

**When I was a kid**, my parents had a basic philosophy: Don't sweat the small stuff, but be sure to take care of the big stuff. These are some of the lessons I learned—they've kept me healthy, and I hope they help you too.

medicine, and milk went with cereal. When we were thirsty, we drank H<sub>2</sub>O. In college I was flummoxed when I saw people guzzle soda like it was, well, water. A regular 12-ounce can of cola has around 140 calories—have one a day and you could gain a pound every month!

**3 You should be the #1 expert on your body.**

I don't know if you saw that classic episode of *Oprah* where my dad talked about poop—for a full hour! Needless to say, I was taught at a very early age to pay attention to how my body felt on a daily basis, and when something was wrong, I knew it. "When you are comfortable with all your body's 'normals,'" says Englewood, New Jersey, ob-gyn Jennifer Ashton, M.D., "you'll be able to notice abnormalities. Some of the most important information that a woman can share with her doctor is when and how something in her body has changed."

**4 Getting a little dirty is good for you.**

Lately it seems like all my friends have become germ freaks, wielding bottles of Purell to thwart any bacterial offenders. But we might have had it right as kids, when we were perfectly content to suck on a dirty

Cheerio that fell on the floor. I spent much of my childhood running around my grandparents' farm; we washed our hands before every meal, but we no doubt got plenty of dirt (and yes, probably even manure) in our mouths. Now researchers know that bacteria you pick up in natural environs actually help bolster immunity by teaching your body to respond properly. If we disinfect everything, our bodies may become under-prepared to deal with problematic bugs, leading to more severe illness and allergies.

**5 Your body craves playtime!**

We have a tradition that still takes place when all four Oz kids are home. It's called Oz Family Olympics, and we spend a Saturday morning hav-

*When in doubt, choose water. Period.*



ing stair races, basketball tournaments or Ping-Pong rallies. We sneak in some exercise, laugh constantly and afterward, feel amazing. "Playing restores you," says Stephanie Pratola, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist and play therapist in Salem, Virginia. Unlike so much

else in our lives, "play is impossible to do the wrong way. It promotes being in the moment and tapping into unconscious and imaginative moments. For all those reasons, it helps with stress relief and makes you better at problem solving. And it's fun!" ■

*Eat...more!*

**YOU CAN HAVE THIS**

½ cup fudge brownie ice cream  
260 calories,  
26 grams fat

**OR ALL THIS**

A homemade brownie sundae: a 2-inch brownie, ½ cup light vanilla ice cream, 2 tsp. chocolate syrup, 1 tbsp. light whipped cream and a cherry  
261 calories,  
15 grams fat



**SO REMEMBER:** Craving a decadent dessert? Build one yourself instead of grabbing a pint of complicated ice cream. You'll get so much more! —*Marissa Lippert, R.D.*



Your health guide, Daphne Oz

**1 Don't follow your doctor blindly.** At our dinner table, medical treatments and surgery techniques were constantly debated by my dad, uncle and grandpa—all surgeons—and my mother, a holistic health practitioner. So I got used to the idea that different doctors have different perspectives. It's tempting to turn doctors into some kind of gods, but the truth is, they're human. Getting a second opinion before starting any course of treatment is not only OK, it's essential!

**2 Your drink of choice should be water.** In our house, juice was just for taking vitamins or

*health quickie* Dark chocolate may lower hypertension nearly as much as exercise, a new study found.