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VEPACHEDU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

## The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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### **Issue 158 Contents:**

Grapes and Peanuts  
Salt Problem  
Fat Problem  
Omega-3 Fats  
Fiber  
Exercise  
Cell Phones and Brain  
Pets  
Oral Sex and Cancer  
Marriage for Longevity of both Male and Female  
Early to Bed  
Manganese  
Alcohol Kills  
Cigarette

### **Grapes and Peanuts**

Resveratrol (RSV), an antioxidant nutrient found in about 300 plants including grape skin, peanuts and berries, has been found to benefit cardiovascular health, and early clinical trials are under way to determine any benefits for cancer prevention and treatment, degenerative and aging diseases such as Alzheimer's disease.

People who eat foods rich in antioxidants called flavonoids, especially berries, may be protecting themselves from developing Parkinson's disease, a new study suggests at American Academy of Neurology's 63rd Annual Meeting, Honolulu. In addition to berries, flavonoids are found in a variety of

**Issue 158**

5112 *Kali Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, Magha month  
2068 *Vikramarka Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, Magha month  
1932 *Salivahana Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, Magha month  
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## The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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foods such as apples, chocolate, and citrus fruits. These compounds have been touted as protective against some diseases because of their antioxidant effects, researchers say. However, not all flavonoids are created equal. Only those known as anthocyanins, found in berries and other red/purplish fruits and vegetables, protected both men and women, according to the results of this study, which was funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

### Salt Problem

Half of Americans need to cut way back on salt, new government guidelines say. The other half probably should cut back, too. That's because most people don't comply with the old guidelines. The salt advice is part of the newly revised U.S. dietary guidelines. The new limit for daily sodium intake is 1,500 milligrams. That's the amount in about two-thirds of a teaspoon of salt. The guidelines say people over 50, all African-Americans and anyone with high blood pressure, diabetes or kidney disease should stay below this total. Everyone else should stay under 2,300 milligrams. The average American consumes 3,400 milligrams of salt a day. The guidelines offer advice for cutting sodium such as cutting processed foods, reduced use of salt in cooking.

### Fat Problem

More than one in ten of us around the world is now obese, nearly double the figure of thirty years ago, according to a major analysis of global risk factors in the *The Lancet*. The U.S. had the highest average body mass index (BMI) of all high-income countries, and the sharpest increase in BMI levels among all high-income countries from 1980 to 2008. Average BMI in the U.S. in 2008 was more than 28 for men and women. A BMI of 25 to 29.9 is considered to be overweight and a BMI above 30 is considered obese. New Zealand had the second highest average BMI, while people in Japan had the lowest, according to the new reports.

As if working mothers don't have enough to feel guilty about, a new study suggests that the more time they spend working, the heavier their children become, in the January/February issue of the journal *Child*

**Issue 158**

5112 *Kali Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2068 *Vikramarka Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
1932 *Salivahana Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2011 AD, February

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## **The Telangana Science Journal**

**Health and Nutrition**

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*Development.* Researchers at American University, Cornell University and the University of Chicago analyzed data on 900 school-aged children, and found that the cumulative time that a child's mother worked was associated with a small but measurable increase in the child's BMI.

Most people around the globe with high cholesterol are not getting the treatment they need, claims the largest ever study of 147m people. High levels of the blood fat are linked with cardiovascular disease, the world's biggest killer, which takes 17m lives a year. The report in the Bulletin of the World Health Organization says too few people are put on cholesterol-lowering drugs.

Nearly 2 out of 3 Americans with a cholesterol problem don't have it under control, a government report finds. The study looked at Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL). About 1 in 3 had high levels of LDL in a blood test or said they were taking medicine to lower it. But only 1 out of 3 people in this group had managed to get their high LDL under control. Still, that's up from 1 out of 6 controlling their cholesterol a decade ago. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the study this month.

Obesity rates worldwide have doubled in the last three decades even as blood pressure and cholesterol levels have dropped, according to three new studies. People in Pacific Island nations like American Samoa are the heaviest, one of the studies shows. Among developed countries, Americans are the fattest and the Japanese are the slimmest. In 1980, about 5 percent of men and 8 percent of women worldwide were obese. By 2008, the rates were nearly 10 percent for men and 14 percent for women. That means 205 million men and 297 million women weighed in as obese. Another 1.5 billion adults were overweight, according to the obesity study.

Two other studies also published in the Lancet surveyed blood pressure rates and cholesterol levels. Western countries including Canada, South Korea and the U.S. had some of the lowest blood pressure rates thanks to medication, while rates are highest in Portugal, Finland and Norway. Cholesterol levels were highest in countries like Iceland and Germany and lowest in Africa.

A study by researchers in Denmark revealed that increasing levels of non-fasting triglycerides are associated with an increased risk of ischemic stroke in men and women. Higher cholesterol levels were

**Issue 158**

5112 *Kali Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2068 *Vikramarka Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
1932 *Salivahana Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2011 AD, *February*

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## The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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associated with greater stroke risk in men only. Details of this novel, 33-year study are now available online in *Annals of Neurology*.

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of adults in the Indian Continent (South Asia), according to a report released this month. Indians tend to have heart attacks earlier than people in other parts of the world, says the report from the World Bank. Life expectancy is 64 now in this region, which includes India, Pakistan and 6 other countries. But more people now must cope with long-term illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes, the report says. The World Bank cited a separate 2008 report on health in the region. That report found people in 5 Indian (South Asian) countries have their first heart attack at an average age of 53. But these countries continue to have high death rates related to poverty. Besides poor nutrition, the causes include infectious diseases and childbirth.

Older people with large waistlines, high blood pressure, and other risk factors for a condition called metabolic syndrome may be at greater peril for experiencing memory loss, a new French study suggests. The study is published in the Feb. 2 online issue of *Neurology*. Metabolic syndrome is a common condition characterized by a cluster of symptoms that can include high blood pressure, too much weight around the waist, elevated blood sugar levels, low levels of HDL, and high levels of triglycerides, a type of unhealthy fat found in the blood. These results suggest that management of metabolic syndrome may help slow down age-related memory loss or delay the onset of dementia.

Eat less and dance your way to fitness and longevity. You can burn 400 calories or more in an hour of fast-paced dancing. And the time will go by so much faster as you shake, sway, twirl, and boogie your way to fitness.

### Omega-3 Fats

How maternal essential fatty acid deficiency impact on its progeny is poorly understood. Dietary insufficiency in omega-3 fatty acid has been implicated in many disorders. Researchers from Inserm and INRA and their collaborators in Spain collaboration, have studied mice fed on a diet low in omega-3 fatty acid. They discovered that reduced levels of omega-3 had deleterious consequences on synaptic functions

**Issue 158**

5112 *Kali Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2068 *Vikramarka Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
1932 *Salivahana Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2011 AD, February

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VEPACHEDU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

## The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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and emotional behaviors. Details of this work are available in the online version of the journal *Nature neuroscience*, which can be accessed at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nn.2736>.

In industrialized nations, diets have been impoverished in essential fatty acids since the beginning of the 20th century. The dietary ratio between omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acid and omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid omega-3 increased continuously over the course of the 20th century. These fatty acids are "essential" lipids because the body cannot synthesize them from new. They must therefore be provided through food and their dietary balance is essential to maintain optimal brain functions. In conclusion, the authors estimate that their results provide the first biological components of an explanation for the observed correlation between omega-3 poor diets, which are very widespread in the industrialized world, and mood disorders such as depression.

There is a strong scientific basis for vegetarians and vegans also to increase their dietary [omega-3 fatty acids](#) and vitamin B12 to help contend with those risks, according to *Chemistry behind Vegetarianism in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. A balanced vegetarian diet can provide enough protein, fat and fatty acids. As a result of unbalanced diets, some vegans tend to have elevated blood levels of homocysteine and decreased levels of HDL. Both are risk factors for heart disease. Good sources of omega-3s include flax, walnuts, almonds, urad (black gram), purslane (leaf) etc.

If you want lasting vision, eat your nuts and vegetables: The omega-3 fatty acids in these foods may protect against two leading causes of human blindness, a new study in mice has found. The results showed omega-3s help regulate blood vessel growth in our eyes. That means the fatty acids could help prevent eye diseases such as retinopathy, caused by an overgrowth of leaky blood vessels in the eyes, and [age-related macular degeneration](#), caused by abnormal growth of blood vessels. The fatty acids also activate proteins that improve insulin sensitivity. Those proteins are the same ones targeted by [type 2 diabetes](#) drugs such as Avandia, so the finding shows that fatty acids could be used to improve insulin sensitivity in people with diabetes. To get the same beneficial health effects as the mice in the study, humans would have to consume 2 grams a day of [omega-3](#) compounds docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EHA), either as a supplement or in food.

**Issue 158**

5112 [Kali Era](#), [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
2068 [Vikramarka Era](#), [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
1932 [Salivahana Era](#), [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
2011 AD, February

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VEPACHEDU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

## The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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Previous research has showed that people who [eat](#) more [omega-3 fatty acids](#) are less likely to develop eye diseases than people who don't eat foods containing omega-3 fats. A 2007 study, published in the journal Nature Medicine, showed that mice fed diets rich in omega-3s had 50 percent less blood vessel growth in their eyes than mice fed diets rich in omega-6 fatty acids (which are found in meat and animal fat).

### Fiber

Eating a diet rich in fiber, especially the kind of fiber found in whole grains, reduces the risk of dying at an early age from a range of causes, a new government study suggests on the website of the Archives of Internal Medicine. Fiber's beneficial effects on heart health have been known for decades, so it wasn't surprising that eating a lot of fiber was associated with a lower risk of death due to heart attack and heart disease. But fiber intake also appears to lower the risk of dying from respiratory diseases (such as pneumonia and chronic bronchitis) and infectious diseases, the study found. The benefits of fiber are broader than what had been anticipated or previously studied. This unexpected finding suggests that the antioxidants and other nutrients in whole grains- not just the fiber- may be partly responsible for promoting health and long life. Consuming fiber from whole grains was most strongly linked to a lower risk of dying during the study, while fiber from vegetables and beans appeared to have a minimal impact on death risk. The fiber in fruit seemed to offer no protection at all.

### Exercise

Aside from the well-known physical benefits, a moderate amount of exercise can increase the size of the brain's hippocampus and reverse memory loss in older adults, according to a study in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#).

### Cell Phones and Brain

Cell phones cause an increase in brain activity, according to the Journal of the American Medical Association. Researchers said the cell phone was stimulating the brain cells. Spending 50 minutes with a cell phone plastered to your ear is enough to change brain cell activity in the part of the brain closest to the antenna. But whether that causes any harm is not clear to scientists at the National Institutes of Health. Much larger fluctuations in brain metabolic rate can occur naturally, such as when a person is

**Issue 158**

5112 [Kali Era](#) , [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
2068 [Vikramarka Era](#), [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
1932 [Salivahana Era](#), [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
2011 AD, February

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## The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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thinking. Most research on cell phones so far has focused on whether using them might cause brain cancer and have shown no increase in risk.

India has over 750 million mobile phone connections, and growing at 15 million per month. Over 500 million individuals are believed to have mobiles. In a few years, mobile telephony could touch most of India's adult population.

Scientists are trying to use electrical stimulation of the brain to help depression and other mental illnesses. The treatment is known as deep brain stimulation, which uses a tiny implant to deliver electrical current to a spot in the brain. The devices already are used for cases of Parkinson's disease that don't respond well to treatment. In this case, the electrical current disables overactive brain cells to stop tremors. Newer research focuses on using deep brain stimulation for mental health disorders. In these cases, the devices stimulate instead of destroy brain cells.

### Pets

A widely publicized study from the 1980s found that pet owners survived longer than non-pet owners after a heart attack. In the 1990s, a group of researchers in Australia reported that blood pressure and lipid levels were lower in pet owners than non-pet owners. In Britain, people in a study were given a dog or cat. The people were questioned 6 and 10 months later and reported that their psychological well-being and self-esteem had improved. They also exercised more. In a survey of pet and non-pet owners, pet owners were less likely to report feeling anxious and depressed, and less likely to be lonely. They also found it easier to get to know people and could identify more people in their neighborhoods for support in a crisis.

Pets increase opportunities for social interaction. People are more likely to talk to one another when a dog is present. In that 2006 Australian survey, more than 50% of people said their pets helped them meet new people and make friends. Almost two-thirds felt that having a pet present made it easier for them to have a conversation. All this social contact reduces isolation and loneliness. Even if you don't feel lonely, this kind of activity contributes to the social good by promoting conversation and friendship in the community. In addition, physical contact with a pet is soothing. Although it is not a substitute for human-

**Issue 158**

5112 *Kali Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2068 *Vikramarka Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
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2011 AD, February

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**VEPACHEDU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION**

## **The Telangana Science Journal**

**Health and Nutrition**

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to-human contact, it has similar physiological effects. It improves measures of stress and may therefore promote physical and emotional health.

Pets provide companionship. Positive close relationships are known to reduce anxiety and stress. Pets can be fun to watch and fun to play with. In many cases, it is easier to be spontaneous and easygoing with an animal than with another human. Pets are a source of non-critical support.

### **Oral Sex and Cancer**

Previous studies have suggested that people who have performed oral sex on six or more partners over a lifetime face an eight-fold higher risk of acquiring HPV-related head or neck cancer than those with fewer than six partners. When you compare people who have an oral infection to healthy, the single greatest factor is the number of partners on whom the infected person has performed oral sex. US scientists said there is strong evidence linking oral sex to cancer, and urged more study of how human papillomaviruses may be to blame for a rise in oral cancer among white men. In the United States, oral cancer due to HPV infection is now more common than oral cancer from tobacco use, which remains the leading cause of such cancers in the rest of the world.

There are as many as 150 different types of human papillomaviruses, and about 40 of those can be sexually transmitted, according to the National Cancer Institute. Some may cause genital warts, while other more high-risk varieties can cause oral, anal, vaginal and penile cancers. Because of promiscuity, half of all sexually active Americans will get HPV at some point in their lives, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated.

Two vaccines, Gardasil and Cervarix, were approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 2006 for HPV types that cause cervical cancer and genital warts. However, only 40 percent of US girls have received one dose and just 17 percent have received all three doses in the regimen, said researchers. A study published earlier this month in the New England Journal of Medicine found that the HPV vaccine could prevent 90 percent of genital warts in men, and the vaccine has also been approved against anal cancer in men and women.

**Issue 158**

5112 *Kali Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2068 *Vikramarka Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
1932 *Salivahana Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2011 AD, February

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## The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

[TIACS-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:TIACS-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

### Marriage for Longevity of both Male and Female

Marriage does not only increase male and female longevity, but also tends to benefit wives mentally and husbands physically, researchers from Cardiff University, Wales, wrote in the *British Medical Journal*. The authors included both the "smug marrieds" and those in long-term committed relationships.

True love does not necessarily run smoothly in all cases, the authors added, relationships during the teen years are linked to a greater risk of adolescent depressive symptoms, this improves as people get older. 18 to 25 year olds tend to enjoy better mental but not physical health if they are in a romantic relationship. Single individuals enjoy better [mental health](#) than their counterparts in strained relationships. It would be wrong to assume that any kind of relationship is better than being on one's own. Splitting up can also have a negative impact on the mental and physical health of both men and women - "*exiting a relationship is distressing*". Those with several partners tend to have shorter lifespans than people in long-term relationships.

A one-billion person years' study across seven European nations found that those in stable relationships had age adjusted mortality rates that were ten to fifteen percent lower than the general population's, indicating that on balance making the effort is likely to be worth it.

### Early to Bed

Not getting enough sleep or having sleep interrupted can have serious, long-term effects on overall health, leading to stroke, heart attack, and cardiovascular disorders. The new study is reported in the *European Heart Journal*. Chronic short sleep produces hormones and chemicals in the body which increase the risk of developing heart disease and strokes, and other conditions like high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes and obesity.

**Issue 158**

5112 [Kali Era](#), [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
2068 [Vikramarka Era](#), [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
1932 [Salivahana Era](#), [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
2011 AD, February

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## The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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### Manganese

Manganese is an element naturally found in water, which can lead to various health, behavioral and intellectual development problems in children, according to a study published in the latest issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

### Alcohol Kills

Alcohol causes nearly 4 percent of deaths worldwide, more than AIDS, tuberculosis or violence, the World Health Organization warned. Yet alcohol control policies are weak and remain a low priority for most governments despite drinking's heavy toll on society from road accidents, violence, disease, child neglect and job absenteeism. Approximately 2.5 million people die each year from alcohol related causes, the WHO said in its Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health. The harmful use of alcohol is especially fatal for younger age groups and alcohol is the world's leading risk factor for death among males aged 15-59, the report found.

Alcohol is a causal factor in 60 types of diseases and injuries, according to WHO's first report on alcohol since 2004. Its consumption has been linked to cirrhosis of the liver, epilepsy, poisonings, road traffic accidents, violence, and several types of cancer, including cancers of the colorectum, breast, larynx and liver.

Alcohol consumption rates vary greatly, from high levels in developed countries, to the lowest in North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and southern Asia, whose large Muslim populations often abstain from drinking. Homemade or illegally produced alcohol -- falling outside governmental controls and tax nets -- accounts for nearly 30 percent of total worldwide adult consumption. Some is toxic.

One of the most effective ways to curb drinking, especially among young people, is to raise taxes, the report said. Setting age limits for buying and consuming alcohol, and regulating alcohol levels in drivers, also reduce abuse if enforced.

Alcohol appears to cause more sleep problems in women than in men, a new study found. It's long been known that alcohol can deepen sleep during the early part of the night but disrupt sleep later in the night,

**Issue 158**

5112 *Kali Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2068 *Vikramarka Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
1932 *Salivahana Era*, *Vikruthi* Year, *Magha* month  
2011 AD, February

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## The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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something called the "rebound effect." But there's been little research into how alcohol's effects on sleep may differ in women and men. It's long been known that alcohol can deepen sleep during the early part of the night but disrupt sleep later in the night, something called the "rebound effect." But there's been little research into how alcohol's effects on sleep may differ in women and men. The study appears online and in the May print issue of the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*.

### Cigarette

Cigarette [smoking](#) may raise the risk of [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis](#) (ALS), according to a new study that adds new evidence to the growing link between smoking and the rare muscle-wasting disease. More than 5,500 people each year are diagnosed with ALS in the U.S. There is no cure, and there are limited treatment options for the disease, which causes rapid muscle deterioration.

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*Source: The primary sources cited above, New York Times (NYT), Washington Post (WP), Mercury News, Bayarea.com, Chicago Tribune, USA Today, Intellihealthnews, Deccan Chronicle (DC), the Hindu, Hindustan Times, Times of India, AP, Reuters, AFP, womenfitness.net, about.com etc.*

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**Om! Asatoma Sadgamaya, Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya, Mrityorma Amritamgamaya, Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih!**

**(Aum! Lead the world from wrong path to the right path, from ignorance to knowledge, from mortality to immortality, and peace!)**

**Issue 158**

5112 [Kali Era](#) , [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
2068 [Vikramarka Era](#), [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
1932 [Salivahana Era](#), [Vikruthi](#) Year, Magha month  
2011 AD, February

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