

The best way to stay safe this summer



Talking to Rover's OK, but lay off your cell phone—and wear a seat belt!

dON'T CHAT AND DRIVE! The biggest cause of fatal car crashes (above even drunk driving and speeding) is driver distraction—and talking on cell phones is especially dangerous, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. “In summer, people are more likely to make calls because they think driving conditions are fine and it’s ‘safe’ to take their mind off the road,” says David Strayer, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at the University of Utah. “But when you compare the reflexes and response time of a driver on a cell phone with that of a legally drunk driver, the cell phone driver often fares worse.” Headsets aren’t any safer. “Drivers are four times more likely to get into an accident when they’re on any phone, even a hands-free one,” he adds. Why? Conversations can lead to “inattention blindness,” in which you miss up to 50 percent of safety cues, such as flashing brake lights on the car in front of you. (Talking to passengers doesn’t seem to have the same effect, possibly because they adjust to your driving demands.) So, in addition to buckling up, stow that cell phone—and pull over if you must take a call, advises Strayer. It may delay your trip a few minutes, but isn’t your life worth it?

—STEPHANIE BOOTH

Calorie math

YOU COULD HAVE THIS

A 20-oz. bottle of Vitaminwater
125 CALORIES,
0 GRAMS FAT



OR ALL THIS

20 oz. regular water, an orange Popsicle, a 5-oz. slice of watermelon and 3 Jolly Rancher Gummies
120 CALORIES,
0 GRAMS FAT



THE LESSON: Healthy-seeming drinks often have unnecessary calories. Sip ice-cold H₂O instead and have a whole day of summer snacks. —NUTRITIONIST JACKIE NEWGENT, R.D.

Q&A



YOUR DOCTOR IS IN

BY JOANN E. MANSON, M.D.

Q Could the new drug Alli help me lose weight?

A Possibly, but don't rush to take it. Alli (pronounced *al-eye*) is an over-the-counter version of a prescription drug called Orlistat that was recently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. It works by blocking the absorption of some of the fat you eat. People who ate a low-fat diet and took Alli lost about 50 percent more weight than those who only cut calories (some lost 15 pounds instead of 10, for example). But I'd recommend Alli only to obese patients who have struggled for years to lose weight and have a condition like diabetes. While it won't raise blood pressure (like past appetite suppressants that contained the now-banned stimulant ephedra did), side effects can include diarrhea and even anal leakage. And these could worsen if you slip up and don't eat a low-fat diet. Alli's not a substitute for smart eating and exercise—you still need to do both or you'll likely gain weight after going off it. But if your doctor thinks medication is necessary, then it's worth a try.

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