

### **Eating at home is healthier**

People who cook at home more often, rather than eating out, tend to have more healthful diets without higher food expenses, according to a new study of King County residents. Researchers at the University of Washington School of Public Health found home-cooked meals were associated with diets lower in calories, sugar and fat, but not higher monthly expenses for food. The study showed no association between income or education and eating at home or out. (*sciencedaily.com*)

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### **Berkeley soda tax results**

A study of Berkeley's soda tax, published in PLoS Medicine, shows the tax is having the intended impact. One year after implementation, sweetened beverage sales declined 9.6 percent, while untaxed beverage sales increased 3.5 percent and showed a shift to healthier choices. There was no evidence of higher grocery bills for consumers or decreases in overall beverage sales for stores. (*Food Politics*)

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### **Diet soda tied to stroke, dementia?**

Gulping down an artificially sweetened beverage not only may be associated with health risks for your body but also possibly your brain, a new study published in the American Heart Association's journal Stroke suggests. Artificially sweetened drinks, such as diet sodas, were associated with a higher risk of stroke and dementia. No connection was found between those health risks and other sugary beverages, such as sugar-sweetened sodas, fruit juice and fruit drinks. (*CNN*)

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### **Worldwide water woes**

A new study in Nature from a global team of researchers shows that the world's stores of groundwater are vanishing at an "alarming" rate, driven mainly by demand for crop irrigation. Researchers found that the most severe depletion is concentrated in a few regions in the United States, Mexico, the Middle East, North Africa, India, Pakistan and China, which include almost all the major breadbaskets and population centers of the planet. Tapped-out aquifers point to a future marked by high food prices and geopolitical strife. (*Mother Jones*)

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### **School nutrition standards rollback**

The new Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, has rolled back improved nutritional standards for school lunches that were in place since 2012. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act required all grains to be 50 percent or more whole grain, and sodium levels were scheduled to drop from the current 1,230 mg limit to 640 mg by 2022. Now, states can exempt the whole-grain and sodium requirements until 2020 at least. (*Harvard School of Public Health*)

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### **Glyphosate on Prop 65 list?**

Glyphosate is to be added to California's Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to cause cancer. It means companies producing products containing residues of glyphosate may in the future have to feature warning labels. Proposition 65 requires the state to maintain a list of chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm and requires businesses to provide warnings prior to causing a significant exposure to a listed chemical. ([oehha.ca.gov](http://oehha.ca.gov))

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### **Benefits from trans fats ban**

People living in areas that restrict trans fats in food had 6.2 percent fewer hospitalizations for heart attack and stroke compared to residents in areas without restrictions, according to a study published in JAMA Cardiology. This finding suggests the benefit of limiting trans fats — once commonly found in chips, crackers, fried foods and baked goods — could have widespread impact. The Food and Drug Administration declared that no amount of trans fats in the diet is "safe." (*Yale News*)

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### **Virus triggers celiac?**

A groundbreaking study published in Science suggests a common virus, Reovirus, might trigger celiac disease, a condition that makes people allergic to foods containing gluten. More research is needed to understand the relationship between the virus and celiac and how the findings could be used to mitigate the risk of developing celiac. (*NPR's The Salt*)

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### **Hundreds of species of bees in peril**

In the first comprehensive review of the more than 4,000 native bee species in North America and Hawaii, the Center for Biological Diversity has found more than 700 species are in trouble from severe habitat loss, escalating pesticide use, climate change and urbanization. Bees play a crucial ecological role by pollinating wild plants and provide more than \$3 billion in fruit-pollination services each year in the United States. ([biologicaldiversity.org](http://biologicaldiversity.org))

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### **EPA chief stops pesticide ban**

In one of his first moves as head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Scott Pruitt rejected the conclusion of his agency's own scientists to ban one of the most widely used insecticides, chlorpyrifos. EPA had announced last fall that chlorpyrifos poses an unacceptable risk to humans when residues are found in fruits, vegetables and drinking water. On the day the ban was to take effect, Pruitt said chlorpyrifos isn't dangerous and rejected the ban. It will continue to be used on conventional broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, citrus and more. (*The New York Times*)