What’s your Health IQ? Take this test to find out!

According to a recent article in the Los Angeles Times, American adults get a “D” in science; 22% confuse astronomy and astrology! On a general science knowledge quiz consisting of 12 questions, the test-takers answered 7.9 correctly, on average. That’s a score of 66%. Only 6% answered all 12 questions correctly.

Similarly, lack of health literacy is also a huge problem among Americans. We are continually bombarded with often-contradictory health information. U.S. patients are confronted with myriad treatment options they are ill-equipped to properly choose among. Urban legend, aggressive direct-to-consumer advertising, and dumbed-down media stories add to the confusion.

The mission of Intelligent Medicine is to enhance your health IQ. Let’s start with this simple quiz to see if you get a “Pass”:

1. Documented benefits of exercise include all of these except:
   a. Reduced risk of cognitive decline
   b. Improved survival from many types of cancer
   c. Better sexual performance
   d. Protection from HIV infection
   e. All are correct

2. Vitamin D has been shown to reduce the risk of all except:
   a. Multiple sclerosis
   b. Colon cancer
   c. Influenza
   d. Melanoma
   e. All are correct

3. A natural way to reduce the risk of kidney stones is to:
   a. Drink green tea
   b. Do hot yoga
   c. Drink lemon juice
   d. Drink beer
   e. None of the above

4. According to the “Hygiene Hypothesis,” you should:
   a. Use Listerine mouthwash daily to prevent mouth infections
   b. Clean household surfaces frequently with disinfectant
   c. Allow children to play in the dirt
   d. Keep up with regularly-scheduled vaccinations
   e. All of the above

5. All of the following are true about mammograms except:
   a. There’s a general consensus among health professionals that routine
screening mammograms save lives
b. Mammograms can miss some cancers
c. Cumulative radiation exposure from mammograms increases a woman’s lifetime risk of breast cancer
d. After a certain age, it’s recommended that it’s OK for older women to stop getting routine screening mammograms
e. All are correct

6. The bacterial composition of your “microbiome” impacts all except:
a. Your weight
b. Your risk of developing diabetes
c. Your mood
d. Your risk of certain cancers
e. All are correct

7. Which of the following is an example of “epigenetics”:
a. The high risk of developing breast cancer in woman with the BrCa gene
b. The ability of persons predisposed to diabetes and weight gain to stay healthy with diet and exercise
c. Families in which most males die early of heart disease
d. The claim that diet and supplements can’t help autistic children since it’s pretty much “hardwired” from birth
e. None of the above

8. Examples of factors that promote aging and degenerative disease include all of the above except
a. Free radicals
b. Advanced Glycation Endproducts (AGEs)
c. Nitric oxide
d. Dietary trans-fats
e. All are correct

9. Sleep deprivation can result in all of the following except:
a. Decreased testosterone levels
b. Insulin resistance
c. Weight gain
d. Attention Deficit Disorder
e. All are correct

10. Among Americans over 65, the incidence of polypharmacy (the simultaneous use of more than 5 medications, some of which may be unnecessary) is greater than:
a. 10%
b. 25%
c. 40%
d. 50%
e. 60%
1. D — There is no evidence that exercise confers protection against HIV
2. E — Vitamin protects against all of the above
3. C — Lemon juice, because of its citric acid content, reduces the risk of calcium oxalate stones
4. C — Exposure to germs in childhood “trains” the immune system to respond normally to pathogens and reduces the likelihood of allergic and autoimmune disorders
5. A — While most health organizations continue to recommend routine screening mammograms, considerable doubt has been raised over the survival benefits they may confer
6. E — All are affected by the bacterial composition of the microbiome
7. B — The ability of individuals to overcome genetic predisposition to diabetes and overweight is an example of epigenetic influence on the expression of heredity
8. C — Nitric oxide improves endothelial function which protects against circulatory disorders
9. E — All have been found to be associated with sleep deprivation
10. D — Over 50% of Americans over 65 are using five or more medications (polypharmacy)

If you answered all these questions correctly, or even nine out of ten, congratulations, you are a true paragon of Intelligent Medicine! If you got seven or eight right, you’re still doing better than average. If you scored 60% or less, your health literacy needs a boost. Try boning up on medical and nutritional facts by listening to our Intelligent Medicine podcasts and following the articles here at DrHoffman.com—you’re sure to ace the test when we repeat it sometime next year!