

# LIVE WELL WORK WELL

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## Limited Health Literacy Is a Major Barrier to Heart Disease Prevention and Treatment

Limited health literacy is a major barrier blocking many people from achieving good cardiovascular health or benefiting from effective treatment according to a scientific statement published in the *American Heart Association's Journal Circulation*.

Health literacy encompasses the ability to read and other skills such as asking questions about your care, understanding documents with medical terminology, performing the basic arithmetic needed to take medication correctly, and negotiating with healthcare providers and insurance companies.

The statement provides an overview of the issues faced by people with limited health literacy based on a review of studies on the topic that were published between 2004 and 2016. Highlights include that people with limited health literacy are:

- 1.8 to 2.7 times less likely to get high blood pressure under control
- More likely to be dependent on nicotine and 3 times as likely to relapse after going through a smoking cessation program
- More likely to develop complications of diabetes, such as diabetic retinopathy

The authors of the statement advocate the use of *The Universal Precautions Toolkit*. "The toolkit reminds us that health literacy is not a patient problem but is the result of the complexities of health care delivery. It calls on health care professionals to make changes that improve access to care for all patients," said Jared W. Magnani, M.D., M.Sc., chair of the writing group for the scientific statement and associate professor of medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in Pennsylvania.

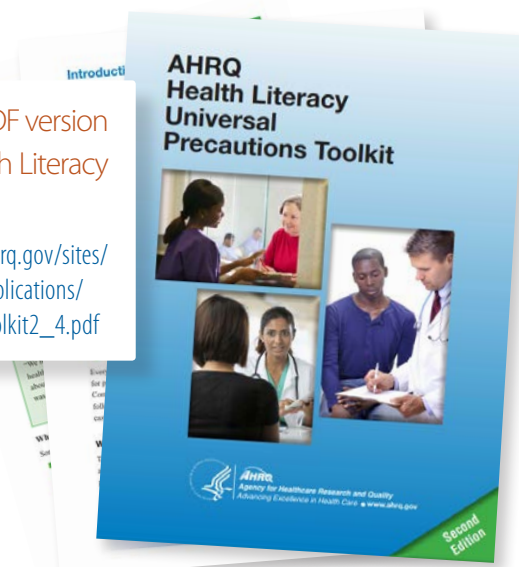
Some of the strategies recommended for healthcare providers in the toolkit include:

- Avoiding jargon and integrating pictures as teaching tools
- Creating understandable forms, informed consents, and brochures
- Improving patient follow-up and telephone access
- Assessing medication adherence and safety
- Considering the patient's culture, customs, and beliefs in their care
- Linking patients to support from specialists, case management, and community resources.

"We employ specialized care for our patients and expect them to understand the reasons for it and make lifestyle changes and take medications daily, many of them for life. We owe it to our patients to ensure that they fully understand their conditions and treatments," Magnani said.

To view a PDF version of the Health Literacy Toolkit, visit:

[https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/publications/files/healthlittoolkit2\\_4.pdf](https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/publications/files/healthlittoolkit2_4.pdf)



American Heart Association. "Limited health literacy is a major barrier to heart disease prevention and treatment." ScienceDaily. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/06/180604112611.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/06/180604112611.htm) (accessed September 16, 2018).





## Children's Healthy Diets Linked to Higher IQ

Children fed healthy diets in early age may have a slightly higher IQ, while those on heavier junk food diets may have a slightly reduced IQ, according to new research from the University of Adelaide.

The study, led by University of Adelaide Public Health researcher Dr. Lisa Smithers, looked at the link between the eating habits of children at six months, 15 months, and two years and their IQ at eight years of age.

The study of more than 7,000 children compared a range of dietary patterns, including traditional and contemporary home-prepared food, ready-prepared baby foods, breastfeeding, and 'discretionary' or junk foods.

"We found that children who were breastfed at six months and had a healthy diet regularly including foods such as legumes, cheese, fruit, and vegetables at 15 and 24 months, had an IQ up to two points higher by age eight."

"Those children who had a diet regularly involving biscuits, chocolate, sweets, soft drinks and chips in the first two years of life had IQs up to two points lower by age eight," Smithers says.

Smithers added that this study reinforces the need to provide children with healthy foods at a crucial, formative time in their lives.

"It is important that we consider the longer-term impact of the foods we feed our children," she says.

University of Adelaide. "Children's healthy diets linked to higher IQ."  
ScienceDaily. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/08/120807095740.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/08/120807095740.htm)  
(accessed September 17, 2018).



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## Eating as a Family Helps Children Feel Better Physically and Mentally

Children who routinely eat their meals with their family experience long-term physical and mental health benefits, a new Canadian study shows.

Université de Montréal doctoral student Marie-Josée Harbec and her supervisor, psychoeducation professor Linda Pagani, made the finding after following a cohort of Quebec children born between 1997 and 1998. The study is published today in the *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*.

The study looked at children who had been followed by researchers since they were 5 months old as part of the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development. At age 6, their parents started reporting on whether or not they had family meals together. At age 10, parents, teachers, and the children themselves provided information on the children's lifestyle habits and their psycho-social well-being.

When the family meal environment quality was better at age 6, higher levels of general fitness were observed at age 10. These children were also less likely to self-report being physically aggressive, oppositional, or delinquent at age 10.

At a time when fewer families in Western countries are having meals together, it would be especially opportune now for psycho-social workers to encourage the practice at home, the researchers believe. And family meals could be touted as advantageous in public-information campaigns that aim to optimize child development.



University of Montreal. "Eating together as a family helps children feel better, physically and mentally: Long-term effects of family meals in early childhood."  
ScienceDaily. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/12/171214092322.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/12/171214092322.htm) (accessed September 17, 2018).



# Chemists Develop New Blood Test to Quickly Detect Liver Damage

Chemist Vincent Rotello at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, with colleagues at University College London (UCL), U.K., announced that they have developed a “quick and robust” blood test that can detect liver damage before symptoms appear, offering what they hope is a significant advance in early detection of liver disease. Their new method can detect liver fibrosis, the first stage of liver scarring that can lead to fatal disease if left unchecked, from a blood sample in 30-45 minutes, the authors note.

For this work, Rotello and his team at UMass Amherst’s Institute of Applied Life Sciences (IALS) designed a sensor that uses polymers coated with fluorescent dyes that bind to blood proteins based on their chemical processes. The dyes change in brightness and color, offering a different signature or blood protein pattern.

The UCL team tested the sensor by comparing results from small blood samples from 65 people in three balanced groups of healthy patients, patients with early-stage fibrosis, and patients with late-stage fibrosis, which was determined using the Enhanced Liver Fibrosis (ELF) test. They found that the sensor identified different protein-level patterns in the blood of people in the three groups.

Rotello explains that the sensing strategy uses a “signature-based” approach that is highly versatile and should be useful in other areas. “A key feature of this sensing strategy is that it is not disease-specific, so it is applicable to a wide spectrum of conditions, which opens up the possibility of diagnostic systems that can track health status, providing both disease detection and monitoring wellness.”

University of Massachusetts at Amherst. “Chemists develop new blood test to quickly detect liver damage.” ScienceDaily. [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/05/180524140924.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/05/180524140924.htm) (accessed September 19, 2018).

## October Recipe: Pumpkin & White Bean Soup

- 1 ½ cups apple juice
- 1 15-ounce can white beans (drained)
- 1 small onion (finely chopped)
- 1 cup water
- 1 15-ounce can pumpkin
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ⅛ tsp. nutmeg
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- ¼ tsp. salt

Mash white beans, onion, and water with a fork or blender until smooth and set aside. In a large pot, add the pumpkin, apple juice, cinnamon, nutmeg, black pepper and salt. Add the bean mix to the pot. Cook over low heat for 15-20 minutes, until warmed through.

Yield: 6 servings. Each serving provides: Calories- 140, Carbs- 28g, Protein- 7g, Fat-1g, Dietary Fiber 7g, Saturated Fat 0g, Sodium 420 mg, Total Sugars 10g  
Source: USDA



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