



We're not from

# MARS<sup>OR</sup> Venus

By: Cleveland Clinic Wellness Editors

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but men and women do seem to have different brain wiring that supports some common gender differences.

Women may be great at multitasking and finding diplomatic solutions, whereas men often do better focusing on single tasks and taking action. In fact, many jokes are based on these stereotypes. But stereotypes are sometimes, maybe often, based on actual observations. These aren't exactly new observations, but one of the largest studies of neural wiring and gender provides some explanation for these gender-stereotypical assignments. Scientists used advanced neuroimaging to explore the brain structure of nearly 1,000 young men and women, aged 8 to 22. They found that men had greater connectivity from the front to the back of the brain and within each hemisphere. Women had better connectivity between

the right and left hemispheres. This would allow their analytical and intuitive sides to work together to arrive at skillful solutions. Men, on the other hand, appear to be wired more to perceive and pounce on problems. These differences became more pronounced as subjects aged.

So it looks like there may be an anatomic reason for our stereotypical differences. While the average man and woman may not be wired the same, our thinking styles are clearly complementary. That might explain why so many male-female partnerships make terrific couples, colleagues and teams.



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New research published in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association* found that men who regularly skipped breakfast had a 27 percent higher risk of a heart attack, some fatal, than those who made breakfast a daily habit. Not a fan of a morning meal? Dietitians say that skipping meals is one of the worst things you can do for your body. Here's why: Skip breakfast and your blood sugar levels plummet, leaving you irritable and more prone to overeating at your next meal. When you wake up, and your energy levels are at their lowest, starting the day on empty is a surefire way to tax your system even further. According to the researchers, forgoing breakfast may lead to obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, which increase your risk of a heart attack over time. So start off your day right with a nutritious meal, like fruit and cottage cheese, oatmeal and berries, scrambled eggs, whole-grain cereal with milk, or toast with peanut butter.

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## MEN:

**Eat more fruits, vegetables, herbs and tea.**

Chemicals in plants called flavonoids may provide some protection against prostate cancer.

One more reason to fill up on fruits and vegetables: to maintain a healthy prostate. Research suggests that flavonoids — beneficial compounds found in fruits, vegetables, cocoa, tea and wine — help protect against aggressive forms of prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer to affect U.S. men; it's also the second deadliest. The study found that men who consumed the greatest amount of flavonoids had a 25 percent lower risk of cancer, compared to those with the lowest intake. The study also suggests that all types of flavonoids were equally beneficial. In other words, you don't have to focus on one particular "superfood" — all flavonoid-rich plants can help keep you healthy. Major sources of flavonoids include blueberries, strawberries, bananas, black tea, onions, tomatoes, oranges and other citrus fruits, parsley and leafy greens.

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## Healthy Recipe

# Wild Guacamole

Looking for a great summer appetizer? Try our guacamole, from the Cleveland Clinic Healthy Heart Lifestyle Guide and Cookbook, which is a fabulous blend of tastes, textures and colors. Avocados get three-fourths of their calories from fat, but since it is monounsaturated fat and they are low in calories, we can enjoy eating avocados while heeding our heart-healthy lifestyle. We can always add a colorful Mexican basket of low-fat tortilla chips, but sometimes we offer an arrangement of crudités.



**Servings:** About 2 cups (8 servings)

### Ingredients:

2 medium ripe Hass avocados, halved  
 1 serrano, seeded and minced  
 2 tablespoons minced red onion  
 1 garlic clove, minced  
 1 small tomato, seeded and diced  
 Juice of 1 ½ limes  
 2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro  
 ¼ teaspoon ground cumin  
 ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt, optional  
 Freshly ground pepper

### Nutrition Info Per Serving:

(1/4 cup): 70 calories (68% calories from fat), 6 g total fat (1.5 g saturated fat), 1 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 4 g dietary fiber, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mg sodium, 350 mg potassium

### Instructions:

1. Using a spoon, scoop the avocado pulp from the shells and place it in a bowl.
2. Using two forks, coarsely mash the avocado, leaving some chunks.
3. Add the chile pepper, onion, garlic, tomato, lime juice, cilantro and cumin.
4. Mix again with the two forks, taking care not to overmix.
5. Add the salt, if using, and pepper to taste. Lightly mix again.
6. Transfer the guacamole to a serving dish and let stand until ready to serve at room temperature.

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