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LIVE WELL WORK WELL

Health and wellness tips for your work and life — brought to you by the insurance professionals at Alamo Insurance Group

Lead Water Poisoning

Although lead-based paint and dust in older buildings are the most common sources of lead poisoning, drinking water is sometimes a source as well. This is mostly due to old, corroded pipes.

High levels of lead in the bloodstream can cause serious health effects, especially in children under the age of 6. Symptoms of lead poisoning in children include developmental delay, learning difficulties, irritability, weight loss, fatigue, abdominal pain, vomiting, constipation and hearing loss.

Since you can't see, smell or taste lead in water, the only way to detect it is to have the water tested. If your home is served by public water systems, your local water authority should be able to provide this information. You can also use an at-home lead-testing kit.

If your tap water's lead levels exceed 15 ppb, you can possibly reduce the threat of lead poisoning by doing the following:

- Run cold water for at least a minute before using or drinking it.
- Do not use hot tap water for drinking and cooking, since hot water draws lead from the corroded pipes. Instead, use cold tap water and heat it on the stove.
- Invest in a home water filtration system that reduces the amount of lead in your water.

This article is intended for informational purposes only and is not intended to be exhaustive, nor should any discussion or opinions be construed as professional advice. Readers should contact a health professional for appropriate advice.

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Zika: What You Should Know

A relatively new virus is prompting worldwide concern because of how quickly it is spreading across the globe. Also alarming is its connection to microcephaly, a neurological birth disorder. Transmitted by the aggressive Aedes aegypti mosquito, the Zika virus is rare because it can infect the fetuses of pregnant women who have the virus.

Symptoms of Zika are generally mild and include headaches, fever, rash and sometimes conjunctivitis (pink eye). Most people don't even realize that they have been infected by the virus, which is why it is such a concern for pregnant women.

The Zika virus has spread to more than 20 countries since May of 2015. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is warning pregnant women against travel to any affected areas. Furthermore, health officials in several of those countries are telling female citizens to avoid becoming pregnant, in some cases, for up to two years. Several states have confirmed the virus in individuals who traveled to areas where the virus is circulating.

Researchers are working to create a Zika vaccine. Until then, the best method of prevention is to avoid travel to areas with active infestations. If you do travel to one of these areas, be sure to wear mosquito repellent and thick clothing that covers as much of your body as possible. Unlike most mosquitos, the type that carries Zika is most active during the daytime hours until dusk, and it also prefers to be indoors. This makes it very important to use screen doors and windows and to stay in air-conditioned hotels when possible.

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RICE-CRUSTED PIZZA

This is a versatile, gluten-free pizza recipe. Experiment using different kinds of rice, cheese and toppings.

- 2 cups cooked rice
- 16 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 egg
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 2 cups tomato puree

Directions

Heat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease a 12-inch pizza pan or baking sheet.

Crack the egg in a mixing bowl, stirring until blended. Add the cooked rice, half of the cheese and the salt. Mix well to combine the ingredients.

Spread the rice mixture in the prepared pan, pressing firmly and making the outer edge slightly raised. Cook for 10 minutes.

Spread the tomato puree evenly over the rice mixture, and sprinkle any additional toppings over the sauce. Bake for 15 minutes. Add the remaining cheese to the top and bake for an additional five minutes to melt it.

Makes: 12 servings

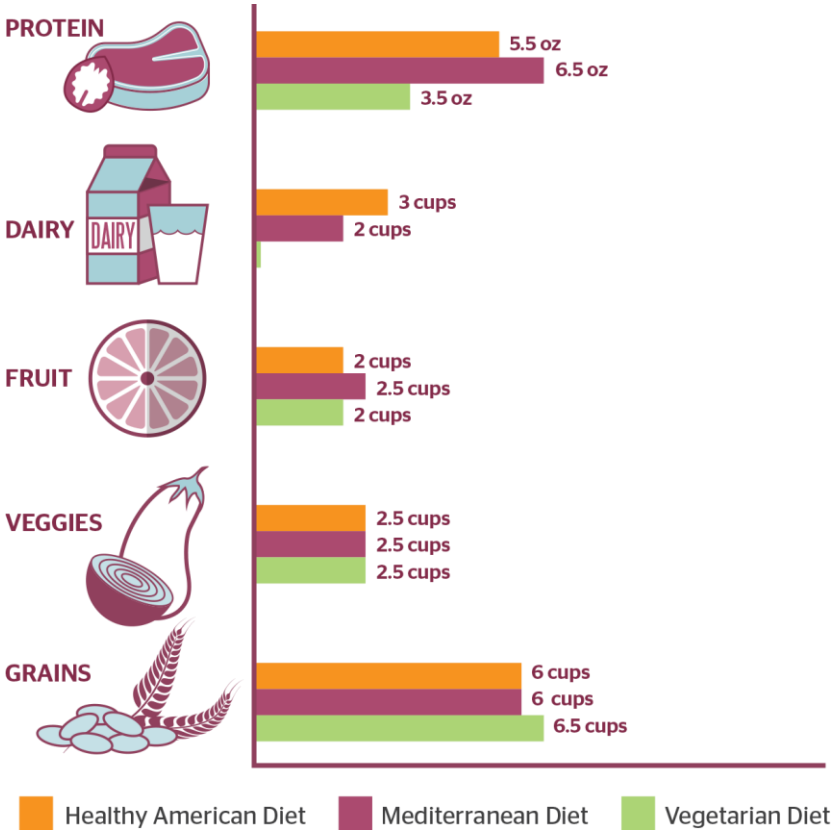
Nutritional Information (per serving)

Total Calories	170
Total Fat	9 g
Protein	11 g
Carbohydrates	12 g
Dietary Fiber	1 g
Saturated Fat	5 g
Sodium	320 mg

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

3 Diets to Help You Follow the New Dietary Guidelines

The new 2015-2020 federal dietary guidelines focus on the prevention of diet-related chronic diseases instead of just weight management alone. Here are three suggested diets designed around the guidelines to help make them more user-friendly:

- **Healthy American Diet**: A healthier version of what people in the United States typically consume, it suggests 2.5 cups of vegetables, 2 cups of fruit, 6 ounces of grain, 3 cups of dairy and 5.5 ounces of protein daily.
- **Mediterranean Diet:** Heavy on protein and fruits while light on dairy, this diet suggests 6.5 ounces of protein, 2.5 cups of fruit and 2 cups of dairy daily. Like the American diet, it also suggests 2.5 cups of vegetables and 6 ounces of grain daily.
- **Vegetarian Diet:** This diet only suggests 3.5 ounces of protein daily. To replace meat and seafood, it prescribes 7 ounces of nuts and seeds, as well as 8 ounces of tofu and other soy products. It also recommends 2.5 cups of vegetables, 2 cups of fruit and 6.5 ounces of grain.

*Above examples are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.