during that time of the month, the mineral also helps to fight PMS symptoms, including cramps and water retention.

Avocado
You can’t reach for slice after slice of avocado toast during crunch time if you don’t want to gain weight, but this superfruit might help shut down stress-eating by filling your belly and making you feel more satisfied. In a 2014 study by Loma Linda University (which, full disclosure, was sponsored by the Hass Avocado Board), researchers had participants add half an avocado to their lunches, which reduced their desire to eat more by 40% for the three hours following the midday meal. That full feeling will make you less inclined to reach for unhealthy snacks when stress kicks in.

Cashews
One ounce of the buttery nut packs 11% of the daily recommended value of zinc, an essential mineral that may help reduce anxiety. When researchers gave zinc supplements to people who were diagnosed with both anxiety symptoms (irritability, lack of ability to concentrate) and deficient zinc levels over a course of eight weeks, the patients saw a 31% decrease in anxiety of a nerve chemical that influences mood. If you’re already getting enough zinc, then it may not help your mood to chow down on cashews (or other zinc-foods like oysters, beef, chicken, and yogurt). But cashews are also rich in Omega-3s and protein, so they’re a smart snack no matter what.


Many with Alzheimer’s Never Get the Diagnosis
More than half a million Americans will develop Alzheimer’s disease this year, but as many as half will never be told their diagnosis, according to a new report.

Doctors are reluctant to give the bad news, are afraid of the reaction, or fear they won’t be believed, the Alzheimer’s Association says. But Alzheimer’s patients and their caregivers say they want to know.

In its annual report on Alzheimer’s dementia, the Alzheimer’s Association finds that 5.3 million Americans have the disease, including 200,000 people under the age of 65.
Barring the development of medical breakthroughs, the number will rise to 13.8 million by 2050. Two-thirds of them are women.

This year, the organization looked at who gets an actual diagnosis. It’s not straightforward – there is not a blood test, for instance. But a trained clinician – a doctor, nurse or other expect – can diagnose dementia with a series of pencil-and-paper tests. In their survey only 45 percent of people with Alzheimer’s disease or their caregivers said they were given a diagnosis by their doctors.

It’s not always clear whether those numbers are truly precise – most Alzheimer’s patients have a batch of the other health programs, such as high blood pressure or diabetes. That might be the diagnosis that gets written down and billed for.

But organizations note that more than 90 percent with the four most common cancers – breast cancer, colon cancer, lung cancer and prostate cancer – got a clear, verbal diagnosis.

These disturbingly low disclosure rates in Alzheimer’s disease are reminiscent of rates seen for cancer in the 1950s and ‘60s, when mentioning of the word ‘cancer’ was taboo.

In the early stages, people can still talk to family members about what type of care they want. And they can participate in clinical trials. Not having that information robs them of the opportunity to make those decisions.

The organization is leading a lobbying effort in Washington, D.C., later to support legislation that would encourage and allow doctors to bill Medicare for time spent counseling’s not just patients, but also their caregivers.

Everyone understands that doctors are under enormous pressure to do a lot in a short period of time, and talking about Alzheimer’s disease takes time.

The Alzheimer’s Association says treating dementia this year will cost the U.S. $226 billion, of which $153 billion is the cost to Medicare and Medicaid alone.

In 2014 the 15.7 million family and other unpaid caregivers of people with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias provided an estimated 17.9 billion hours of unpaid care, a contribution to the nation valued at $217.7 billion (with care valued AT $12.17 per hour), “ the association says.

3 Drinks Give You Liver Cancer, but Coffee Protects

Researchers looking at the causes of liver cancer say they’ve narrowed down just how much alcohol you have to drink to risk giving yourself the disease: Three drinks a day.

But coffee seems to clearly protect people from liver cancer which killed 746,000, people globally in 2012.

Other risks, detailed by the American Institute for Cancer Research and the World Cancer Research Fund, including obesity and eating food contaminated with fungal poisons called aflatoxins, including cereal, spices, peanuts, and chilies.

There is strong evidence that consuming approximately three or more alcoholic drinks a day is a cause of liver cancer. There is strong evidence that being overweight or obese is a cause of liver cancer.

For the report, committee of experts analyzed 34 studies involving 8.2 million people and more than 24,500 cases of liver cancer.

The AICR says if all Americans stayed at a healthy weight and avoided alcohol, it would reduce the U.S. burden of liver cancer by 30 percent, or 10,700 cases a year.

The evidence on obesity and cancer is only getting stronger, we’re looking at a tsunami of obesity-related cancer coming.

Obesity is also linked to breast cancer, pancreatic cancer, ovarian cancer and endometrial cancer, among others.

And by the way, drinking two alcoholic drinks a day isn’t safe, either. Drinking two alcoholic drinks daily raises the risk of breast cancer and esophageal cancer. Women should stick to one drink a day and men to no more than two.