

# ask the **EXPERTS**

This month, snacks to replace smoking, the facts on lecithin and shifting a stubborn gut.

## nutrition



Emma Stirling  
Nutrition editor

Lecithin is a fatty yellow substance produced in the body and found naturally in certain foods, for example egg yolks. It is commonly extracted from soybean to make a range of different food additives and lecithin granule supplements. As for its health benefits, there are no proven links between lecithin and lowered cholesterol, or any conclusive research into lecithin's ability to lessen the effects of Alzheimer's disease. While Weight Watchers encourages 'food first' eating – that is, aiming to get

Is it true that lecithin can slow the progress of Alzheimer's and lower cholesterol? Should I not be concerned about its high **ProPoints** values?

Val McKenzie, Tuakau, New Zealand

all of your vitamins and minerals from food – we do recommend taking a multivitamin while losing weight. And it's great that you've looked up the **ProPoints** value of lecithin granules and taken this into account. All Weight Watchers members should do this with any supplements they are taking, especially oil-based ones such as omega-3 fatty acids, since they can have a significant impact on your daily **ProPoints** allowance. If you're planning to take a new supplement, be sure to discuss this with your local GP or other healthcare professional beforehand to ensure it doesn't react with medications or supplements you may be taking already.

## men's health

I exercise every day, but still have a gut. Any suggestions?

M. Martindale, via email

You're not alone! Many men complain that, although they work out regularly, they're still stuck with a gut. Why?

Weight loss research into gender differences has shown that men generally have a strong belief they can exercise weight off while making little change to the foods they eat. However, the only way to lose a gut through exercise alone is by giving up everything else and becoming a full-time ultra-endurance runner. A far less painful

and far more effective way to shift your belly weight is to become savvier about good nutrition and to alter your eating habits. To give some perspective, in the right junk food environment after a long day at work, a man can eat 8,400 kilojoules in less than 30 seconds. To burn off this energy, he'd have to exercise every day for a week. The smartest, easiest and most effective way to lose a gut is with a combined strategy of good eating and regular exercise, such as on the Weight Watchers **ProPoints Plan**.



Allan Bolton  
Men's consultant

# cooking

*I've recently stopped smoking and now find myself wanting to eat constantly as a replacement. What foods can I snack on to keep my hands and mouth occupied without completely blowing my ProPoints budget?*

Jenna Hull, via email



Lucy Kelly  
Senior food editor

Congratulations on giving up smoking! When I gave up, I found that sugar-free gum and sweets were a good short-term solution to my nicotine cravings. But a word of warning: don't eat too many of these as they can have a laxative effect.

For a longer-term solution, stock up with healthy snacks, since snacking is an important part of feeling satisfied on the **ProPoints Plan**.

Include at least two fruit snacks in your day, as well as one or two dairy snacks, such as a thin Kavli rye cracker topped with a slice of Bega So Extra Light Tasty Cheese and sliced tomato, or a small tub of diet yoghurt. Low **ProPoints** values soup will also satisfy your hunger cravings without blowing your **ProPoints** budget. To make large batches of soup, start with a base of sautéed onion, carrot and celery, then add loads of another vegetable, such as mushroom, spinach, carrot, pumpkin or broccoli, cover with chicken stock and gently simmer. You can boost flavour and your daily dairy consumption by adding a tablespoon or two of finely grated parmesan cheese for no added **ProPoints** values. Freeze soup in individual containers for easy reheating.

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# fitness

**Will doing yoga really boost my mental and physical wellbeing? Or is that just one of those old exercise myths?**

Karen Davis, Sydney, NSW



Martha  
Lourey-Bird  
Fitness editor

Yoga has long been spruiked as benefitting the body and soul, as well as promoting an overall feel-good factor.

While this may sound a little airy-fairy, extensive research backs up yoga's positive impact on our emotions, including its ability to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Doing yoga regularly also improves strength and flexibility and helps to reduce the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and other age-related diseases. If you're just getting started, head to a beginner's class and let the instructor know you're new. Start gradually, giving yourself time to adjust to each yoga pose, and always do the most basic versions first. You can then progress to harder variations of each pose. As you improve, try different types of yoga classes or even attend a weekend yoga retreat. With regular practice (at least twice a week), not only will you be looking better, you'll soon be feeling better inside and out.

If your letter to Martha is published, you'll win a pair of women's sport shoes from Rykä. Don't forget to tell us your correct shoe size when you write in.



**FACT** **20%** of Australian men over the age of 50 will suffer from osteoporosis at some stage.

Got a question? Email us at [editor@weightwatchers.com.au](mailto:editor@weightwatchers.com.au) or write to us at *Ask the Experts*, Locked Bag 2020, Broadway, NSW 2007, Australia.