

Health & Body • *health help*



## Five Fewer Things to Worry About

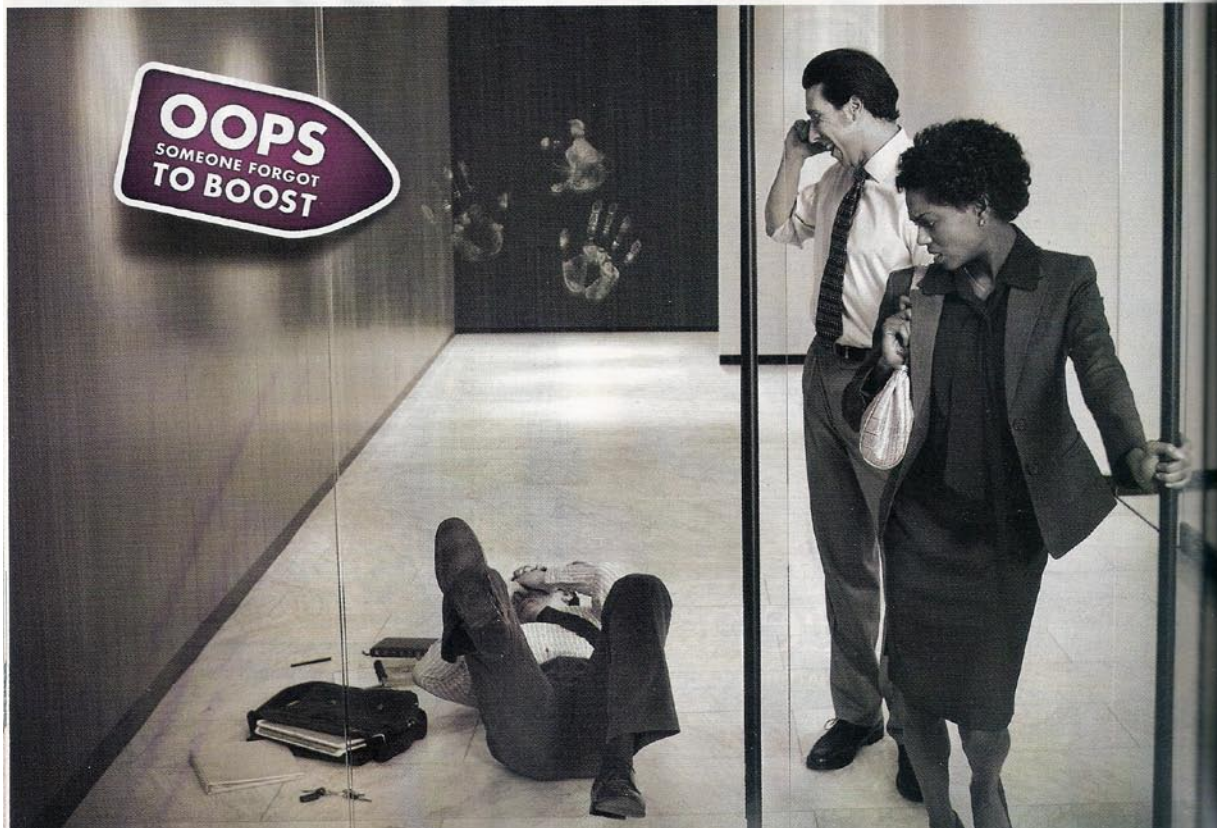
*What a relief: Women's health expert Marie Savard, M.D., wipes these supposed hazards off the "bad for you" list. Hooray!*

### Sipping a Cup or Two of Coffee

Women who drink about seven ounces of caffeinated coffee a day have thinner blood than women who don't drink any, a recent Italian study found. That's a *good* thing: Thinner blood is less likely to form dangerous clots. Coffee may help the brain, too; people who sipped at least three cups a day had a 65 percent lower

• **HEY, JAVA JUNKIES:** Your vice may be perfectly healthy!

MARK LEBOWITZ





risk of dementia later in life, a recent study from the University of Kuopio in Finland discovered. "I'm addicted—I have a cup or two every day," says Dr. Savard, a Philadelphia internist and author of *Ask Dr. Marie*. "But like everything else, moderation is key. Don't guzzle a whole pot."

## Eating a Big, Juicy Burger

"No one's saying you should have one every day, but one of my favorite things to order when I go out is a hamburger—it's full of protein and is filling," says Dr. Savard. Eating modest amounts of red meat may have health benefits: Australian scientists found that women who ate beef, lamb or pork had less depression and fewer problems with their periods compared with women who had sworn off red meat completely. Just be smart about portions—diets too high in red meat have been linked to an increased risk of cancer—and choose leaner beef, like ground sirloin, to keep artery-clogging saturated fat under control.

## Blowing Off Steam

Happiness is good for your heart, but letting yourself get mad may be healthy too. Researchers at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor recently found that married men and women who expressed their anger to each other lived longer than those who suppressed negative feelings. "Anger itself is normal, and it's better to release it," says Dr. Savard. "Even shouting can be therapeutic." Dropping the occasional F-bomb apparently helps: In a new study, British scientists stuck people's hands in icy water and found that swearing actually helped lessen the subjects' perception of pain. Next time you stub your toe, let it fly.

## Digging In to a Bowl of Pasta

Attention, carbo-phobes! Just-released data from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, suggests that a substance in grains and other plants called glutamic acid may help protect your heart. In the study, people who had a higher intake of the amino acid

had lower blood pressure. Believe it or not, a cup of macaroni has more than five times as much of the nutrient as broccoli. Of course, it also has more calories, so to get the best bang for your caloric budget, choose whole grains like whole wheat bread and brown rice over refined ones. Not only do whole grains help keep your energy levels more stable, they have more fiber and B vitamins, which also keep your heart healthy.

## Playing Doctor

Experts fret about patients making themselves paranoid by googling their symptoms, but more than 70 percent of young women do it at the first sign of ailments or injury anyway. Dr. Savard is OK with that. "I tell women to look up symptoms so they know what to ask about when they get to the doctor's office," she says. "If you do your homework, you're in the best position to get good care. You could gain important information and even help your doctor make a diagnosis." A few reliable sites: WebMD, mayoclinic.com and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's cdc.gov. —Gina Roberts-Grey

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