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# Wellnews: All the news that's fit

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## Meet germ

*Tropheryma whippelii* is a recently discovered bacterium found in the environment, feces and dental plaque. It causes Whipple's disease, a rare affliction occurring most commonly in white, middle-aged individuals from Europe and North America.

Whipple's disease involves joint pain, progressing to weight loss, diarrhea and eventual infection of the liver, spleen and heart. Treatment is intravenous antibiotics. Untreated, the disease is fatal.

## Get me that. Stat!

Schoolchildren who receive more recess time behave better and are likely to learn more, according to a study of 11,000 third-graders by researchers at Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University in New York City.

## Gap-toothed smile

Americans in general are no happier than they were 30 years ago, according to a new study out of the University of Pennsylvania. On the plus side, the gap between people who still describe themselves as mostly happy and those who are not-so-much has narrowed significantly.

“Americans are becoming more similar to each other in terms of reported happiness,” declared Penn economist Betsey Stevenson, who co-authored the study with colleague Justin Wolfers.

Some areas of improvement:

The so-called “happiness gap” between whites and non-whites narrowed by two-thirds, according to Stevenson and Wolfers, the result of non-whites being significantly more happy than they were in the 1970s, while whites are slightly less happy.

The gap between genders closed, too. American men have become a little more cheerful; women a little less.

One place where the happiness gap widened was in educational attainment. College graduates reported being

happier than in the past, while those with a high-school education or less were glummer.

Overall, the percentage of Americans surveyed who said they were “pretty happy” grew from 49 percent in 1972 to 56 percent in 2006.

Of course, given what's happened to the economy since 2006, that happy percentage may be smaller now.

## Phobia of the week

**Ephiphobia:** fear of teenagers

## Number cruncher

A single serving of Ruby's Diner chili fries (424 grams) contains 1,121 calories, 576 from fat. That's 98 percent of the recommended total fat intake for a 2,000-calorie daily diet.

It also contains 62 milligrams of cholesterol (21 percent); 1,132 mg of sodium (47 percent); 107 grams of total carbohydrates (36 percent); 10g of dietary fiber (40 percent); 4g of sugar and 30g of protein.

## Epitaphs

Reader if cash thou art  
In want of any  
Dig 4 feet deep  
And thou wilt find a Penny.

– John Penny's gravestone in Wimborne, England

## Observation

Half of the drugs could well be thrown out of the window, except that the birds might eat them.

– English physician Martin Henry Fischer

## Medtronica

### MedGadget

medgadget.com

A self-described Internet journal of emerging medical technologies (it's a blog) that examines new (and sometimes old) devices with health applications, from the utility of surgical masks to robotic brain surgery.

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