

The top 5 stories patients should read

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While we write principally with a physician audience in mind, many of our stories are also read by the public at large. Here are some of our most popular stories on topics that any patient would do well to understand better.

How to read Nutrition Facts label: Fighting 5 food misconceptions. The fight against diabetes and heart disease also means fighting nutritional misunderstandings and offering sound advice to patients. A new video helps dispel common misconceptions about the Nutrition Facts label found on food packages and offers physicians guidance on how to educate their patients.

A growing health disparity: Life expectancy for the richest, poorest Americans. The poorest American men at age 40 have a life expectancy similar to men in Pakistan and Sudan, according to a major study appearing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Meanwhile, the richest Americans continue to add years to their lives.

Raising minimum age for purchasing tobacco has health implications. More than 140 localities in 10 states have raised the minimum purchasing age for tobacco from 18 years of age to 21—a movement that has been a long time coming. Find out why this is crucial to the health of the nation and which states and cities have such rules in place.

AMA calls for background checks, wait periods to prevent gun violence. The AMA adopted policy calling for background checks and a waiting period for all firearms purchasers, expanding on its previous policy of requiring the same for only handguns.

What FDA's new sodium guidelines could look like in practice. With nine out of 10 U.S. adults and children consuming too much sodium, the Food and Drug Administration has released draft proposed voluntary guidelines to encourage companies to significantly

reduce sodium in processed and restaurant foods by 2020. Some of the recommended changes may be eye-opening for patients who don't closely monitor their sodium intake.