

What's your Health IQ? Round two!



In a previous article, I lamented Americans' lack of health literacy and provided a quiz to see how my readers fared.

Now, I'd like to challenge you again.

According to an article in the Los Angeles Times, U.S. adults get a "D" in science; 22% confuse astronomy and astrology! On a general science knowledge quiz consisting of 12 questions, the test-takers answered 7.9 correctly, on average. That's a score of 66%. Only 6% answered all 12 questions correctly.



Similarly, lack of health literacy is also a huge problem in this country. We are continually bombarded with often-contradictory health information. Patients are confronted with myriad treatment options they are ill-equipped to properly choose from. Urban legend, aggressive direct-to-consumer advertising, and dumbed-down media stories add to the confusion. The mission of *Intelligent Medicine* is to enhance your health IQ.

Here's a second installment of our health quiz—see if you pass!

1. The following are health consequences of the microbiome

(the bacteria that inhabit our GI tracts and skin surfaces)
EXCEPT:

- A) Helps to manufacture essential vitamins and nutrients
- B) Responsible for optimal immune functioning
- C) If properly regulated, helps to maintain normal metabolism and weight
- D) Can influence mood
- E) ALL of the above are correct

2. A deficiency of vitamin B12 can result in all of the following EXCEPT:

- A) Anemia
- B) Numbness and tingling of the extremities
- C) Cognitive decline
- D) Dry skin and brittle hair
- E) ALL of the above are correct

3. All of the following nutrients are integral to hair health EXCEPT

- A) Iron
- B) Magnesium
- C) Essential fatty acids
- D) Biotin
- E) ALL of the above are correct

4. Nutrients beneficial for depression include all of the following EXCEPT

- A) Copper
- B) Omega 3 fatty acids (EPA/DHA)
- C) B vitamins
- D) Curcumin
- E) ALL of the above are correct

5. Which of the following supplements can cause liver damage if taken in excess?

- A) Vitamin A
- B) Niacin
- C) Iron
- D) NONE of the above
- E) ALL of the above

6. Which of the following types of studies is considered the “Gold Standard” for scientific research?

- A) An epidemiological study
- B) “N of 1” trial
- C) A prospective, double-blind, placebo-controlled study
- D) A case-control study
- E) A meta-analysis (study of studies)

7. A patient wakes up with numbness and tingling in her arms and has difficulty walking. The LEAST likely diagnosis is:

- A) A stroke
- B) Zika virus
- C) Multiple sclerosis
- D) A panic attack
- E) Pinched nerves in spine

8. Symptoms of magnesium deficiency include all of the following EXCEPT:

- A) Fatigue
- B) Muscle spasms
- C) Diarrhea
- D) Cardiac arrhythmias
- E) ALL of the above are correct

9. All of the following nutrients have been found to be beneficial for asthma EXCEPT:

- A) Magnesium
- B) Fish oil
- C) Vitamin D
- D) N-acetylcysteine (NAC)

- E) ALL of the above are correct

10. The MAJOR cause of chronic liver disease in the US is:

- A) Tylenol overdoses
- B) Alcoholism
- C) Hepatitis
- D) Diet
- E) Environmental pollution

ANSWERS:

1. E) ALL are correct. New discoveries are continually adding to the health benefits the microbiome confers.

2. E) I myself was surprised to learn that B12 deficiency can contribute to hair loss.

3. B) There isn't much evidence to suggest that magnesium supports optimal hair growth

4. A) Copper excess (especially when accompanied by zinc deficiency) has been associated with psychiatric disorders.

5. E) Excess vitamin A, niacin and iron have all been found to cause liver damage.

6. C) While all types of studies are valuable, prospective double-blind placebo-controlled studies are generally accorded the most weight by the scientific community.

7. B) Zika virus is an unlikely possibility because, while it can rarely result in muscle weakness and paralysis (Guilain Barre Syndrome), it is unlikely to be associated with numbness and tingling.

8. C) In fact, too little magnesium might result in the opposite—constipation; taking too much magnesium can induce diarrhea.

9. D) or E) This is sort of a trick question, because, depending on what studies you're looking at, NAC is either not efficacious for asthma, or it is. It likely helps to thin mucus which could be a factor in respiratory disorders, but the research on its role in asthma is conflicted.

10. D) All are causes of liver disease in the U.S., but the

leading cause (76%) is non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), which is the result of dietary excess—primarily of refined carbohydrates.

If you answered all these questions correctly, or even 9 out of 10, congratulations, you are a true paragon of *Intelligent Medicine*! If you got 7 or 8 right, you're still doing better than average. If you scored 60% or less, your health literacy needs a boost. Try boning up on medical and nutritional facts by listening to our *Intelligent Medicine* podcasts and following the articles we post at DrHoffman.com—you're sure to ace the test when we offer another installment later this year!