



E-spoons E-zine
December 2012

CHASING THE LIGHTS.....

The heat is on, in the southern hemisphere at least..... and a little sun shine chases away what's bugging you and it probably shouldn't be your cholesterol count. So open up your windows to a little solar power, it might just save coffee from extinction and see you enjoying joy rides into your old age. And if you want to avoid short circuits in your old brain, you might want to cut down on those carbs and shine some light in. Finally, in the season of twinkling Christmas lights, avoid the holiday dinner pig out by washing your mouth out with sugar and if you're filling up at the fast food joint, eat the hamburger and fries, but don't drink the cold drink. Merry Christmas.

The E-spoons E-zine is a monthly compilation of stories appearing on [7 Big Spoons™ blog](#). The stories are based on the latest science tit bits and will help you become a little healthier, wealthier and wiser by explaining the why. As a friend of Spoonful of Science you have been included on our mailing list – should you wish to unsubscribe, follow the link at the bottom of the E-zine.

A little sun shine chases away what's bugging you

Western Boxelder bugs, love to sun tan with their friends.....and when they do, they create quite a stink. Literally, the sun creates a some-what noxious odour.

Most of the time, in nature, odd smells are all about SEX.

But the monoterpenes, being created by the sun tanning beetles, are definitely not making Mr or Mrs bug, more “attractive”. They're about protection, not from the bogey man, that might eat beetles for breakfast, but from little annoying pests, that give beetles itches and things.

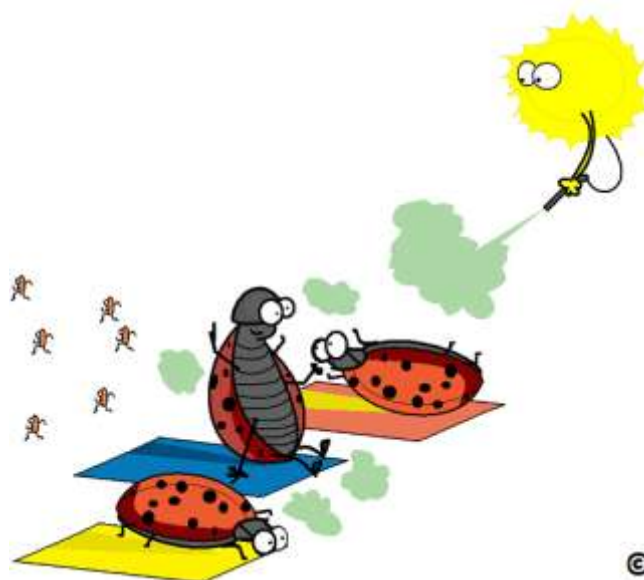
The details of the chemistry still need to be worked out. But, researchers from Simon Fraser University, have established the beetles sun bathing with friends are performing a little *beetle medicine*. [Click here to read more about beetle medicine.](#)

So this summer, don't be afraid to sun tan with friends. Practise a little beetle medicine and gets things cleaned up too. Fortunately, you won't create a STINK, unless you're a little heavy handed with the sun tan lotion, but as you soak up the sun, you will be turning your cholesterol to vitamin D, and a couple of other things too. The vitamin D kicks starts your sanitation system, keeping annoying pests away for you too.

Beetles are not blessed with BIG BRAINS, but they do know that staying in the sun for too long, will cook their little body's. So when the beetles are hot and bothered – they head for the shade. Do the same. Baking in the sun for hours, is what increases the risk of SUN BURNS. And SUN BURNS cause DNA damage, which can put you at risk of skin cancer and makes you look old before your time.

But a little sun everyday will keep the bugs away !

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High cholesterol is not one of the BIG THREE predictors of heart disease

High cholesterol is seen as the kiss of death.....

A high LDL count, is probably not a sign of good health, but researchers from the University of Warwick are putting high cholesterol, in perspective. The team identified three things which are far better indicators that you have A SERIOUS problem.

The big THREE turned out to be

- Central obesity i.e. a big tummy – this is a sign of INSULIN RESISTANCE
- High blood sugar levels (hyperglycemia) and
- High blood pressure

Both high sugar levels and high blood pressure, put a huge amount of strain on the integrity of the blood vessels. The cells lining the blood vessels need help, getting “patched”. In heart disease this patching is going awry. [Read more....](#)



Swallowing pills to FIX your cholesterol, is not FIXING the trouble and often create NEW troubles. The key to FIXING the trouble, is to limit the damage to the cells that line the blood vessels.

A good place to start, is to get the 7 Big Spoons™ sorted, because they will help minimize the damage to those precious cells.....



Need a little help with your cholesterol battle plan ?

High cholesterol is a sign of BAD BODY CHEMISTRY. I conduct one-on-one health conversations in Gauteng area.

Phone 083 262 5023 to book an appointment and begin “FIXING” the real trouble.

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Windows are opening up to solar power



Most of us are familiar with the idea of big (pretty ugly looking) panels, being strapped to building roof tops, to gather solar energy.

But, the roof is not the only place the sun shines on....

Researchers from UCLA have taken one step closer, to turning ordinary windows into electricity generating machines, that people can still see through. The team have developed an almost see through solar cell, which absorbs light in the infrared spectrum (this is part of the spectrum which our eyes can't see).

The energy, that is absorbed by the special “invisible” plastic, is turned into electricity. Energy that can be used to run all those power hungry appliances, we NEED to run our lives. [Read more about this technology](#), which is helping create Sustainable Energy for All.

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The year of Sustainable Energy for All is drawing to a close – if you're struggling to feel motivated to do your bit, then hopefully the next story will get you fired up to cut YOUR carbon emission.....

Forget the pandas – SAVE COFFEE from extinction

You've heard about climate change and somewhere in the back of your mind – you're a little worried.

Clearly a changing climate is not good thing.

But, did you know climate change could make the coffee plant, *Coffea arabica*, E-X-T-I-N-C-T.

NO MORE COFFEE – ouch ! NO MORE CAFFE LATTE – double ouch !

Breathe – breathe.

The EXTINCTION event is probably about 70 years away, BUT you may suddenly be feeling a lot more committed to living more sustainably and cutting your carbon emissions.

Earlier this year, a research team from the Royal Botanic Gardens in the UK went coffee tree spotting on the Boma Plateau, a forested area, where the *Coffea arabica* still grows wild. The 2012 team, was able to compare the number of coffee trees in the area in 1941 and now.

In short, they found there were a lot less coffee trees in 2012. They attributed the decrease in number to climate change. And “predict” wild Arabica plants will be extinct by 2080. [Read more...](#)

Oh dear, a hotter world is likely to mean **less productivity**, both for the coffee farmers and for humanity as a whole. No more meetings in coffee shops or **pulling an all nighter with a little java juice !**

Forget the pandas – SAVE COFFEE ! It is a set of genes that I cannot live without.

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Joy rides in old age depend on vitamin D power

Ask any teenager, the thing(s) that cause them the greatest amount of angst and frustration. You and all those RULES will be on the list, so will money, specifically lack of it, but for many of them, the worst part about life as a teen, is the mobility issue. Not being able to get where you want/need to go, when you want to go – SERIOUSLY cramps your style.



Of course, for most teens walking is invariably an option... not a preferred option, although it should be, but an option to get from point A to point B.

For many older adults, walking stops being an option.

Leaving the golden years full of the angst and frustration, of not being able to get where you want/need to go, when you want to go. This lack of mobility seriously cramps ones style.

So what determines whether you still have the keys to the car, when you're too old to drive ? Vitamin D levels. [Read more](#)

So if you're in the habit of hiding from the sun, but keen on enjoying fast and furious joy rides into your twilight years.

Sun tan or supplement. Get those vitamin D levels into the normal range.

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Old brains short circuit on high carbohydrate diet

Officially, the brain runs on carbohydrates. So logic dictates, the more carbohydrates you eat, the better your brain should run.

But, researchers from the Mayo Clinic have put a spanner in the works of this thinking. They have discovered, in the elderly at least, too many carbohydrates, hasten foggy thinking.

The research team tracked what 940 seriously old brains (the owners were 70-89 years of age), ate most days. Initially all the old brains were in good working order, but 4 years down the line, quite a few had started to short circuit, showing signs of failing circuitry, with slips in memory, language, thinking and judgement above and beyond normal age-related changes.

After crunching the numbers, the team concluded that people with the highest carbohydrate intake, were 3.6 times more likely to develop mild cognitive impairment. Interestingly, the brains consuming the highest levels of fat, were the least likely to fail.

As one gets older, high carb meals are often the order of the day – they're easy to prepare and a lot less pricey. But your brain needs both protein and fat to function at its best. Protect your brain by **obeying the rule of thirds** and give it a little bit of everything it needs.

[Read the full story...](#)

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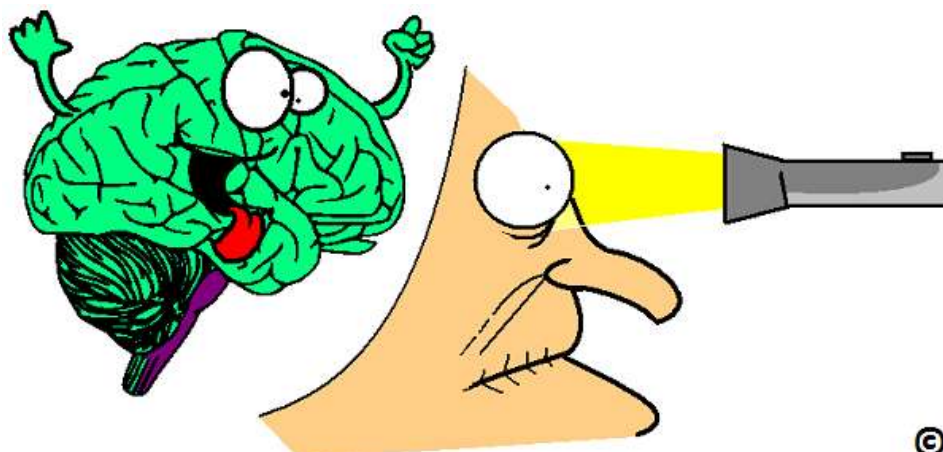
Need a little help with a health problem ?

Complete a body audit and discover the habits that are hurting your health. Then draw up a personalized action plan, to improve your overall body chemistry. To book your body audit, drop me an e-mail at drsandy@spoonfulofscience.com or phone 083 262 5023 to book an appointment.

Shine the lights in grandpa's eyes so he will remember more

The convalescent's room, is designed to be pale and calming, the curtains are slightly drawn and the lights are typically set on low. Caregivers believe this is the most nurturing environment – it is governed by strict routine and quiet. But the continuous low light lighting, is disrupting an ancient routine – the circadian rhythm. The circadian rhythm, does more than just **set the body's metabolic rhythms**, it sets the brain's rhythm too.

A research team from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Science, decided to turn on the lights in elderly care facilities across the Netherlands..... Turning the lights on made a difference.



No, it didn't turn back time and get the old brain's thinking like new but...

- It did slow down the cognitive decline, by about 5 %
- Residents seemed a lot happier, depression decreased by 19 %

Overall, the lights improved thinking abilities, mood, behaviour, ability to function and sleep. The only adverse effect of the bright light therapy, was an increase in the electricity bill.

If the light seems to be dimming in your brain or the brain of someone you love, as a result of those passing years. Try turning the lights on – LITERALLY.

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Gargle with sugar to see the light

Did your Mom wash your mouth out with soap, when you uttered a DIRTY WORD ?

To be honest, I can't ever remember this actually happening to me, not because I was a goodie two shoes..... I think it was just a threat. The THREAT was designed to improve my self-control. And since it never actually happened, the threat must have achieved its objective.



So the idea that rinsing your mouth out, can improve self-control is not a new one.

But washing out your mouth with soap, is not something you would necessarily want to try out on your self. Odds are you'd be blowing bubbles out your nose etcY-U-C-K !

Fortunately, you don't actually have to use soap !

According to research published in *Psychological Science*, you can use something way more pleasant and still get the self control benefit.

You can get the rinse effect with a mouthful of sugar.

And best of all, you don't need to SWALLOW. So you're not exposing yourself to UNWANTED calories. [Read more...](#)

So if you have to do a task that is particularly taxing, but won't take too long to do AND YOU CAN DO IT IN PRIVATE e.g. your actual taxes, solving a challenging problem, not lighting up that cigarette, you might want to kick start the task with a good sugar gargle. Remember the aim is to hold the sugar in your mouth AND NOT TO SWALLOW.

NOTE : Public displays of sugar gargling will be tricky, so you may need to go with a more civilized plan B. Suck a sweet. The disadvantage of plan B is you are now swallowing calories.

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Got a sugar gremlin ? Enrol in our new e-course to outwit it.

Trick or Treat ?

Outwitting your sugar gremlin through a little trickery of your own

Have the hamburger and fries but don't do the cold drink

Eating out is often blamed for the obesity epidemic. But is there really SUCH A BIG difference, between a sandwich with all the toppings eaten at home, followed by a low-fat twinkie and a hamburger eaten at McDonalds ?

Sort of....

A team from University of Illinois believe it is the supersized cold drink, accompanying the meal, that is a BIG part of the problem in fast food eating. [Read more....](#)

Puritan health gurus will tell you to avoid fast food like the plague, but modern living is for the most part, FAST living. Avoiding fast food all together is not easy.

Everything in moderation. And if you do nothing else, [watch those liquid calories.](#)

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Thank you for taking the time to read the e-zine. I love hearing from readers, so [drop me an e-mail](#) to let me know which story you enjoyed the most, did you learn something new or do you have a different perspective.

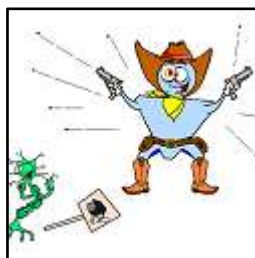


Did you catch this month's Neurotechnology Tips ?

Neurotechnology tips provides tit bits of science to help you buzz up your brain performance. [Click here](#) to have a Neurotechnology Tip delivered directly to you in box next week.



Fess up when you're absolutely petrified of sitting that exam



Stressed neurons are clumsy dropping the memories you need



Your tablet computer is scaring away the night valet

Next month we will EYE-ING THE NEW YEAR. Look out for the next edition of E-spoons in your inbox on 2 January 2012 (the first Wednesday of the month).

Yours scientifically

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The cartoons were drawn by [Guy Alain Ngangob](#) – drop him an e-mail if you need a cartoon or two. If you want to access the science articles used to compile the newsletter, visit the relevant pages on the blog and follow the link.

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