

These NUMBERS could save your life

You might know the digits of your cholesterol and blood pressure and the date of your last Pap smear, but that's only part of the bigger picture. These are the less familiar numbers you need to know to stay healthy. Bone up on them *now*.

BY DANA HUDEPOHL

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Times you have to switch out your toothbrush in a year

After three months, the bristles become too worn down or frayed to effectively remove plaque, says Kyle Stanley, a faculty member at the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry at the University of Southern California. Plus, they're crawling with bacteria. The next time you buy a new toothbrush, write an expiration date on the handle, and always pitch it after you've been sick: Germs can spread to nearby brushes. Fascinating, no? And gross.

25 IN DECIBELS, THE VOLUME AT WHICH YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO HEAR

That's the equivalent of leaves rustling; if you can't hear them, you may be suffering from hearing loss. (Yes, even now.) A simpler test: Stick a square of masking tape on the back of your TV remote and write down the volume you find most comfortable when you're alone. Then check every six months or so to see if that number is creeping up, suggests Leigh Kjeldsen, an audiologist in private practice in the San Francisco Bay Area.

600 The minimum number of IUs of vitamin D you need daily

You'll be doing your future old-lady self a disservice—setting her up for fragile bones that are prone to fractures—if you don't supplement with at least the recommended daily allowance of vitamin D, and preferably as much as 2,000 IUs. Vitamin D strengthens bones in a number of ways, including helping your body better absorb and use calcium, says Robert Eastlack, M.D., codirector of the San Diego Spine Fellowship at Scripps Clinic. Add weight-bearing exercise two to three times a week for an even bigger benefit. "You're 'training' your bones to adapt and strengthen no differently than when you train your heart with cardio," Eastlack says.

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Servings of fruits and veggies you should get a day

If you don't count potatoes, the average American gets a mere three servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Women who eat a daily intake of 2,000 calories should get *nine*. If that's too daunting, aim for at least five, says JoAnn Manson, M.D., chief of preventive medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. "When you fill up on healthier foods first, you'll naturally eat less red meat, unhealthy fats, refined carbs, and added sugars," she says, cutting your odds of heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, and vision loss, to name a few. Here's how to measure them out:

Vegetable serving = 1 cup raw leafy veggies; ½ cup other vegetables
Fruit serving = 1 medium fruit; ½ cup chopped, cooked, or canned fruit