

Ask a Patient Health News January 8 2023

Health News: January 8, 2023

Note: beginning this week, drug and treatment-related news will be sent in a separate newsletter every other week. "Ask a Patient Health News: Drugs and Treatments" will come from the address AskPatientNews@substack.com. Check it out for highlights about the 37 new drugs approved in 2022, safety updates for weight loss drug Wegovy, Alzheimer's drug news, and more.

- Temporary gym closures during the pandemic meant that members had to modify their workout routines. Many didn't go back even after the health clubs reopened. The International Health, Racquet, and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) estimated that by 2021 some **27 percent of U.S. fitness centers had permanently closed**. While "high value, low-price" national chains such as Planet Fitness have remained solvent, many boutique gyms that focus on one type of workout (indoor cycling, pilates, yoga, CrossFit) and are often priced by the class, haven't fared as well. *Consumer's Checkbook* looks at how the fitness industry has changed since the pandemic, and provides tips on **how to shop for a gym membership**.

<https://www.checkbook.org/washington-area/fitness-industry-changed-by-covid/>



Each Trilogy 100 and Trilogy 200 ventilator is identified by serial number, which is located on the bottom of the device.

- Julie Gellert had spent a decade trying to find a cure for her **chronic digestive problems**, which included severe abdominal pain, chronic diarrhea and recurrent vomiting. She had acid reflux surgery, endured injections and taken a variety of medications, but nothing seemed to control Gellert's incapacitating symptoms for long. Four gastroenterologists had attributed her symptoms first to [acid reflux](#) and later to [gastroparesis](#), a disorder in which food is processed too slowly. In late 2019, a specialized PET scan revealed the elusive cause of her long-standing problems, resulting in harrowing treatment that may have saved her life. Gellert credits the interest of a new primary care doctor and her own tenacity in helping to ferret out the diagnosis. Check out Sandra Boodman's latest **medical mystery**.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/12/17/stomach-pain-symptoms-diagnosis/?itid=sf_article_list

- While it may be high in fat, **cheese** is loaded with nutrients and can have a positive effect on your health. As a fermented food, aged cheese varieties like cheddar, parmesan, Camembert and Gouda can be beneficial to **human gut microbiota**. A study comparing 145,000 people in 21 countries eating two daily servings of cheese and full-fat dairy found a **reduced risk of diabetes and hypertension** compared with those eating no dairy. Another benefit of cheese (especially hard or aged cheese) is that it can be eaten by those with **lactose intolerance**, since the bacteria used to make cheese digests most of the lactose in the milk. Find out more about cheese, including nutrition profiles for different types, from registered dietitian Stephanie Clarke in this *Consumer Reports* article. <https://www.consumerreports.org/health/nutrition-healthy-eating/is-cheese-good-for-you-a3337686245/>



Research News

- Adults who stay **well-hydrated** appear to be **healthier**, develop fewer chronic conditions, such as heart and lung disease, and live longer than those who may not get sufficient fluids, according to a National Institutes of Health study. Using health data gathered from 11,255 adults over a 30-year period, researchers analyzed links between serum sodium levels – which go up when fluid intake goes down – and various indicators of health. The study expands on research the scientists published in March 2022, which found links between higher ranges of normal serum sodium levels and **increased risks for heart failure**. The study was published in *eBioMedicine*.

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/news/2023/good-hydration-linked-healthy-aging>

- One type of bacteria found in the gut may contribute to the development of **Type 2 diabetes**, while another may **protect** from the disease, according to early results the Microbiome and Insulin Longitudinal Evaluation Study (MILES), led by researchers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. They found that people with higher levels of a bacterium called **Coprococcus** tended to have higher (beneficial) insulin sensitivity, while those whose microbiomes had higher

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levels of the bacterium **Flavonifractor** tended to be present in those with diabetes and was associated with lower insulin sensitivity. Mark Goodarzi, senior author of the study said, "The big question we're hoping to address is: Did the microbiome differences cause the diabetes, or did the diabetes cause the microbiome differences?" The study was published in the journal *Diabetes*.

<https://www.cedars-sinai.org/newsroom/gut-bacteria-may-play-a-role-in-diabetes/>

Children's Health News & Mental Health Research

- In recent decades, **severe obesity** among children in America has nearly quadrupled. In response, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) revised a tool to track cases of severe obesity among children who were previously "off the charts." Updated growth charts released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now extend to a **body mass index (BMI)** of 60 -- up from the previous maximum BMI of 37, to **track obesity in kids ages 2 to 19**. BMI is interpreted differently for children/teens than for adults even though it is calculated with the same formula. Due to changes in weight and height as they grow older, as well as their relation to body fatness as they grow, BMI levels among children and teens are expressed relative to other children of the same sex and age.

<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/cdc-updates-bmi-charts-for-kids-heres-why#What-do-BMI-charts-involve?>

CDC's [Extended BMI Charts](#)

CDC's [About Children's BMI](#)

- The CDC predicts that due to rising obesity rates, the number of **young people** under the age of 20 with **diabetes** is likely to surge in future decades, with as many as 220,000 children and teens living with type 2 diabetes in 2060, a nearly 700% increase. Also, a 65% increase in young people with type 1 diabetes is predicted. The study was published in *Diabetes Care*.

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/p1229-future-diabetes-surge.html>

- Using data from a diverse cohort of 9,200 9 and 10-year olds participating in the **National Institute of Health's Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD)** study, University of California researchers examined of the association between different forms of **screen use** such as television, video games, texting, watching videos, video chat, and social networking with the development of **new-onset Obsessive-Compulsive-Disorder (OCD)**. Watching **videos** (such as on YouTube) and **video games** had the strongest associations between screen time and new-onset OCD.

Interestingly, the authors **did not** find an association between **television watching** and OCD. This may be due to television's lack of algorithms or advertisements suggesting related content. The authors also suggest that behaviors surrounding traditional television may not have the same potential for the clustering of specific content that may otherwise exacerbate **intrusive thoughts or images**. Repeatedly watching the same or similar content, such as videos presented on Youtube, could lead to overestimation of threats that could contribute to obsessions stemming from intrusions instigating fear. The study was published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

<https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2022/12/424431/screen-time-linked-ocd-us-preteens>

- In a three-year study, University of North Carolina researchers studied how **social media habits of preteens and young teens** may be affecting **brain development**. Over the course of the study, researchers captured brain scans that measured participants' response to the anticipation of social feedback. In the study, middle school (6th and 7th grade) participants who were **habitual users** of social feeds (more than 15 times a day using Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat) became **increasingly sensitive** (or anxious) in anticipation of social feedback as they got older, while those students who were moderate users became less sensitive over time, and nonhabitual users had a fairly constant level of sensitivity as they got older.

"For youth who habitually check their social media, the brain is changing in a way that is becoming more and more sensitive to social feedback over time," said lead study author Dr. Eva Telzer, assistant professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "And this is setting the stage for how the brain continues to develop into adulthood." The study was published in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

<https://futurism.com/neoscope/scientists-brain-scans-kids-social-media>

JAMA study: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2799812?guestAccessKey=7fedb432-3c46-496d-be6b-e9b7394a71f2>



- Seattle Public Schools is **suing the tech giants** behind TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Snapchat, asserting the companies are substantially contributing to a **youth mental health crisis**. "This mental health crisis is no accident. It is the result of the Defendants' deliberate choices and affirmative actions to design and market their social media platforms to attract youth," the lawsuit states. The lawsuit cites research linking social media use to mental and behavioral disorders including anxiety, depression, disordered eating and cyberbullying and argues the tech companies have violated Washington's public nuisance law.

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<https://www.askpatient.com/news/newsletter-archive/>

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<https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/seattle-schools-sues-social-media-firms-over-youth-mental-health-crisis/>

- The latest Omicron subvariant, **XBB.1.5**, which was first identified in the U.S. in October 2022, has rapidly become the dominant strain in the U.S. and is also on the rise in Europe. Over 40% of Covid cases in the United States are thought to be caused by XBB.1.5. At the beginning of December, it accounted for only 4% of cases. While many people are likely to get Covid either again or for the first time because of this immune-evading variant, the severity of disease is considered to be no worse than previous Omicron-related infections.

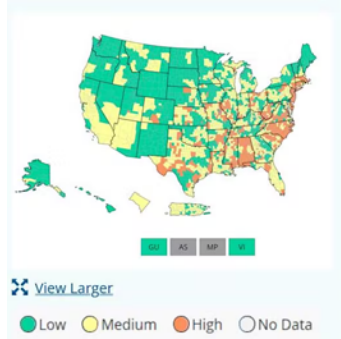
<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#variant-proportions>

- The Covid-19 virus has mutated substantially since the first variant of concern, "Alpha," was identified in December 2020. Is it time to change the **composition of primary doses** to target Omicron and future subvariants? On Jan. 26, 2023, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will discuss that issue and more at a meeting of its Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC).

[Vaccine Advisory Committee Meeting Press Release](#)

A growing number of counties in the U.S. (**62%**) have "high" or "medium" community levels of Covid-19 as of January 5, 2023. Four weeks ago (in our last newsletter), 45% had a "high" or "medium" community level.

U.S. COVID-19 Community Levels by County



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