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TIDBITS® APPRECIATES AGAVE

by Janet Spencer

There are an estimated 270 species of the agave plant. Of those, 70% are native to Mexico. Others are native to the southwestern U.S. and the Caribbean. Agave is useful in many ways!

EAT, DRINK, WEAR

- Agave is not a cactus, but is instead a succulent, designed to retain water in thick spikey leaves in desert regions. It's similar in appearance to yucca or aloe vera.
- Natives called agave by many different names. Mayans called it Ki'l, and Aztecs called it Metl. In 1758, Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, known as "the father of modern taxonomy," organized the system of naming organisms using a two-part Latinized name (genus and species), which remains standard today. He dubbed the genus "agave" which is Greek for "noble" or "marvelous." He knew that every part of the agave plant is useful.

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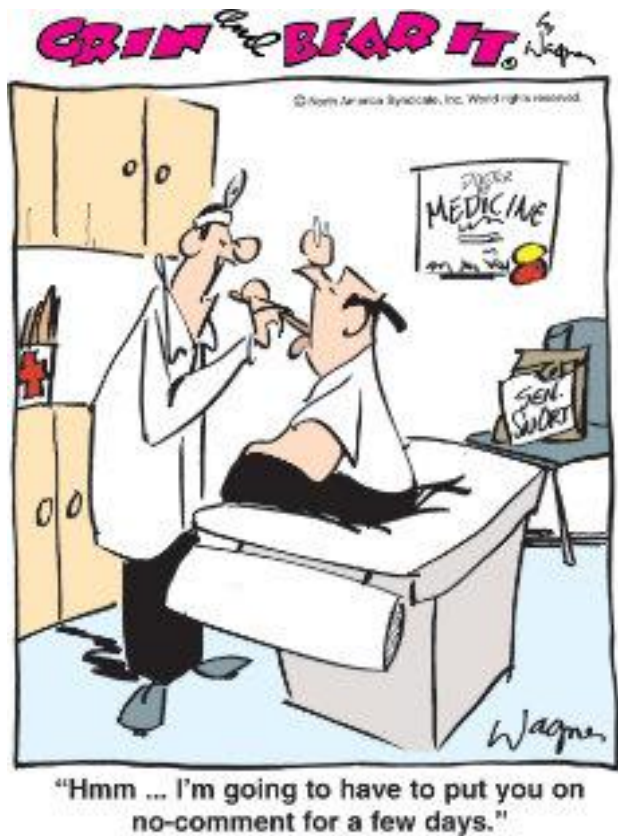
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AGAVE (cont)

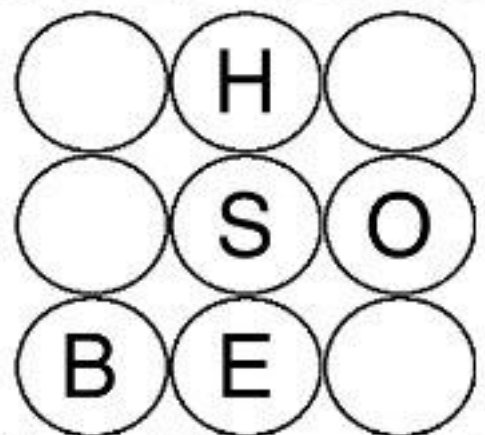
- The heart and root of the agave are edible, as are the flowers, flower stalks, and parts of the leaves. The barrel-shaped root alone can weigh hundreds of pounds. The sap of the plant yields a nectar that's 1.5 times sweeter than sugar. Agave is also fermented and distilled to create tequila and mezcal.
- Most agave plants produce a single flower in their lifetime after years of stockpiling sugars, water, and nutrients. The flower stalk is as tall and straight as a flagpole and can be over 20 feet (6 m) tall. This puts the flowers out of reach of small animals who might otherwise eat the blooms. It usually takes between 8 and 30 years for an agave to reach the point of being ready to flower. The flowers are pollinated by bats, insects such as bees and hawk moths, or birds, depending on the species. If that flower stalk is pollinated, a single flower will produce thousands of seeds. After blooming, the mother plant dies.
- One species of agave relies on a single species of bat to achieve pollination, luring it in with a sweet nectar. The petals of the flower open at night, offering a nest for the bat to rest, thereby pollinating other plants it visits. If the agave blooms when no bats are in the area, no seeds will be produced and the plant will die in vain.
- In Mexico, there was a settlement called Tequitlan which was inhabited by the Tiquili people. The name meant 'land of hard labor' in the local language. Spanish conquistadors shortened the name to Tequila. The residents of the area had long fermented the sap of the agave plant into an alcoholic beverage called pulque, which formed an essential part of their diet for as long as 3,000 years. The Spaniards appreciated the beverage, but then took it one step farther by showing them how to distill the pulque into a liquor. (cont)



- Here's a tip for you waist-watchers out there: Wait until Halloween Day to buy the candy. The in-house sweets won't be haunting you throughout October.
- Update window treatments to compensate for dropping temperatures. Trade your sheers for sturdy, draft-blocking panels.
- * Now's the time to install weather-stripping or caulk for the fall and the winter. To find drafts, try this trick. Light a taper candle and run it very slowly along the cracks of your windows. When you see the flame flicker, that's where you have a draft leak.
- Want to save money and be a good environmental servant? Get with the times -- the old times, that is. Buy secondhand items and have household items repaired instead of throwing them out. Good-quality clothes can be sold or donated to charity shops; furniture and household items can be sold or donated to charity as well, or repurposed into new rooms.
- "To keep sauces from splattering and dirtying the inside of your microwave, cover the food with a damp paper towel or a coffee filter." -- E.C. in Utah
- Now you can have your tea and clean something too. Teabags can be used to clean woodwork. Rub wood softly with a damp bag.
- Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 1800 Pembroke Dr., Suite 300, Orlando, FL 32810.

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WORD SPIRAL



Fill in the missing letters to reveal the nine-letter word that starts at one of the four corners and moves clockwise around the perimeter before ending in the center.

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AGAVE (cont)

- There are two types of liquor that come from distilling fermented agave sap: tequila, and mezcal (or mescal). They are similar, but not the same.
- Different species of agave yield different tastes. Also, different soil types and growing conditions yield different tastes. A volcanic soil yields a spicier flavor; a clay soil yields a floral flavor. Agave grown at higher altitudes yields a sweeter taste; those grown at lower altitudes give an earthier taste. Mineral content and soil pH also factor in.
- True tequila comes from a single species of agave, called the blue agave, which must be grown in a certain soil type in a specific region of Mexico. Mezcal, on the other hand, comes from over 40 species of agave grown in a wider range of conditions across a larger region of Mexico.
- All tequila is mezcal, but not all mezcal is tequila. Mezcal is the broad umbrella term for any liquor made from agave.
- Whereas there are many flavors and varieties of mezcal, there are only 5 flavors of tequila, depending on how long it's been aged, and in what sort of barrel, either oak or stainless steel. Whereas most liquors become better with age, and the older the better, tequila tops out at about 4 years. Consider that it takes the blue agave plant between 8 and 12 years to mature to the point where it's ready to be harvested, and that once processed, it requires up to 4 more years to age to maximum perfection. The average bottle of tequila requires 11 years to produce.
- About 300 million blue agave plants are harvested each year for processing. Today there are over 100 distilleries making over 900 brands of tequila in Mexico. (cont)

Fun Fact

Lake Kariba is the largest artificial lake and reservoir in the entire world. It lies between Zambia and Zimbabwe. Its huge volume is believed to have induced seismic activity in the region, including over twenty earthquakes.

Source: wikipedia.org





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Americanisms



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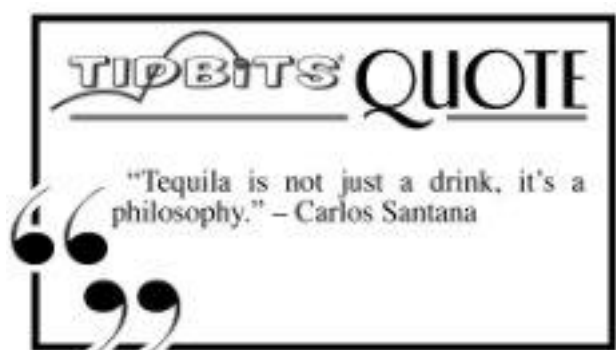
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTHOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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1. Resident Evil
(R) Austin Abrams, Zach Cherry
2. Practical Magic 2
(PG-13) Sandra Bullock, Dianne Wiest
3. Spider-Man: Brand New Day
(PG-13) Tom Holland, Zendaya
4. The Odyssey
(R) Matt Damon, Tom Holland
5. Coyote vs. Acme
(PG) Will Forte, Lana Condor
6. Daniel and the Fiery Furnace
(PG-13) Mena Massoud, Elijah Alexander
7. The Transformers: The Movie
(PG) Orson Welles, Robert Stack
8. Runner
(PG-13) Alan Ritchson, Owen Wilson
9. The Weight
(R) Ethan Hawke, Russell Crowe
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4	9	1		6		2		
			3		2	4	1	
1					8	7	2	9
		2	6				3	1
		9		1	3	6	8	
7		6	5	3		8	9	2
					7			
		4		2			5	

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way
that each row across, each column down and each
small 9-box square contains all of the
numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used
for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters,
apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all
hints. Each week the code letters are different.

G FTI'P FT PAGIUR CTD
PAZ DZROTIRZ TD PAZ
BTIPDTNZDRX. G QYRP VGNZ
HX VGCZ. — DGAKIHK

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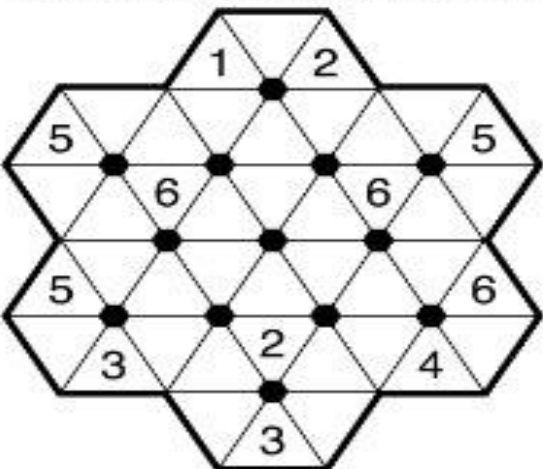
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VITALHEALTH4YOU DR. HOLLY CARLING
AND ALICIA BALLEJA

SNOWFLAKES
by Japheth Light

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.



DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆
◆ Easy ◆◆ Medium ◆◆◆ Difficult

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HealthBits

By Dr. Holly Carling

WHEN PAIN IS A PAIN

Nobody likes pain, but without this important communication tool, we’d be in big trouble. Pain is an alert system letting us know that something is wrong. Whether it is warning us that we are touching a hot stove and will get burned, or an organ that is in trouble sending out its red flag telling us there is some internal threat going on that needs attention, we’d best heed the warning. But when it is unrelenting, it can be a pain to have pain because it inhibits us in our life.

There are as many causes for pain as there are ways to respond to it. Some can tolerate grand levels of pain and be able to push through it, while someone else is incapacitated by it. There are also different classifications of pain. First is acute or chronic. Acute is sudden onset - short-lived or can be the beginning of chronic pain. It’s usually the result of tissue damage such as fracture, torn ligament or strained muscle. It can also mean organ damage. Cancer, ulcers, irritable bowel, etc. are examples of organ damage. Chronic means that you’ve had pain for a while – it is long lasting. It is usually associated with a disease such as arthritis, autoimmune disorders, fibromyalgia or unresolved tissue damage.

Pain is generally associated with inflammation. Like pain itself, inflammation is important as it is a normal response of the body’s and is essential to healing. However, runaway inflammation can become chronic, and the pain associated with it can be severe. Localized swelling is a normal healing response

contributing to the pain and is usually associated with inflammation.

Chronic pain can be anywhere from dull, nagging and simply annoying, to extreme, needing medication or aggressive pain management. About 70% of those who manage their pain with medication have breakthrough pain – meaning the pain flares even when on medication.

Within the chronic pain category, is also nerve pain. Examples include diabetic neuropathy, post-herpetic neuralgia (shingles), trigeminal neuralgia (facial nerves), stroke, tumor, chemotherapy or radiation therapy. These are generally severe burning, numbness or sharp pains that can have a significant negative impact on lifestyle.

Most people when they think of alternative solutions to pain, they think of acupuncture. Well researched and validated in regards to pain, acupuncture is increasingly becoming the treatment of choice for both chronic and acute pain.

Acupuncture helps to reduce the runaway inflammation and swelling and promote healing. Although we don’t quite understand the full mechanism in acupuncture’s ability to trigger and support healthy healing response, the brain mechanism is pretty well understood.

Acupuncturists don’t just treat the pain. They treat everything else going on at the same time. When it comes to non-injury related pain, knowing all symptoms helps to determine causative factor, and when that is treated, the patient, not just his/her pain, improves. However, injury-related pain is very responsive to acupuncture treatments as well.

So when pain becomes too much of a pain in your life, it is time to consider acupuncture!



Dr. Holly Carling is a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, Licensed Acupuncturist, Doctor of Naturopathy, Clinical Nutritionist and Master Herbologist with over four decades of experience. Dr. Carling is a “Health Detective,” she looks beyond your symptom picture and investigates WHY you are experiencing your symptoms in the first place. Dr. Carling is currently accepting new patients and offers natural health care services and whole food nutritional supplements in her Coeur d’Alene clinic. Visit Dr. Carling’s website at www.vitalhealthcda.com to learn more about Dr. Carling, view a list of upcoming health classes and read other informative articles. Dr. Carling can be reached at 208-765-1994 and would be happy to answer any questions regarding this topic.

Medical/Health Disclaimer: The information provided in this article should not be construed as personal medical advice or instruction. No action should be taken based solely on the contents of this article. Readers should consult appropriate health professionals on any matter relating to their health and well-being. The information and opinions provided here are believed to be accurate and sound, based on the best judgment available to the author, but readers who fail to consult appropriate health authorities assume the risk of any injuries.

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VETERANS ★ POST ★

By Freddy Groves

Grants to address veteran homelessness

Beginning Oct. 1, the VA will give away \$1.17 billion in grants to address the problem of veteran homelessness.

Of that amount, \$855 million will go to organizations that work with the VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families in the form of one-year grants. The SSVF works with low income veterans and veteran families who are either homeless or who are at risk for it. Their goal is to get veterans back into housing quickly and to prevent homelessness in the first place, working to provide permanent housing.

Of the \$1.7 billion, \$318 million will go to organizations through the Grant and Per Diem program via three-year grants. This program works to provide services and case management to help veterans stay in their current housing or to provide more appropriate housing for veterans who are elderly, frail, terminally ill or who have minor dependents.

The VA's Housing First philosophy, started in 2012, shifted away from the prior "treatment first" models that had kept too many veterans out of permanent housing. It had required sobriety first, or treatment first, or income first. Now, with the Housing First philosophy, homeless or at-risk veterans can determine for themselves which services they initially want, which lowers the barrier to getting them into actual housing and provides needed stability. Then other services can be offered -- healthcare, education, employment, legal -- to help maintain that permanent housing.

If you are a veteran who is either homeless or who is in danger of becoming homeless, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-424-3838. They're open 24/7. Or you can go online to www.va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp and start a chat there. Everything is confidential, but they will need to ask you a few questions to know which services you qualify for and how best to help you.

If you're facing eviction, don't wait, especially if you have a family. Connect with the call center as soon as you know so they can help.

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By Sam Mazotta
Should my mother get a new puppy?



DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My mom, who's in her late 70s, told me that she wants a puppy. Her independent living community allows pets, but I think that she is a little too old to train and care for a new dog. How do I convince her to give up the idea? -- Janine in Ocala, Florida

DEAR JANINE: I put this question to my friend, R.A. Morean, author of "Your Last Puppy: A Practical Guide for Seniors and Their Families." Her reply:

I get this question a lot. And after interviewing nearly a hundred parents and their adult children, I am sorry to say your mother makes a good case.

There is clear, empirical evidence that having a dog or puppy actively promotes physical, mental and cognitive health, especially for those 60 and older. There is no doubt having a puppy or dog will promote longevity and quality of life.

Lean into the idea and then explore the question together. Your challenges when speaking to your mother should include a discussion of a succession plan, and clear-eyed responses to a set of questions ranging from "What is my energy level?" and "Do I have mobility issues?" to "Is there a trainer close by?"

Make your list and sit down with her and discuss. It will soon become clear to both of you if a puppy will be too much work. Then you can move on to the step: if not a puppy, then an older dog. There are many places to find older, well-trained dogs.

In the last 15 years of my mother's life, she adopted an older dog. And when Lettice passed, she adopted again. If your mother's community also offers assisted living, I would approach them now, because 75% of assisted living communities allow dogs. Some facilities are "pet friendly," which means they allow pets. Others are "pet inclusive," which means they monitor food, schedule veterinarians and groomers to visit on-site, and staff are trained to keep an eye out for both residents and their pets. Good luck! The important thing is that you are listening to your mother.



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2	6				
1					3
				1	6
		2	6		
	3				2

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 6-box square contains all of the numbers from one to six.

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- By Ryan A. Berenz
1. Name the Italian driver who, at age 19, won five straight Formula 1 Grands Prix during the 2026 season.
 2. At the 1924 Chamonix Winter Games, American Charles Jewtraw won the first gold medal in the first Winter Olympics competing in what event?
 3. Nicknamed "The Nuke," which English teenager won the Professional Darts Corporation World Championships in 2025 and 2026?
 4. Which Boston Celtics great missed all 14 of his field goal attempts and scored zero points in a 104-100 loss to the Philadelphia 76ers in January 1965?
 5. Which Peruvian-born tennis player for the U.S. won the Australian Championships and the Wimbledon men's singles titles in 1959?
 6. Name the PGA Tour player who was named captain of the U.S. Team for the 2026 Presidents Cup golf tournament.
 7. Lawyer Elaine Weddington Steward was hired as assistant general manager of which Major League Baseball team in 1990?

Answers

1. Kimi Antonelli.

2. The 500-meter speed skate.

3. Luke Littler.

4. Bill Russell.

5. Alex Olmedo.

6. Brandt Snedeker.

7. The Boston Red Sox.

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TIDBITS

presents

TRIVIA NEWSFRONT

1. This cocktail, made with tequila, lime, triple sec, and salt, is the most popular tequila drink.

2. Why do people often lick salt off their hand before drinking a shot of tequila?

3. Why is tequila often taken with lime?

4. The majority of blue agave for tequila is grown in this Mexican state on the Pacific coast

5. Named after its founder in 1795, this is the oldest tequila company in the world.

ONE MORE FACT

The production of tequila impacted the sales of Spanish wine that had previously been imported into Mexico. The King of Spain passed a law saying that production of Mexican wine was forbidden. In 1605, Spanish aristocrat Don Pedro Sanchez ramped up production of tequila anyway, rebranding tequila as a liquor instead of a wine. Although he spent a couple of years in jail for it, the Don Pedro brand of tequila is still in production today.

A logo for 'KOVELS' ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES. The word 'KOVELS' is in large, white, serif capital letters on a dark purple background. Below it, 'ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES' is written in smaller, yellow, serif capital letters.

BYLINE: By Terry and Kim Kovel

Postmodern Furniture

Postmodern furniture is a parade of quirky styles and colors, unexpected shapes and materials, and innovative construction. Few designers are more quirky, colorful, or creative than Gaetano Pesce.

Like many of the great 20th-century designers, Pesce (1939-2024) trained as an architect and designed lamps, jewelry, other home furnishings, furniture, and buildings. He is known for his clever work with resin and extruded plastic, but his creative output has a softer side, too. His most famous furniture design might be the UP-5 chair, also called "La Mamma" for its curvy, feminine shape, with fabric upholstery over foam and rubber. The soft foam used in the UP chairs allowed them to be compressed flat for easy packaging, shipping, and storage. They sprang back into shape when the package was opened.

The Feltri chair, which Pesce designed in 1987 for Italian company Cassina, is another one of his famous upholstered designs. As its name may suggest, its base is made of felted wool. Its tufted upholstery may give it a slightly more conventional, even old-fashioned, look than Pesce's usual work, but his playful, experimental approach to form and function is clearly there. The soft, pliable back and sides of the chair can be folded into different configurations. The Feltri chair has been made in many colors. This vibrant purple vintage Feltri chair sold for \$3,696 at Wright.

Q: My Hummel ornament with two angels, one playing a stringed instrument, has an unusual mark that I have been unable to identify. It looks like part of the TMK-2 Full Bee, with a bee over the "V" and "(R)" to the lower right. The number "146" and "M.I. Hummel" in script are impressed underneath. I cannot find any reference to the "(R)". Is it possible to enlighten me as to its meaning?

A: The "(R)" stands for "Registered." It is unusual, but it does not affect the meaning of the mark or the value of the figure. There are some variations of Hummel marks, especially in the earliest (pre-1970s) marks. According to mihummel.org, the "R" is most often seen in figures dating from 1950 to 1955. TMK-2 Full Bee, the first Hummel mark to feature the bee over a "V," was used from about 1940 to 1959. Later marks use a stylized bee over the "V" or do not have a "V." Most Hummel figurines are impressed with "M.I. Hummel," for designer Sister Maria Innocentia Hummel, and an identification number. Based on the number and your description, yours is the "Angel Duet" baptismal font.

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For more collecting news, tips and resources, visit www.Kovels.com (c) 2026 King Features Synd., Inc.

A logo for 'COUCH THEATER' by Demi Taveras. It features a silhouette of a person sitting on a couch and pointing towards the text. The words 'COUCH THEATER' are in large, bold, pink letters with a black outline. Below it, 'BY DEMI TAVERAS' is written in smaller, white, sans-serif capital letters.

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BYLINE: By Demi Taveras

Photo Credit: Courtesy of MovieStillsDB

Photo Caption: Nate Bargatze stars in "The Breadwinner."

"Tony" (R) -- Dominic Sessa, who had his breakthrough role in the comedy-drama film "The Holdovers" (2023), leads this biographical coming-of-age film directed by Matt Johnson ("Nirvana the Band the Show the Movie"). Sessa plays the titular character Tony, aka Anthony Bourdain, but well before Bourdain ever became the celebrity chef many would come to know and love. Taking place in 1975, the film follows a 19-year-old Tony, who's a student in Vassar College with aspirations of being a writer. Life doesn't go exactly as planned, though, and he lands a job at a seafood restaurant in Provincetown, Massachusetts. Once there, however, Tony finds himself drawn to the atmosphere of the restaurant and starts working his way up, catching the attention of the head chef Jose (Antonio Banderas). "Tony" is out now to rent or purchase! (Amazon Prime Video)

"The 2026 MTV Video Music Awards" (TV-14) -- As MTV has become less of a staple in music lovers' lives, their VMA award show has admittedly lost its touch. Still, MTV always aims to recapture the magic of past award shows, and this time, they're doing so by bringing Madonna back to the VMAs after 23 years! Not only is she the opening performer, but she also leads the pack with 13 nominations for her recent album "Confessions II." Naturally, Taylor Swift follows her with 11 nominations for "The Life of a Showgirl," and Sabrina Carpenter trails Swift with nine nominations for her hit album "Man's Best Friend." Additionally, Nirvana will be honored with the legendary Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award. If you missed the live event, it's available to stream now! (Paramount+)

"Saturday Night Live: Season 52" (TV-MA) -- It's crazy to think that it's already been two years since "SNL 50," but here we are, welcoming in the 52nd season of Lorne Michaels' late-night sketch-comedy show. Two new cast members have been announced since Chloe Fineman's ("Love Language") departure from the show after seven seasons -- the first being Saidah Belo-Osagie and Grace Reiter ("Run Amok"). Reiter is the first SNL cast member to be born in the 2000s. This season will feature hosts like New York Knicks MVP Jalen Brunson, "Obsession" star Inde Navarrette, and comedian Shane Gillis ("Madden"). Meanwhile, upcoming musical guests include girl group Katseye, Spanish singer and actress Rosalia ("Euphoria"), and pop star Gracie Abrams. The first episode is out now to stream! (Peacock)

"The Breadwinner" (PG) -- This family-friendly comedy film was co-written by Nate Bargatze and also features the stand-up comedian in his first feature-length starring role. Bargatze plays a family man, also named Nate, and he's the top



- TELEVISION: What is the name of Jon Snow's dire wolf in "Game of Thrones"?
- HISTORY: Which Civil War general literally used "scorched earth" tactics in his march from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia?
- MOVIES: Which 1960s movie has the tagline, "A man went looking for America, and he couldn't find it anywhere"?
- GEOGRAPHY: Which body of water includes islands known as the Seychelles?
- CHEMISTRY: Which element's symbol is Sn?
- LITERATURE: What is the length of a traditional sonnet?
- GEOLOGY: What is a common name for calcium carbonate?
- FOOD & DRINK: Which fast-food chain goes by the name Hungry Jack in Australia?
- U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president gave radio addresses that were described as "fireside chats"?
- ASTRONOMY: What is the shape of the Milky Way?

Trivia answers

- Ghost.
 - General William T. Sherman.
 - "Easy Rider."
 - Indian Ocean.
 - Tin (stannum).
 - 14 lines of poetry.
 - Limestone or chalk.
 - Burger King.
 - Franklin D. Roosevelt.
 - Spiral.
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G Y X S N O I T C U R T S N I

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions forward, backward, up, down and diagonally
Unlisted clue hint: SWEET COURSE AFTER DINNER

Breakfast
Delivery
Discount
Drink

Gift
Installation
Instructions
Insurance

Manual
Membership
Samples
Shipping

Tax
Tip
Warranty

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Make a Family-Style Salade Nicoise

It's market time! On weekend mornings, I like to saunter through our neighborhood farmers market amid the crowds of people who, like me, are attracted to the "picked at their peak" vegetables, flowers, eggs, honey and jams in colorful stalls. Adults and kids alike visit with vendors, while friends happily bump into one another for a chat.

Since produce is overflowing at markets and grocery stores, there's no better time to make a fresh, easy-to-prepare dish that the whole family will love. I was recently inspired by my friend, Ann Francois, to make a big salade nicoise for the centerpiece of her dining table at a recent gathering with our friends.

While I have vivid memories of traveling in southern France and feasting on this country salad (which is typically composed of tomatoes, tuna, hard-boiled-egg halves, and anchovies on a bed of lettuce, dressed with a vinaigrette), Ann's version featured the addition of locally sourced new potatoes and mounds of green beans. Each ingredient was artfully arranged on a platter and served with crusty French bread.

Make this healthy salad with your kids for a light and simple-to-prepare main course. What makes it so family-friendly is that you can tweak it to suit tastes. Add artichoke hearts, capers, or grilled red peppers. Don't like anchovies? Just skip them!

SALADE NICOISE

Serves 6

- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 head Boston lettuce, separated into leaves, washed and dried
- 1 pound firm green beans, preferably French string beans (haricot verts), cooked just beyond the tender-crisp stage and chilled
- 1 pound new potatoes, cooked and halved
- 2-3 (5- or 6-ounce) cans albacore solid white tuna, drained and flaked, or grilled fresh tuna, cut into chunks
- 3 large vine-ripe tomatoes, sliced into wedges
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, halved lengthwise
- 1 cup pitted black olives
- 1 (2-ounce) can anchovy fillets, rinsed and patted dry (optional)

To make the vinaigrette, in a jar, let kids measure and shake vigorously to combine the oil, vinegar, lemon juice, mustard, garlic, salt and pepper. Set aside.

To assemble the salad, working together with your kids, arrange the lettuce over a large serving platter. Top with mounds of the green beans, potatoes, tuna, tomatoes, eggs and olives. Drape the anchovy fillets (if using) over the potatoes. Drizzle vinaigrette over the salad and serve.

Donna Erickson creates relationships and community through food and fun. Find more to nourish and delight you at www.donnaerickson.com.

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ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Although practical situations continue to dominate this week, there's time for the Lamb to indulge in the fun things in life -- like maybe taking a special someone out for a great evening!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) This week favors relationships. Take time to renew old ones and make time to go where new friends can be found. On a more practical note, expect news about a business deal.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You should be seeing some progress on a new workplace situation. Meanwhile, family matters might demand more attention, and you'll want to set aside time to deal with them.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) A relationship might suddenly present some challenges that you never expected. After talking things out, you might want to consider taking some time to assess what you've learned.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) A disappointing response to a request might dampen the Lion's spirits. But you might want to ask what the reasoning is behind it. What you learn can be of great importance in a future undertaking.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) A once-volatile situation should be settled by now, giving you a chance to refocus on a project that you've been planning for. Look for an interested party to rally to your support.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A business matter that unexpectedly turns into a personal situation could create complications. It's best to resolve the matter now before too much harm can be done.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Emotions can run high when they involve personal matters that no one really wants to talk about. But this could be a good time to create the means to a workable outcome.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) A positive response to a workplace request could lead the way to other long-sought-out changes. Congratulations! A personal situation also takes a welcome turn.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Patience pays off as a once-overwhelming work situation continues to become easier to handle on a one-by-one basis. Look for positive news from a colleague.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) It might be a good idea to take more time to reassess your next move in working out a complex situation. You could benefit from a new perspective on the matter.

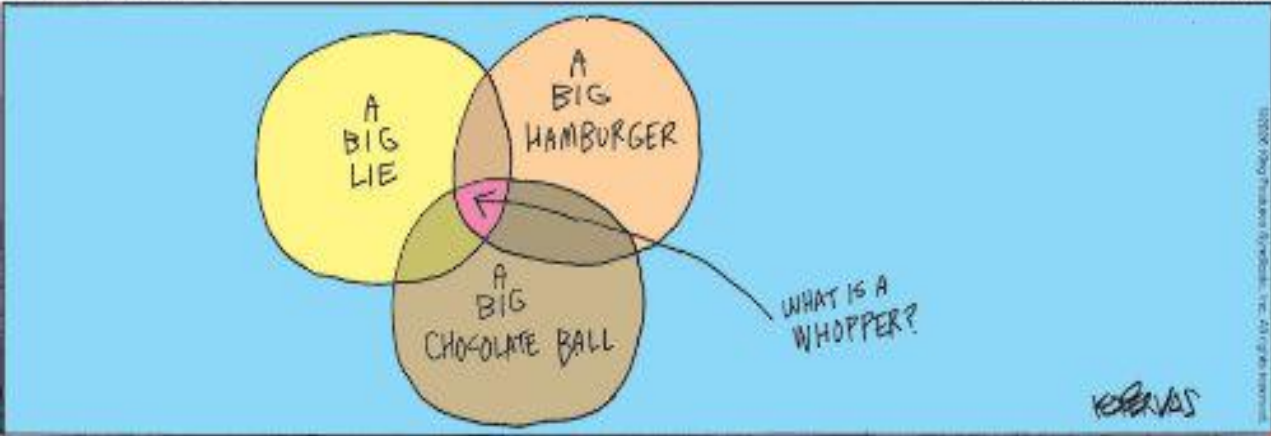
PISCES (February 19 to March 20) You might want to consider making time to discuss a change of plans with everyone concerned. Be prepared to explain your actions. Also, be prepared to listen to alternatives.

BORN THIS WEEK: You have a strong sense of what's right and you try to work from this foundation. Your friends and employers see you as reliable.

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Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: O equals R

AVSPO YGW YVR JWHKPUUPQ
DW KOPJBRPUX DBHP DW DGP
RPJWIQ VIXDGBIM RGP
JWWSPQ: APDDX JUWJSPO.

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Super Crossword

ACROSS

1 "Eat — eaten" (law of the jungle)

5 One prayed to during a drought

12 Laboratory substance

20 Schnitzel meat

21 Redenbacher of popcorn

22 Chevron motor oil brand

23 Manage to avoid the introductory music?

25 Cousin of a musical

26 Cousin of a mouse

27 Look at

28 These fast musical passages, in Spain?

30 Customary actions of a World War II coalition?

34 Agnus — (Mass prayer)

35 Potential picnic pest

36 Potential picnic pest

37 Politician DeSantis

38 Expected

40 Revise copy

44 Catch by luring

47 Advancement made by a ferocious female?

53 "Don't panic!"

55 Like a 30-pound cat, say

56 Impel forcibly

57 Former rival of Pan Am

58 With life, musically

60 Divining deck

61 Fill a bishop with joy?

66 Blasting stuff

68 Film director Gus Van —

69 Peru's capital

70 "— that the truth!"

71 Fishnet stuff

72 Previously

73 Let off steam

74 Father

75 Bury Johannes Gutenberg?

79 Homer epic

81 High schoolers, e.g., slangily

83 Long period

84 Apartment sharer, e.g.

86 — Detoo (sci-fi droid)

87 School-related

92 Fishing for large shrimps from atop a rooflike shelter?

95 2006 Olympics host in Italia

96 Hershey's toffee bar

97 Mariner's "Mayday!"

98 "Of course!"

100 Potential picnic pest

101 Vardalos of film

104 Poem variety

106 Give novelist Marcel the boot?

109 Goading person who's stranger?

115 Tic-tac-toe win

116 Pekoe, e.g.

117 Marine stuff with a hard, pinkish skeleton

118 The process of deciding how much the frosting should cost?

122 Many a pre-toast tale

123 Band tour follower

124 Alloy

125 Emphasized

126 Baskers may acquire them

127 Some jeans, familiarly

DOWN

1 Really astonishes

2 Drug reducing muscle strain

3 "Guardians of the Galaxy" co-star Dave

4 Antiquity, archaically

5 Cow catcher

6 Amount of money owed

7 "— had it!"

8 Nothing at all

9 Epoxies, e.g.

10 Car make until '04

11 Bug spray ingredient

12 Selected

13 Less sad

14 At all times

15 "Encore!"

16 Dots in la mer

17 Big town, in Italian

18 Writer Chekhov

19 Minimum

24 Psychic skill

29 Port south of Kiev

31 Nimble

32 Motorola tablet introduced in 2011

33 Gerund suffix

38 Alternative to cash or credit

39 "I volunteer to help"

41 ER worker

42 "— Rhythm"

43 Crime of some traitors

45 Entr'—

46 Cat's "toe bean," e.g.

48 Novelist Jaffe

49 One stroking a cat, say

50 Off-target

51 Wall bracket for candles

52 "English" or "Irish" dog

54 Cow catcher

58 — -rock (music genre)

59 How many freelancers work?

61 "Mistress of the Dark" of TV and film

62 Hide out, as a criminal

63 Membrane enclosing an embryo

64 Japanese floor mats

65 Make lovable

67 Part of ENT

71 Spanish for "month"

75 Bisected

76 Glowing signs

77 Sci-fi empath Deanna

78 — -Chinese

80 Rinky- —

82 Wiped away

85 Psyche part

87 Matures

88 Therefore

89 Trivial details

90 Kind of

91 Small, simple houses

93 Divide into fair shares

94 Sch. in Manhattan

99 Visit for a bit

101 Dunn and Ephron

102 Birth cert., e.g.

103 Sum finder

105 Meted (out)

106 Stellar hunter

107 Sweat outlets

108 King, in Caen

110 Cicero's "Lol"

111 Cones' counterparts

112 Cons' counterparts

113 Likes, slangily

114 Light beige

119 Trail mix bit

120 H.S. transcript stat

121 Toon frame

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Moments in time

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Oct. 12, 1990, South Dakota became the first state to rename Columbus Day "Native American Day," in honor of the initial inhabitants of the Americas. Two years later, the city of Berkeley, California, would be the first to call it "Indigenous Peoples' Day."
- On Oct. 13, 1925, groundbreaking stand-up comedian Lenny Bruce, whose freewheeling and profanity-laced routines on taboo topics notably attacked societal conventions and occasionally resulted in arrests, was born in Mineola, New York.
- On Oct. 14, 1892, "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" by Arthur Conan Doyle was published. The book was the first collection of Holmes stories, which had been published in magazines since 1887. Its titular detective was partly inspired by Dr. Joseph Bell, whom Conan Doyle had met at the University of Edinburgh when he studied medicine there.
- On Oct. 15, 2024, researchers announced seven new species of tree frogs in Madagascar whose high-pitched whistling calls were reminiscent of sound effects from the sci-fi series "Star Trek," prompting the monikers Kirk, Picard, Sisko, Janeway, Archer, Burnham and Pike.
- On Oct. 16, 1906, German shoemaker Wilhelm Voight, who already had a long criminal record, embarrassed the German army by impersonating an officer and leading an entire squad of soldiers to the town of Kopenik, where they helped him steal 4,000 marks from the mayor's office.
- On Oct. 17, 1974, President Gerald Ford explained to Congress that he had chosen to pardon Richard Nixon, rather than allow Congress to pursue legal action against him, claiming that a long, drawn-out trial would have further polarized the public -- a decision that was condemned by many and may have helped cost Ford a victory in the presidential election of 1976.
- On Oct. 18, 1963, Félicette, a Parisian stray cat, had the honor of becoming the first (and to date the only) cat to visit outer space. The black-and-white feline's journey lasted 98 miles and a grand total of 13 minutes before her capsule safely parachuted back to Earth.

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

By Matilda Charles

Speeding up our walking

Is it 10,000 steps per day we need to walk? Or is it 6,000 to 8,000? Or can we get by with only 3,000 to 4,000 steps each day?

The answer, apparently, is that it depends on who is giving us those numbers.

That 10,000 number started as an advertising ploy. Back in 1965 a Japanese company created a pedometer (step counter), and the name of it was similar to the 10,000 number in Japanese. It caught on from there as a goal to strive for, without much (or anything) in the way of actual research behind it.

We've been faced with everybody throwing out a number they claim is the optimum one for us to lower our risk of heart disease and risk of death -- leaving us confused about our best number.

Now, however, there might be something much simpler: Instead of counting steps, a new study has shown that increasing our walking speed might be just as good as walking many thousands of steps each day at a slower speed.

Specifically, what they discovered is that walking fewer than 5,000 fast steps every day could be as good as walking 5,000-7,500 slower steps when it comes to lowering our risk of death.

And how fast is fast? According to the study in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, aiming for 80 steps per minute for fewer than 5,000 steps is as good as 60 steps per minute for over 5,000 steps.

The study had tens of thousands of participants with their information pulled from the UK Biobank, a worldwide database with the information on a half million volunteers, so this was a significant study.

To quote one of the study reviewers, "The biggest health gains often come from going from no activity to some activity. Even a few minutes of movement a day can start to improve your overall health and longevity."

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WHAT HAPPENS IN ASSISTED LIVING?

A typical day in an assisted living community is often filled with warmth, comfort, and activities that promote both well-being and joy. It's a space where seniors can enjoy their independence while receiving the support they need, all within a nurturing environment that feels like home.

Morning: A Fresh Start

The day begins on a peaceful note. Residents can wake up at their own pace, knowing that assistance is always available if needed. A hearty breakfast is served in the dining room, where everyone can enjoy nutritious, home-prepared meals while chatting with friends. The atmosphere is warm and inviting, and it feels like catching up with family over coffee. After breakfast, residents might choose to participate in gentle exercise classes designed to energize the body and mind or catch up on current events. There might be a visit from one of the favorite pets from our pet therapy partners, or musical entertainers that invite everyone to sing along!

Mid-Morning: Activities and Social Time

After breakfast, the day opens up with a variety of engaging activities. Some may join a group for an art class or music therapy session, while others may prefer a stroll in the beautifully landscaped courtyard. There's always something to do, whether it's a book club, a crafting session, or even a friendly game

of bingo. Social events like these help create bonds among residents (and those caring for them), by keeping the atmosphere vibrant and full of life.

Afternoon: Relaxation and Recreation

After a delicious lunch, residents have time to relax or pursue personal hobbies. Some may retreat to their rooms for a nap or to enjoy a quiet afternoon of reading. Others might head to a common area to watch a movie or enjoy a card game. The community might have a scenic drive or a picnic in the park planned. Staff members are always present, offering a helping hand or friendly conversation.

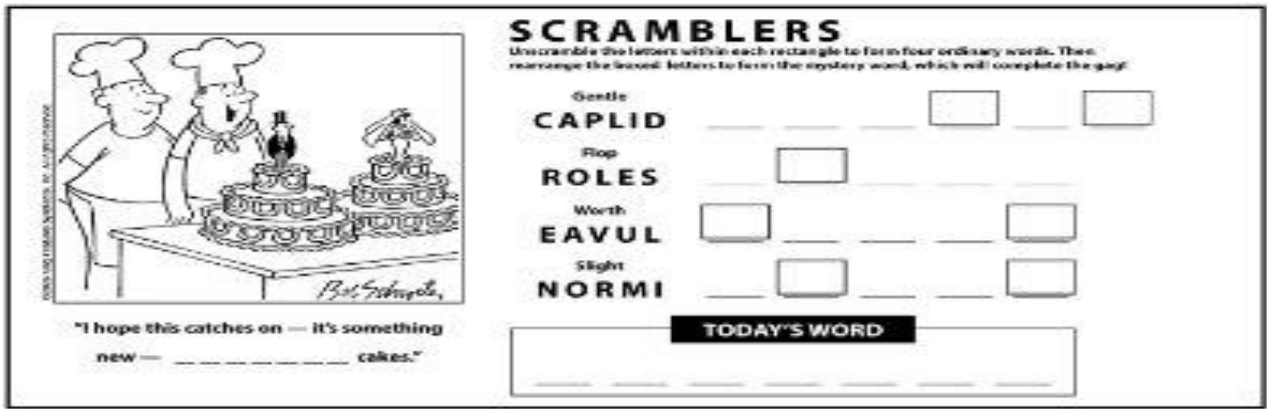
Evening: A Cozy End to the Day

Dinner is another opportunity for socializing, with delicious meals tailored to different tastes and dietary needs. As the day comes to a close, residents can unwind with a variety of evening activities—like enjoying a cup of hot chocolate and watching the sun set in the courtyard together, watching a classic film, or simply relaxing in one of the walk-in bathtubs with a little Epsom salt and essential oil. The day ends on a cozy note, ensuring that everyone feels happy and at home.

In assisted living, every day is filled with moments of joy, connection, and comfort, where each resident can live life at their own pace while being part of a caring community. Call me today for a free consultation in navigating assisted living and memory care options.



Becky Georgius
Sales and Marketing Director
The Lodge Assisted Living and Memory Care Communities
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Micro Crossword

By Elizabeth C. Gorski

Across

1 Desert vegetation

6 "There runs ___ by Merrow Down" (Rudyard Kipling)

7 "Save Me" singer ___ Roll

8 To the time that

9 Word with spray or passage

Down

1 Bayou cuisine

2 Rock concert venue

3 Indianapolis football team

4 Actress Shire of "The Godfather"

5 Pastoral opus

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

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TIDBITS WORD POWER

Unscramble this word:

GAINANERD

If you add this pomegranate-based sweet red syrup to a Screwdriver, you get a Tequila Sunrise.

TIDBITS NUGGET OF KNOWLEDGE

World War II-era soldiers and servicemen wanted to mix tequila with juice to make it more palatable, but did not always have spoons to do the mixing. They used their tools instead, which is how the cocktail called the Screwdriver (orange juice and tequila) got its name.

KNIGHT MOVES

D	K	Y
U		N
I	L	N

Unlock the power of chess to find the eight-letter word of the day. Choose your starting letter carefully, then move around the square in a one by two fashion to get to the next letter.

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TIDBITS PUZZLE ANSWERS

TRIVIA NEWSFRONT ANSWERS

1. Margatta
2. It leaves the feet of snuffling chaper friends.
3. Doctors during a flu epidemic thought less with people would ward off the illness.
4. Jelloni
5. Jose Cuervo

WORD POWER
ANSWER
GRENADINE

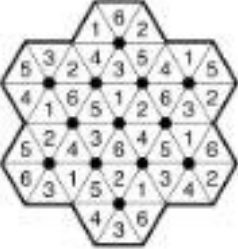
QUIZ BITS
ANSWERS

1. The top
2. Thomas

Weekly SUDOKU
Answer

3	2	8	7	4	1	9	6	5
4	9	1	8	6	5	2	7	3
6	5	7	3	9	2	4	1	8
1	6	3	4	5	8	7	2	9
8	4	2	6	7	9	5	3	1
5	7	9	2	1	3	6	8	4
7	1	6	5	3	4	8	9	2
2	3	5	9	8	7	1	4	6
9	8	4	1	2	6	3	5	7

SNOWFLAKES
solution



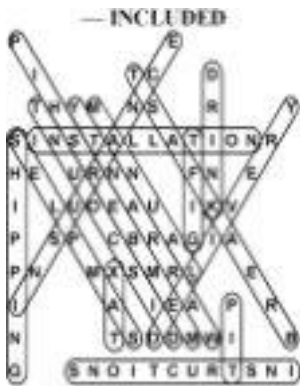
SCRAMBLERS
Solution
1. Placid; 2. Loser
3. Value; 4. Minor
Today's Word
DIVORCE

KNIGHT MOVES
Answer

D	K	Y
U		N
I	L	N

UNKINDLY

INCLUDED



Word Spiral Answer
BATHROBES

MINI SUDOKU
Answer

3	4	5	2	6	1
2	6	1	3	4	5
1	5	6	4	2	3
4	2	3	5	1	6
5	1	2	6	3	4
6	3	4	1	5	2

Micro Crossword
Answer

C	A	C	T	I
A	R	O	A	D
J	E	L	L	Y
U	N	T	I	L
N	A	S	A	L

CryptoQuote
answer
I don't do things for the response or the controversy. I just live my life. — Rihanna

CryptoQuip
answer
Baker who was compelled to precisely time to the second anything she cooked: Betty Crocker.

Super Crossword
Answers

ORBE	RAINGOD	CHEMICAL
VEAL	ORVILLE	HAVOLINE
ELUDE	PRELUDE	OPERAETTA
RAT	SEE	ESTOSPRESTOS
AXIS	PRAxis	DEI
WASP	RON	DUE
ENTRAP	OGRESS	PROGRESS
STAY	CALM	OBESSE
	TWA	ANIMATO
ELATE	PRELATE	TNT
LIMA	AIN	MESH
VENT	DAD	INTERPRINTER
ILIAD	TEENERS	AEON
ROOMIE	ARTOO	ACADEMIC
AWNING	PRAWNING	TORINO
	SKOR	SOS
NIA	ODE	QUESTPROUST
ODDER	PRODDER	OOO
REDCORAL	ICING	PRICING
ANECDOTE	GROUPIE	EASE
STRESSED	SUNTANS	LEES

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TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH
By Dr. Keith Roach



By Dr. Keith Roach
Shingles Patient Doesn't Experience Pain Due to Vaccination

DEAR DR. ROACH: I was reading your recent column about shingles. Several years ago, I contracted shingles, even after getting the vaccine. It hit me in my left eye, so I went to my eye doctor. (I wasn't sure what the problem was.) He took one look at my eye and diagnosed me with shingles.

He gave me an antibiotic that cleared up the problem. At no time was I in any pain, which I attributed to my getting the vaccine. Do you concur with my observation? I'm aware that getting shingles can be very painful. -- L.J.

ANSWER: Shingles is caused by a reactivation of the chicken pox virus, which most older adults acquired as children with chicken pox. But it can also be acquired through the chicken pox (varicella) vaccine. Usually, shingles is painful as it grows in the nerve, causing inflammation and damage. The vaccine helps reduce the risk of getting shingles; however, it isn't perfect, and people can still get shingles despite being vaccinated.

Fortunately, the vaccine has two additional benefits. The first is that, as you correctly surmised, it reduces the pain of acute shingles. It also reduces pain medication use by 40% and the duration of pain meds by 50%. I think you're relatively fortunate to not have any pain at all. The second benefit is that vaccination reduces, by about 90%, the likelihood of getting continued pain for weeks and months after the infection -- a condition called postherpetic neuralgia.

Shingles is sometimes so obvious that any experienced clinician can make the diagnosis at a glance. However, it can be misdiagnosed as herpes simplex (and vice versa), other viruses, or even bacterial infections. The laboratory can be very helpful when the diagnosis isn't clear. Antiviral medicines such as valacyclovir

(Valtrex) are effective at reducing pain and inflammation, and it's best to begin them as soon as possible (ideally within 24 hours, but certainly within 72 hours of the onset of the rash).

Shingles of the eye should be urgently seen by an ophthalmologist, who has equipment and expertise that primary care clinicians don't. There are complications of the eye that may require intravenous antiviral medicine. All adults over 50 and immunocompromised adults of any age should get the shingles vaccine, unless there's a good reason for them not to get it.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Should one get the COVID vaccine when they suspect that they have active long COVID? How can one rebuild a good immune system after long COVID? -- C.B.

ANSWER: Yes, a COVID vaccine is indicated. The vaccine is safe in people with persistent symptoms after a COVID infection, which is commonly called "long COVID." Most people don't see a change in their symptoms. About 20% of people experience improvement, while an equal number experienced a (usually temporary) worsening of their symptoms. The vaccine helps protect people against getting long COVID with future infections.

Regaining normal strength, vitality and resilience after long COVID takes time. The recommended interventions include a tailored exercise program, as people with long COVID have a reduced ability to exercise, and standard recommendations may be too strenuous. At least one study found a benefit for six months of probiotics and prebiotics helping people to recover. Proper sleep hygiene with a goal of 6-8 hours may help. Stress management and psychological support may also play important roles.

There's not a magic bullet when it comes to recovering from long COVID. I have several patients who continue to struggle after getting a severe infection during the beginning of the pandemic, which was more than six years ago now.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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Amber Waves
by Dave T. Phipps



HEY LOYD, HOW DID YOUR DATE GO WITH THE NEW GIRL?

NOT GREAT... I MEAN, IT STARTED OUT WELL ENOUGH. WE BEGAN WITH THE SIMPLE SMALL TALK.

BUT EVERY TIME SHE LAUGHED SHE HAD THIS ANNOYING HABIT OF SNORTING WHEN SHE LAUGHED!

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