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[Defining Essential Health Benefits — The View from the IOM Committee](#)

When Congress enacted the Affordable Care Act (ACA), it mandated that a broad package of “essential health benefits” (EHBs) equivalent to that of a “typical employer plan” be offered by qualified health plans participating in newly created state-based insurance exchanges, as well as by new plans offered to individuals and small employers outside these exchanges. Congress directed the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to flesh out the details. The DHHS, in turn, asked the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to recommend a process for defining and updating the EHB package — but notably, not to develop a specific list of benefits. [Read more at http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1109982?query=featured_home&&]

[Nutrition and You: Trends 2011](#)

ADA's 2011 survey presents a vivid look at consumers' current knowledge and attitudes, and offers an opportunity to view two decades of trends in the ways Americans regard food, nutrition and health [Read more at <http://www.eatright.org/nutritiontrends/>]

[Consumers Don't Pay As Much Attention to Nutrition Fact Labels As They Think](#)

According to a new study published in the November issue of the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, consumers' self-reported viewing of Nutrition Facts label components was higher than objectively measured viewing using an eye-tracking device. Researchers also determined that centrally located Nutrition Facts labels are viewed more frequently and for longer than those located peripherally. [Read more at <http://www.eatright.org/Media/content.aspx?id=6442466339>]

[Yoga Eases Back Pain](#)

In the trial, 228 adults in six cities in western Washington state were randomly assigned to 12 weekly 75-minute classes of either yoga or stretching exercises or a comprehensive self-care book called The Back Pain Helpbook. Nine in 10 of them were primary-care patients at Group Health Cooperative. Participants in the trial typically had moderate - not severe - back pain and relatively good mental health, and most had been at least somewhat active before the trial started. [Read more at <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/236530.php>]

[Yoga to Help Diabetics](#)

A total of 123 middle-aged and older individuals participated in the study, and about half of them took yoga classes several times a week for three months. Compared to the study's control group, the participants who took the yoga classes lost a small amount of weight, but more impressively their blood sugar levels remained under control (indicators of poor sugar control rose among those in the non-yoga group). [Read more at <http://www.drweilblog.com/home/2011/10/16/yoga-to-help-diabetics.html>]

[Traditional Yoga Cleansing to Combat Colds & Flu](#)

The practice of yoga consists of breathing techniques, meditation, and purification techniques in

addition to the practice of physical poses (asanas). Kriyas are cleansing practices that can be used to help purify the body according to the yogic tradition. "Jala Neti" is a kriya used to cleanse the nasal passages. Around the world, this practice (also called Neti or nasal wash) has gained popularity among people who suffer from acute and chronic sinusitis, seasonal allergies, and frequent upper respiratory infections. Modern research is beginning to support the use of this ancient cleansing practice as a valuable tool for alleviating cold symptoms and preventing upper respiratory tract infections. [Read more at <http://www.ayurvedicscience.com/main/new-newsletter/september-newsletter-0930.html/#Naturopathy>]

[Therapeutic Drumming for Autism](#)

Continued research has shown that drumming has significant therapeutic effects on individuals who suffer from a variety of ailments and disorders. Anything from depression to chronic pain, and yes, even autism. [Read more at <http://www.ocreger.com/articles/healing-318903-parent-autism.html>]

[Electro-acupuncture Boosts IVF Success](#)

Women who have an electro-acupuncture session as part of their infertility treatment may have a better chance of ultimately having a baby, a new clinical trial suggests. [Read more at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/27/us-electro-acupuncture-boosts-ivf-success-idUSTRE78Q4DE20110927>]

[Alternative Therapies Show Promise for Osteoarthritis in Hands](#)

When osteoarthritis (OA) occurs in the hands, it can be difficult to carry on one's usual daily activities and hobbies. Standard medical treatments for OA include pain medication, physical therapy and application of ice or heat to the joints; in more advanced osteoarthritis, joint injections and surgery are recommended. Researchers have looked at a number of alternative therapies to help prevent or treat arthritis, and glucosamine and chondroitin are two popular supplements that have been studied a fair bit for their role in this regard. [Read more at <http://www.sacbee.com/2011/10/02/3949444/integrative-medicine-alternative.html>]

[New FDA Food Safety Guidelines Released](#)

FDA released a supplement to its Model Food Code, including several new or amended provisions offering a clearer delineation of the food safety responsibilities of a restaurant or retailer's "person in charge," and clearer guidelines for the amount of time a business should be given to correct violations of Food Code provisions. [Read more at <http://www.nrn.com/article/new-fda-food-safety-guidelines-released>]

[October Celebrated as First National Farm to School Month](#)

October is being celebrated as the first National Farm to School Month. The project demonstrates the growing importance and role of Farm to School programs as a means to improve child nutrition, support local farming and ranching economies, spur job growth and educate children about agriculture and the origins of their food, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. [Read more at http://www.fredericknews.com/sections/art_life/display_farmgarden.htm?StoryID=126923]

[Study Shows Vitamin E Supplements Increase Incidence of Prostate Cancer](#)

An updated analysis of data from the Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial (SELECT) showed that vitamin E supplements significantly increased the incidence of prostate cancer in healthy men. At a median followup of 7 years, the researchers observed that the incidence of prostate cancer was increased by 17 percent in men who received the vitamin E supplement alone compared with those who

received placebo. The findings were recently published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. [Read more at <http://nccam.nih.gov/news/2011/101111.htm?nav=upd>]

[How Laughing Fights Pain](#)

An interesting investigation from England has demonstrated that the physical act of laughing - the actual muscle contractions involved - lead to the release of "feel good" endorphins, the same brain chemicals responsible for the runner's "high." [Read more at <http://www.drweilblog.com/home/2011/10/17/how-laughing-fights-pain.html>]

[The Key to Wellness? It's Gratitude, One Doctor Says](#)

The most basic key to wellness isn't a drug, an exercise regimen or a particular diet, says natural medicine author Michael T. Murray, ND. He's become convinced that cultivating a spirit of gratitude is the foundational secret to health. [Read more at <http://blog.seattlepi.com/naturalmedicine/2011/10/10/the-key-to-wellness-its-gratitude-one-doctor-says/>]