

**BEST & WORST  
RESTAURANTS**  
PAGE 14

**TIDE  
CLEANS UP**  
PAGE 50



**SHOWDOWN:  
BMW vs. MERCEDES**  
PAGE 56

**5 WAYS TO  
SLEEP BETTER**  
PAGE 29

AUGUST 2012 | CONSUMERREPORTS.ORG

# ConsumerReports®

**HOW SAFE  
IS YOUR  
HOSPITAL?**  
Page 20

## Tablets Smart phones Laptops E-book readers Cameras

150+ recommended models



**PLUS** Gas-saving do's and don'ts PAGE 55

**DOWNLOAD**  
**ConsumerReports®**  
**ON YOUR iPad®**  
**at no additional cost!**

**NOW  
INCLUDED  
WITH YOUR  
PAID MAGAZINE  
SUBSCRIPTION**

- **Expert Ratings and recommendations**
- **Interactive navigation**
- **Videos, slide shows, and more**

**1** Have your print magazine handy. You'll need your account number on the back.

**3** In the app, tap “Current magazine subscribers—tap here for access.” You’ll be asked to confirm your account.



- If you've never subscribed to a Consumer Reports product online and don't have a user name, enter your account number and ZIP code and tap "continue." You'll be asked to create a user name with at least one number and upper-case letter, plus a password.
- If you're already an online subscriber, enter your user name and password in those fields. Then enter your account number and ZIP code on the subsequent page and tap "continue."

**CONGRATULATIONS!** Follow the steps on the confirmation page to begin downloading your issues.



iPad® is a trademark of Apple, Inc., which neither endorses nor is associated with Consumer Reports. Images simulated.



# Contents

CONSUMER REPORTS AUGUST 2012

Volume 77 No. 8



## COVER STORY

### 34 | Tech to go!

Best choices in tablets, e-book readers, smart phones, cameras, and more this summer.

**PLUS** Beachproofing your gear.

### 37 | E-book readers

A new winner leads our list.

**Ratings page 37**

### 38 | Tablets

Exclusive reviews of 31 top choices.

**Ratings page 38**

### 40 | Smart phones

The latest models offer bigger screens and faster service.

**Ratings pages 40-41**



### 42 | Digital cameras

Cameras are packing more in smaller bodies and offering useful extra features.

**Basic camera Ratings page 44**

**Advanced camera Ratings page 45**

## LAB TESTS

### 47 | Laptops

New processors boost performance.

### 48 | Gas grills

Latest models sizzle.

### 48 | Tech support

Apple leads the pack.

### 49 | Headphones

Upgrade your sound.



### 50 | Laundry detergents

Fifteen top choices clean up.

**Ratings pages 50-51**

### 52 | Washers & dryers

Prices are rising, but you don't have to get soaked.

**Ratings pages 53-54**

## FEATURES

### 14 | Restaurant roulette

Best places to spend your dining dollars.

**PLUS** Sensible vs. impulsive dining out, and battle of the breakfasts.

**Ratings page 19**

### 29 | Sleep tighter

Our survey of 26,451 readers finds that insomnia is rampant but treatable.

### 32 | Mattresses

Latest advice on brands and mattress retailers.



## CR INVESTIGATES

### 20 | How safe is your hospital?

Our new safety Ratings of hospitals in your region show that too many pose risks.

**PLUS** Eight things that should never happen in a hospital. **State-by-state Ratings pages 25-28**



TOP PHOTO: MICHAEL SMITH

*Continued on next page*

## DEPARTMENTS

### 5 | Letters

### 6 | Viewpoint

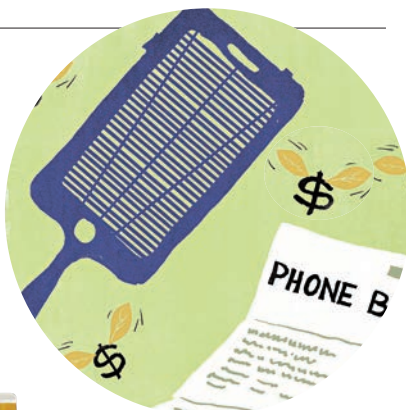
Safer use of antibiotics.

### 6 | From our president

Hold banks accountable.

### 7 | Up front

- Phones put pedestrians in a fog.
- On top of spaghetti.
- What bugs America's shoppers.
- **CLAIM CHECK** Pepsi's next big thing?
- Free alerts on your cell phone.
- Lemonades.
- Attack of the "zombie" bank accounts.
- Eyeware care.



### 12 | Money

Beware of bogus phone-bill fees.

### 61 | About us

### 62 | Index

### 63 | Selling it

## This issue by the numbers

### Best & worst scores

**89**

Original Mattress  
Factory store



**9**

Aromatherapy  
as a sleep aid



### What you'll save

**\$1,950**

Buy a **mattress** from Ikea instead of Tempur-Pedic to get a comfortable bed and pocket this much in savings.

**\$700**

Buy the top-loading LG WT4801C **washer** instead of the Whirlpool Vantage WTW7990X to get better performance and save this amount.

**\$10**

Sign up for alerts at the Maggiano's **restaurant chain** and get this much off your next visit.

### Coming in September

Vitamins and supplements, sliced turkey, bread alternatives, TV services, bathroom upgrades, sinks, toilets, and blenders.



## CARS

### 55 | News

Myth vs. reality at the gas pump.

### 56 | Road tests

The BMW 328i vs. Mercedes C250, plus the Scion iQ and Chevrolet Malibu Eco.

## Who we are

### Consumer Reports

is the world's largest independent consumer-product-testing organization. We also survey millions of consumers about their experiences with products and services. We're based in Yonkers, N.Y., and are a nonprofit organization.

**What we do** We buy all the products we rate.

**What we don't do** We don't accept paid advertising; we get our money mainly through subscriptions and donations. We don't accept free test samples from manufacturers. And we don't allow our name or content to be used for any promotional purposes.

**How to reach us** Write to us at Consumer Reports, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057, attn: Customer Service.

- To send a letter to the editor, go to [ConsumerReports.org/lettertoeditor](http://ConsumerReports.org/lettertoeditor).
- For news tips and story ideas, go to [ConsumerReports.org/tips](http://ConsumerReports.org/tips).
- E-mail submissions for Selling It to [SellingIt@cro.consumer.org](mailto:SellingIt@cro.consumer.org).
- For subscription information, go to [ConsumerReports.org/magazine](http://ConsumerReports.org/magazine) or call 800-666-5261. See page 61 for more details.

**Ratings** We rate products using these symbols:

● Excellent ● Very good ○ Good ● Fair ● Poor



**CR Best Buy** Products with this icon offer the best combination of performance and price.



**Recommended product** Models with this designation perform well and stand out for reasons we note.



**Recommended car** These tested well, are reliable, and performed adequately if crash-tested or included in a federal rollover test.



**Don't Buy** We label products with this icon when we judge them to be safety risks or to have serious performance problems.



## ON YOUR MIND

## Other ways to save?

In "Cut Your Telecom Bill" (June 2012), you omit NetZero 4G from your Ratings, even though it's priced less than the top 10 Internet services. And in your phone-service Ratings, you omit Skype, which is free and national, and offers phone and video calls.

—**Horace Mann** Fort Bragg, CA

**Editor's note** NetZero plans can cost less than those of major mobile carriers, but you get lower data limits and coverage is concentrated around only 82 cities. We couldn't rate NetZero



and Skype because too few readers whom we sampled used those services.

## Matchmaker

We learned early in our relationship that neither of us would make major purchases without consulting "The Reports." And one of our first

dates was to the annual meeting in Yonkers, which reinforced our compatibility. We contend that being long-term subscribers to CONSUMER REPORTS is a better indicator

of values and predictor of compatibility than any online dating site.

—**Stephen Griffing & Vicki Vaughan** Danbury, CT

**Corrections** In July's "Ask Our Experts," we should have said that built-in tire gauges warn when the pressure drops 25 percent below the recommended cold pressure. In a June reply, we should have clarified that there's no federal law stopping retailers from imposing surcharges for credit-card use, though some states and most card companies prohibit it.

## SEND YOUR LETTERS TO

ConsumerReports.org/lettertoeditor.

## Ask our experts

**Q** I want a hybrid, but everyone says repairs and battery replacement are astronomical. I don't like dealerships because they're overpriced, but would that be my only choice to service a hybrid?

—**Miguel Ruiz** Miami

No. An independent shop can handle typical maintenance and repairs. Although a dealer is probably the best choice for hybrid-system repairs, our data show that most hybrids have been very reliable. Replacement batteries can cost \$2,300, but the hybrid system is covered by at least an 8-year/100,000-mile warranty; 10 years/150,000 in many states. Many hybrid batteries last much longer than that.

**Q** Does it matter whether I use aluminum foil or zipper plastic bags to refrigerate or freeze raw meat?

—**Leonard Zablow** New York

You can use either one. Packaged whole cuts of beef can be refrigerated in their original wrapping in the coldest part of the fridge for three to five days; ground beef, one to two. Meat can be frozen in its supermarket wrapping, but it's permeable to air and susceptible to freezer burn if stored for six months or more. To prevent that, overwrap the store plastic with aluminum foil, freezer paper, or freezer-weight plastic wrap or bags. For best quality, cut away freezer-burned areas before cooking.

**Q** Is long-term-care insurance a waste of money or will it protect my 401(k)?

—**Daniel Groh** Allegan, MI

It depends on whether you can afford the coverage and the level of risk you're willing to take. Financial planners have told us that people with a net worth of less than \$200,000 to \$300,000 (excluding a house and depending on the regional cost of care) could probably not afford a policy and should plan to rely on family or government programs for help. Those with assets of \$2 million or more should be able to pay



**GOING GREEN** You don't need to see a dealer mechanic for hybrid-vehicle maintenance.

for care. People in between are the most likely candidates for coverage. Consider consulting a fee-only financial adviser for unbiased advice. To find one near you, go to [napfa.org](http://napfa.org).

**Q** Can Facebook track me solely from a mention of me on someone else's Facebook page, even if I am not on Facebook myself?

—**Vic White** Park City, UT

No. Tracking a user requires interaction with his or her browser. It's not enough for someone else to post information about the user.

**Q** Is a doctor's office allowed to require patients to sign a blank credit-card slip in case the patient doesn't pay his bill?

—**Adele Creutz** Earlysville, VA

There doesn't appear to be any federal law prohibiting obtaining a pre-authorized credit charge, according to the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. But Visa, for one, doesn't allow any merchant, including a doctor's office, to do so. Contact the agency

at [consumerfinance.gov](http://consumerfinance.gov) or 855-411-2372, or your credit-card issuer, if you want to complain.

**Q** Our asphalt-shingle roof is 7 years old and has mildew stains. Should I have it power-washed?

—**Juan Daneri** Greenville, NC

No. A pressure washer could dislodge granules and damage the shingles. Use a sprayer to apply a mildewcide or a mixture of trisodium phosphate (TSP), bleach, and water. Gently clean the surface with a soft-bristle brush, and thoroughly rinse it with a hose. Be careful; the wet solution can make the roof slippery. To prevent mildew from returning, hire a professional to install a copper or zinc strip at the ridge line. Rainwater will cause copper or zinc molecules to coat the roof and prevent mildew. If you live in a humid area, consider mildew-resistant shingles when you reroof.

## SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO

ConsumerReports.org/askourexperts.

This page highlights efforts of Consumers Union, the policy and action arm of Consumer Reports, to improve the marketplace.

## WHERE WE STAND

**THE ISSUE** Widespread and inappropriate use of antibiotics has led to a rise in deadly, resistant diseases.

**OUR TAKE** The declining effectiveness of antibiotics has become a national public health crisis. The more they're used, the less power they have, as diseases morph to resist them. A whopping 80 percent of antibiotics in the U.S. are used not for human health but by the meat and poultry industry to make animals grow faster and to prevent sickness in crowded and unsanitary conditions.

Consumers Union believes that sharply limiting antibiotic use in animals is necessary to preserve the effectiveness of the drugs for treating diseases in people. We believe that supermarkets have not just an opportunity but also an obligation to help solve that



health-care threat. We applaud the stores that offer meat raised without antibiotics. We urge all grocers to require their meat suppliers to reduce antibiotics in livestock production, and we urge shoppers to support those efforts by buying meat labeled "no antibiotics" when they can. For more information, go to Consumers Union's website [MeatWithoutDrugs.org](http://MeatWithoutDrugs.org).

# \$40 million

That's the settlement Skechers is paying into a fund for buyers of its rocker-style toning shoes. The money goes to settle Federal Trade Commission charges that the company's claims for weight loss, toning, and muscle strengthening were unfounded. Consumer Reports has also found that some wearers have been injured. To see whether you are eligible for a refund, go to [skecherssettlement.com](http://skecherssettlement.com).



## ON THE RECORD

**'Sugar is a solid, dried, and crystallized food, whereas syrup is an aqueous solution or liquid food.'**

—MICHAEL M. LANDA, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, denying a petition by the Corn Refiners Association to be allowed to call high-fructose corn syrup "corn sugar." No, the FDA said in May, consumers aren't confused by the term high-fructose corn syrup, as the trade association contended. Consumers Union had urged the FDA to reject the petition.

## STATE LINES

### Tight house

When summer heat arrives, many of us crank up the air conditioner and steel ourselves for an eye-popping utility bill. To help homeowners save money, Consumers Union is urging states to improve energy codes for newly built homes so that they use less energy. In May, Ohio approved stronger codes, which will probably save owners of compliant homes in the state an average \$190 a year on utilities. Consumers Union testified before an Ohio panel in support of the standards. We're pushing for similar improvements in Maine, Minnesota, and New Hampshire to help people enjoy homes that are more comfortable, more efficient, and of better quality. For information on Consumers Union's work on a variety of energy topics, go to [OurGreenEnergyFuture.org](http://OurGreenEnergyFuture.org).



## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

### Bank accountable

Isn't banking easy now? Money goes in automatically, money comes out automatically, and—oops—fees get slapped on automatically.

Yeah, those fees—for a low balance, a transfer, using a teller, and everything else. You may opt to take your money elsewhere, but be aware that once a bank has you, it's loath to let you go.

Apparently, consumers' frustration doesn't indicate that they'll actually make the move; only about 3 percent of consumers changed their primary financial institution in the last few months of 2011.

Consumers Union sent 16 secret shoppers to branches of the 10 largest retail banks around the country to ask how to close an account. We also reviewed online fee schedules and account disclosures, collected consumer stories, and asked the banks' public-relations departments to explain their policies.

#### It takes money to move money.

Some banks charge \$25 to close an account that has been open fewer than 90 or 180 days. You'll pay up to \$10 for a certified check and up to \$30 for a wire transfer to move your funds. Rerouting automatic payments and deposits can take up to six weeks.

#### Closed but not forgotten.

Some banks reopen a closed account if a belated debit or credit comes in. Then you may get socked with an account-opening fee, a low-balance fee (of course, there was supposed to be no balance in there), and an overdraft fee. (See "Attack of the 'Zombie' Account," in the Up Front section on page 11.)

#### It's not even in the fine print.

The written account disclosures and websites we looked at lacked clear account-closing policies, and some customer-service representatives at the same bank gave conflicting advice to consumers.

Consumers Union believes that banks have a responsibility to ease the transfer process by speeding it up, transferring funds free, and making their policies clear and understandable. For our full report and tips on easing the move, go to [DefendYourDollars.org](http://DefendYourDollars.org).

*Jim Guest*  
JIM GUEST  
President





## Phones put pedestrians in a fog

**A FEW YEARS AGO**, people walking on a college campus while using a cell phone were asked whether they'd just seen "anything unusual." Only 8 percent said yes. But Western Washington University researchers had indeed planted an unusual passerby: a unicycle-riding clown in a purple and yellow outfit.

In a new survey, **CONSUMER REPORTS** found that 85 percent of Americans had in the past six months seen someone use a mobile device to talk, text, e-mail, or use apps while walking in public. Of those who had witnessed such behavior, 52 percent felt that the pedestrians endangered themselves or others.

It's clear that drivers aren't the only peo-

ple distracted by devices. Numbers are hard to pin down, but research using federal data as part of an Ohio State University graduate-student project estimated that 1,506 "nonmotorized" people—mostly pedestrians—were hurt nationwide in 2010 while distracted by cell phones, an increase of about 186 cases per year between 2004 and 2010. Reports for 2009 and 2010 show that most injuries occurred while the pedestrian was talking, followed by reaching for the phone, then texting. It's no surprise that some cities are starting to crack down on distracted walkers.

**What our survey said.** Of Americans who saw at least one pedestrian using a phone, 42 percent saw someone bump into a person or object or walk in front of a moving bicycle; 34 percent saw someone step in front of a moving vehicle. "Everyone knows to look left and right," says Ryan Stanton, a spokesman for the American College of Emergency Physicians, "but when you're texting, you forget the rules of survival."

Stanton, also an emergency doctor, cites a patient who walked into a street sign (head laceration) and another who hit a fire hydrant (serious shin cut), plus "countless twisted ankles" in cell phone users who have stepped off an unnoticed curb.

Northeasterners were more likely than others to have seen a pedestrian using a mobile device—92 percent had. Among Northeasterners who witnessed such behavior, 42 percent saw someone walk in front of a moving vehicle, compared with just 27 percent of Midwesterners. People over 55 were far more likely to consider the practice a hazard than those 18 to 34. But similar percentages of men and women called distracted walking dangerous.

**Bottom line.** If you must walk and talk or text, act like a driver and pull over into a quiet area. "At any point if you're moving, you need to have your head up," Stanton says. "If you need to text, just stop for 5 seconds, make your text, and that way you won't worry about traffic, fire hydrants, and manhole covers. Whatever your hurry, it's not worth ending up in the hospital."

Need more evidence of risk? Researchers at Stony Brook University found that phone-using walkers had "significant reductions in gait velocity" and an "increase in lateral deviation." In other words, they walked like snails and zigzagged toward their destination. That news was announced in January—a few months before a California man nearly walked and texted his way into the arms of a black bear.

### What you saw

<b>Pedestrian used mobile device in busy area</b>	<b>85%</b>
... and bumped into something	<b>42%</b> (of the 85%)
... or stepped in front of moving vehicle	<b>34%</b> (of the 85%)

From a nationally representative poll of 1,008 adults 18 and older conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center.





## On top of spaghetti

**PLAIN PASTA ISN'T** exactly full of flavor, so it helps to pair it with a decent sauce. Our trained tasters found three Excellent choices among the 20 they tried.

**Taste.** Among the best is Giada De Laurentiis (from Target), just 60 cents per half-cup. It's balanced and fresh-tasting, with a buttery richness. Also Excellent are Victoria and Mario Batali, though the Batali costs more than twice as much as the De Laurentiis, ounce for ounce. Three sauces are Very Good, and most of the rest are merely OK; Hunt's Traditional is only Fair. It tastes a bit like tomato paste and is slightly sour, with a soapy, perfumey off-taste.

What's in a famous name? Although the tested De Laurentiis and Batali sauces

score high, Paul Newman's rates far lower. Well-known store brands including Great Value (Walmart), Trader Giotto's (Trader Joe's), Kirkland Signature (Costco), and 365 Everyday Value (Whole Foods) are also middling, with the best of that group,

Great Value, also the cheapest, at 22 cents per half-cup.

Brandmates aren't equally tasty. Although Barilla and Bertolli tomato and basil sauces are Very Good, the marinara versions are Good. Don't assume that all sauces by a particular manufacturer will be of similar quality.

**Nutrition.** Judged on calories, fats, sodium, sugars, fiber, calcium, and iron, most products earned a score of Good. (Newman's Own includes some iron and fiber, so it squeaks into the Very Good category for nutrition.) Still, the numbers differ: Calories per half-cup range from 40 to 100; fat from 1 to 7 grams; sodium from 340 to 560 milligrams; and sugars from 2 to 12 grams.

**Bottom line.** Giada De Laurentiis Tomato Basil is a CR Best Buy. Victoria and Mario Batali, runners-up, are pricier but also somewhat lower in calories, fat, and sugars. All three taste as if made with fresh ingredients. Cost is based on approximate retail prices of the containers we bought. Costco's came in the biggest jar, 32 ounces; Trader Joe's in the smallest, 18 ounces.

### ■ CLOSE-UP

Our tasters also tried Classico Signature Recipes Creamy Alfredo and the same product in a Light version. Regular has 100 calories and 9 grams of fat per serving (a quarter-cup for these sauces); Light shaves off about 40 calories and 4 grams of fat. Both taste mediocre, and neither comes close to a traditional Alfredo sauce. They taste so similar on fettuccine that if you must eat jarred Alfredo sauce, you might as well choose Light and save calories and fat.



## What bugs America's shoppers

Pity poor Mr. and Ms. Doe. They picked up a new grill and some hamburger, went home, realized the grill was missing parts and the meat was past its expiration date, tried to reach a customer-service rep to complain, and failed. In so doing, they hit three of the top gripes plaguing the nation's shoppers.

In a nationally representative survey conducted in March, we asked more than 1,000 Americans to score 15 shopping complaints on a 1-to-10 scale, 1 meaning that an experience "does not annoy you at all" and 10 meaning that it "annoys you tremendously." Our gripe-o-meter shows the results.

For three complaints (hard-to-open packaging, can't find American-made goods, and packages with empty space), women were much more annoyed than men—and our analysis confirmed that gender, not who shopped for groceries, was responsible for the difference. (When we quizzed Americans about travel gripes in 2010, women also reported somewhat higher levels of annoyance than did men.) But there was little variation in scores for people in different age groups.





# Ratings Pasta sauce

All tested products In order of taste.

Giada De Laurentiis



Victoria

✓ CR Best Buy  
✓ Recommended

	Product	Per half-cup					Comments
Rec.		Cost	Calories	Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Sugars (g)	
EXCELLENT							
✓	Giada De Laurentiis Tomato Basil (Target)	\$0.60	100	7	440	6	Balanced, fresh-tasting, with a buttery richness.
✓	Victoria Marinara	0.87	70	4	380	3	Balanced, fresh-tasting, chunky, with olive-oil and fresh garlic flavors.
✓	Mario Batali Marinara	1.33	70	4	490	3	Balanced, fresh-tasting, garlicky.
VERY GOOD							
✓	Rao's Homemade Marinara	1.33	80	6	340	3	Slightly spicy, fresh-tasting, fairly balanced.
	Barilla Basilico Tomato & Basil	0.53	80	3	460	8	Thick, with fresh-tasting basil impression and olive-oil flavor. Slightly sweet.
	Bertolli Tomato & Basil	0.51	80	2	520	9	Chunky, with fresh-tasting basil impression and olive-oil flavor. Slightly sweet.
GOOD							
	Ragu Old World Style Traditional	0.39	80	2.5	480	7	Smooth, slightly sweet, with flavorful onion, olive-oil flavor, a touch of cheese. Mild spice/herb flavor.
	Francesco Rinaldi Original Traditional	0.34	80	3	540	8	Smooth, slightly sweet, with flavorful onion, olive-oil flavor. Mild spice/herb flavor.
	Great Value Traditional (Walmart)	0.22	70	1.5	490	9	Smooth, with flavorful onion. Mild spice/herb flavor.
	Barilla Marinara Traditional	0.50	90	3.5	470	7	Chunky, thick, tomato-paste taste, dried herb/spice impression and olive-oil flavor.
	Mezzetta Napa Valley Bistro Tomato Basil	0.75	100	5	550	6	Chunky, oily, with lots of dried herbs/spices. Olive-oil flavor.
	Ragu Chunky Tomato, Garlic & Onion	0.40	90	2.5	460	10	Sweet, tomato-paste taste, with dried herbs/spices and flavorful onion.
	Bertolli Vineyard Marinara with Burgundy Wine	0.52	90	2	500	12	Somewhat sour, with wine note and olive-oil flavor.
	Kirkland Signature Marinara (Costco)	0.30	40	1	470	5	Somewhat sour, with strong dehydrated spices and off-note in garlic flavor.
	Prego Traditional	0.45	70	1.5	480	10	Sweet, tomato-paste taste, with dehydrated-oregano flavor.
	Newman's Own Marinara	0.54	70	2	460	8	Thick, somewhat spicy, with big dehydrated-oregano impression and black-pepper note.
	Classico Tomato & Basil	0.53	50	1	380	5	Big dehydrated spice/herb impression, a bit bitter, an off-note in garlic flavor.
	Trader Giotto's Traditional Marinara (Trader Joe's)	0.29	50	1	530	2	Thin, salty, with dried herbs/spices and bitter notes.
	365 Everyday Value Classic Marinara (Whole Foods)	0.38	45	1	400	5	Spicy, with big dried herb/spice flavor that's sour and a bit bitter. Slightly rubbery mushroom pieces.
FAIR							
	Hunt's Traditional	0.19	60	1	560	5	Smooth, tomato-paste taste. Slightly sour, with soapy/perfumey off-note.

## Gripe-o-meter

Scores are based on a 10-point scale, with 10 being the most annoying.

Can't reach a human by phone	8.0
Bought food already stale or outdated	7.6
New product damaged or missing parts	7.6
Downsized products (size shrank, cost didn't)	7.3
Must click through website or watch ads	7.3
High shipping and handling fees	7.0
Bad driving in store parking lots	7.0
Hard-to-open packaging	6.8
Unhelpful sales help	6.8
Can't find American-made goods	6.7
Long checkout lines	6.3
Packages with empty space	6.3
Too few salespeople	6.0
Traffic on the way to store	5.1
Confusing food labels	5.0

Source: The Consumer Reports National Research Center. Differences of less than 0.4 points are not meaningful.



## CLAIM CHECK

## The next big thing for Pepsi?

**The claim.** "Drink it to believe it," says the campaign for Pepsi Next, a "game changing cola" with fewer than half the calories of regular Pepsi yet "real cola taste." It was recently introduced nationwide.

**The check.** We drank it to see whether we believed it. Specifically, we provided full, unmarked (except by color codes) cups of Pepsi, Pepsi Next, and Diet Pepsi to 87 CONSUMER REPORTS staffers. After sipping, each volunteer filled out a questionnaire.

**Bottom line.** Some of our guinea pigs were believers, others weren't. Overall, staffers liked regular Pepsi best, followed by Pepsi Next, then Diet Pepsi. The same order held for people who usually drink regular cola. (Poor Diet Pepsi: 26 percent of staffers overall agreed with the statement "I would not drink it again—ever.") But people who usually drink diet soda liked, in order, Pepsi Next, Diet Pepsi, then Pepsi.

Our results suggest two things: If you drink sugared cola because you dislike the taste of diet, Pepsi Next may be a good alternative, letting you cut calories but enjoy a taste fairly similar to that of regular cola. And if you drink diet cola because you don't want all the sugars of a regular one, Pepsi Next may also make sense: You might like the taste better and won't consume very many extra calories. And if you're trying to avoid calories as well as artificial sweeteners? Try seltzers.

## Cola comparison

Product	Sweeteners	Calories, 12 oz.
Pepsi	high-fructose corn syrup	150
Pepsi Next	high-fructose corn syrup, aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose	60
Diet Pepsi	aspartame	0

■ DID YOU KNOW?

## Free alerts on your cell phone

A system of textlike Wireless Emergency Alerts—for natural disasters, missing children (Amber alerts), and presidential announcements involving national security—is now rolling out to mobile phones. AT&T, Cellcom, Cricket, Sprint Nextel, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, and Verizon Wireless have agreed to carry the alerts, which subscribers will receive automatically and at no charge. (You can opt out of Amber and weather alerts but not presidential alerts.) The messages are like texts but use a different kind of technology to ensure they're delivered immediately; they relate to your current whereabouts as determined by the nearest cell phone tower. Government agencies including the Federal Communications Commission, Department of Homeland Security, and National Weather Service collaborated to create the system. To find out whether your phone is "WEA enabled," contact your carrier.



## Lemonades on parade

Some lemonades, especially lower-calorie choices, fall pretty far from the tree. Our tasters tried 16, including eight ready to drink, four powdered, and four from recipes. Results are below. Within categories, lemonades are in order of taste.

**Bottom line.** Whether life hands you lemons or not, make your own lemonade.

### Best choices

Two recipes using fresh lemon juice, from Allrecipes.com: Best Lemonade Ever (see Close-up) and Old-Fashioned Lemonade.

**Comments:** They have some pulp, taste fresh, and are slightly bitter.



### Just decent

Country Time, Minute Maid, Minute Maid Premium, Newman's Own Virgin, Arizona,

Kool Aid Unsweetened (you need to add sugar), Tropicana, Brisk, Real Lemon Juice (recipe from bottle), Minute Maid 100% Pure Lemon Juice (recipe from bottle), Crystal Light Natural mix.

**Comments:** Most don't taste fresh and have candylike flavors. Those toward the top of our list are mild; the rest taste highly processed or have other taste flaws.



### Not so hot

Tropicana Light, 4C Light, Trop 50. **Comments:** These reduced-calorie products tend to have a somewhat cooked flavor and are astringent and slightly bitter, with an artificial-sweetener impression and off-notes. Trop 50 has a slight grapefruit taste; the others have candylike flavors.



■ CLOSE-UP

### Homemade lemonade

In a small saucepan, combine  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups white sugar and 1 cup water. Bring to boil and stir to dissolve sugar. Allow to cool to room temperature, then cover and refrigerate until chilled. Remove seeds from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups lemon juice but leave pulp. In pitcher, stir together chilled syrup, lemon juice, and 7 cups water.

Best Lemonade Ever, from Allrecipes.com





## ■ GOTCHA!

# Attack of the 'zombie' account

The last thing you might expect after closing a bank account is for your bank to resurrect it without permission and start charging the pesky fees that may have led you to close the account in the first place. But a recent study by Consumers Union, the advocacy arm of Consumer Reports, found that two of the nation's 10 largest retail banks, Bank of America and Chase, reserved the right to reopen a closed account if there was a subsequent deposit; and Bank of America might also reopen an account after an attempted withdrawal. Chase told us later that it no longer reopens closed accounts, but it had not amended its policy online as of June. And banks smaller than the top 10 might still resuscitate old accounts.

You typically won't realize your account has risen from the dead until you get your first statement. By then, you may have

incurred fees of up to hundreds of dollars, for failing to keep a minimum balance or bouncing checks, for example.

Bank of America spokeswoman Betty Riess said that if the bank doesn't reopen the account, "a deposit that you want to be there could be rejected" and that the bank notifies customers about its policy when they close an account.

**What you can do.** Unfortunately, you can't drive a stake through your old account's heart. But you can ask a bank representative whether the bank would reopen your account under any circumstances. (Asking by phone or in person is a good idea: Our study found that websites for the 10 banks lacked clear, easy-to-find closing policies.) In addition, make sure there are no outstanding checks, automatic payments, or direct deposits



that could bring your account back to life.

Consumers Union is calling on the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and Congress to keep zombie accounts in the grave.

## ■ TECH TIPS

# Eyewear care

**Prescription eyeglasses can cost as much as \$1,000, and most have plastic lenses, which scratch more easily than glass. Clearly, you need to protect your investment. But should you clean lenses with tissues or cloth? When they're wet or dry? We asked experts and lens makers.**

**DON'T** wipe lenses when they're dry. Any debris on their surface or dust in the cleaning cloth could cause scratches.

**DON'T** wipe lenses with a tissue, paper towel, or paper napkin. They can have a rough surface.

**DON'T** use ammonia, bleach, vinegar, or window cleaner, which can harm lenses and their coatings. (Most lenses are now coated, usually with an antireflective layer.)

**DON'T** spit. Spit is a handy (though off-putting) cleaning solution, but "saliva may contain oil or something else that's damaging," says American Optometric Association spokeswoman Susan Thomas. Exhaling on lenses before cleaning doesn't get them very wet, and the association doesn't recommend it.

**DON'T** put unprotected glasses in a purse, pocket, or bag.

**DON'T** regularly place glasses on a sink or vanity top. Spatter, sprays, and cosmetics can soil lenses, and hair spray or perfume can damage anti-reflective coating.

**DON'T** leave glasses in a hot car. "Especially

avoid the top of the dashboard," Thomas advises. "The windshield will act like a magnifying lens."

**DO** clean lenses regularly with warm water and a drop of dish detergent, then dry with a clean, soft cotton cloth, like a handkerchief, or a microfiber cloth. Launder any cloth routinely according to the manufacturer's instructions. LensCrafters and Pearle Vision, optical retailers that are part of the same company, suggest using an eyeglass cleaner sold at their stores for about \$2.50 per 2 ounces. A small bottle of lens cleaner is convenient when you're out and about, but is

it better? "Most work very well, but there's no great advantage over liquid soap," says Lee Duffner, an ophthalmologist in Hollywood, Fla., and a spokesman for the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

**DO** use a hard-shell case that is the right size for your glasses.

**DO** lay glasses down with their lenses facing upward.

**DO** use both hands to put glasses on and take them off, and keep glasses on your nose, not on your head. Otherwise, frames can become misaligned. Even clean lenses are less than effective if they aren't positioned properly in front of the eyes.



# Beware of bogus phone-bill fees

**PHONE COMPANIES** and federal regulators have taken steps to curb “cramming,” the placement of unauthorized charges on phone bills. But the new measures don’t go far enough, and they apply only to the dwindling number of landlines, not cell phones, which outnumber them by almost three times. So consumers must be extra vigilant in reviewing their mobile-phone bills for those fees.

Cramming works like this: Third-party providers of telecom services send their charges to aggregators that compile and send them on to phone companies to be added to customers’ bills. Some third-party billing is legitimate, such as charges for AOL, DirecTV, and Dish Network. But if you’ve been billed for voice mail, e-mail, Web hosting, or other services from unfamiliar companies that you didn’t order, you’ve been crammed. The Federal Communications Commission says that crammers rely on confusing phone bills to trick consumers into paying for services they didn’t authorize or receive, or that cost more than they were led to believe.

## Half-measures

Earlier this year, the FCC adopted a rule that will require phone companies to notify landline customers about their option to block third-party charges—but only if the company offers it (they’re not required to). And the major phone companies agreed to stop accepting billings for certain products typically used for cramming—voice mail, Web hosting, and e-mail—by the end of 2012.

But in 2009 AT&T took the same action against voice-mail and Web-hosting services, and the Senate Commerce Committee concluded in 2011 that crammers adapted

to such prohibitions by billing for other services, such as electronic faxing.

All of this points to potential problems for cell-phone customers as crammers focus on less-restrictive wireless accounts. But the trade association that represents cellular companies claims there is no threat. “There is no persuasive evidence that cramming is a widespread problem in the wireless industry,” according to CTIA-The Wireless Association, which says that it is concerned that mandated consumer protections will stifle the growth of mobile applications.

But plaintiffs who sued Verizon Wireless and other companies in a 2011 class action, which has since been settled, found plenty of activity—480,000 alleged cramming victims billed \$12 million by the cellular giant, according to court filings. And the Texas attorney general is pursuing more than two dozen defendants in another lawsuit involving cellular customers who were crammed.

## What you can do

Here’s how to protect yourself:

**Block your accounts.** The FCC estimates that 15 to 20 million landline customers are crammed each year, and the Senate Commerce Committee investigation concluded that phone companies were inef-

fective at stopping it during the past 14 years. So don’t rely on your telecom provider to weed out the charges. Instead, tell your wireless and landline carriers to block all third-party charges to your accounts.

**Scour your bills.** Only one in 20 cramming victims may be aware of the charges because consumers don’t know to look for them, according to a Federal Trade Commission survey. So check your monthly bills for small (\$2 to \$20) unauthorized charges with unfamiliar names or codes.

**Get a refund.** If you find unauthorized charges, call your carrier to demand a refund. Verizon now issues them “no questions asked.” AT&T pushes customers to first call the third-party company but will issue a refund if they insist.

**Pay with a credit card.** If you decide to download apps or shop by smart phone, use your credit card instead of having the cost put on your phone bill. Credit cards provide consumers with many protections, including the right to dispute fraudulent charges and get money back for goods or services not delivered as promised.

**Guard your cell number.** Often, a bad guy needs only your phone number to place a charge on your bill. Cell-phone numbers, which aren’t published in directories, are typically requested by crammers’ websites in exchange for freebies that are actually subscription sign-ups. A CONSUMER REPORTS staffer entered her phone number on an auction website in order to place a bid, and a \$9.99 recurring subscription charge from the company showed up on her next AT&T Wireless bill. So it’s best not to give your cell-phone number to online contests, auctions, surveys, or giveaways.

**Don’t be misled.** When our staffer called AT&T about the \$9.99 charge, she was told that by ignoring a text message hawking the service, she had authorized the purchase. AT&T later told us she was given erroneous information, something we already knew. Cellular industry guidelines say that consumers have to agree to such charges in two separate actions before they’re allowed. So make sure you demand your money back if you’re a victim of this billing trick.



## BY THE NUMBERS

# \$2 billion

That's how much consumers could be losing to crammers each year, says the Senate Commerce Committee.



# Find out how much to pay for a new car with our expanded local pricing information

The **Consumer Reports New Car Price Report** shows you what others really paid, regional dealer marketing fees, and other information to help you get a great deal on a new car.

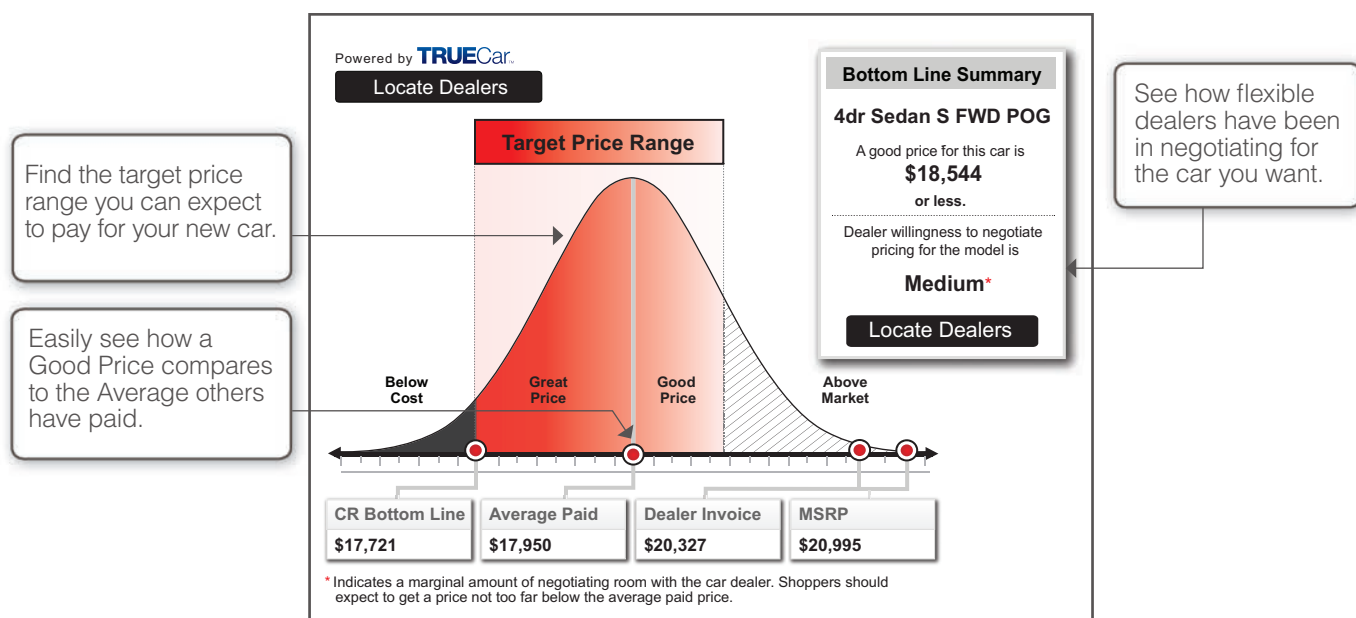
The enhanced Report now features an easy-to-read price curve that includes:

- Great, Good, and Above Market price ranges for your area
- The average price others paid for the same car
- The Build & Buy Service, providing a transparent car-buying experience through a network of pre-qualified dealers
- A rating of a dealer's willingness to negotiate on the model you've chosen



**Arm yourself with the New Car Price Report.  
Save Time. Save Money.**

**ConsumerReports®  
New Car Price Service**



**Call Now For Your \$14 Report.  
\$12 for each additional report ordered at the same time.  
1-800-693-5524  
Or go to [www.ConsumerReports.org/BigSavings](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/BigSavings)**

For service in Canada, go to: [www.ConsumerReports.org/canada27](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/canada27)

NCPS28A



# Restaurant roulette

We rate 102 of America's biggest chains

**E**VERY DAY, AMERICANS spend about \$1.7 billion at the nation's 970,000 restaurants—close to the amount they spend each year on indigestion remedies. Clearly, diners deserve a sure thing: a clean place that provides tasty food and good value. To find the best bets, we surveyed 47,565 readers who ate a total of 110,517 meals at 102 table-service chain restaurants—a step (sometimes a leap) up from fast-food joints.

On one end are family-oriented, pot-roast-and-hash-brown restaurants such as Denny's, IHOP, and Perkins, with simple décor, sturdy tableware, and a bill of about \$10 per person for breakfast or lunch. On the other, white-tablecloth eateries such as The Capital Grille, Ruth's Chris Steak House, and Morton's Steakhouse, where guests can sample carpaccio and ahi tuna on fine china, sip wine in clubby surroundings, and pay more than \$40 per person for dinner and drinks.

The rated restaurants serve cuisine for most palates: steaks and burgers, barbecue,

seafood, Italian, Mexican, and Asian. Some chains have a niche: fondue at The Melting Pot; hibachi cooking at Benihana; Cajun fare at Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen.

## What we found

Nine chains earned especially high marks across the board for the four attributes in our Ratings—taste, value, service, and mood—and were praised for menu variety, cleanliness, and a lack of noise. They were:

- **Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano** (focusing on big portions and "personal attention")
- **Black Angus Steakhouse** (flame-grilled steaks with an "over-the-campfire flavor")
- **Bob Evans** (breakfast and homey fare)
- **Bravo Cucina Italiana** ("upscale affordable dining" in "Roman ruin" décor)
- **First Watch** (eggs, pancakes, sandwiches)
- **J. Alexander's** (American classics, sandwiches, salads, specialties such as grilled fish with mango papaya salsa)
- **Le Peep** (eggs, crepes, salads)
- **Elmer's** (pancakes, comfort food)
- **Fatz Eat & Drinkz** (grilled or fried

sandwiches, entrées, finger foods)

Among the lower-rated were two family restaurants ("family" because they're typically informal, cater to kids, are open long hours, and serve no liquor): Friendly's, where "we are committed to quality in everything we do," and Waffle House, where "we are not in the food business ... we are in the People business." Both drew relatively low marks for cleanliness and mood; Friendly's was also criticized for lackluster service. The pub-style Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar was another laggard, criticized for value and noise.

On average, readers were very satisfied with roughly half of the 102 chains. But there's room for improvement. Only Cheddar's Casual Café, which touts "always-affordable food," received a top mark for value, and just 19 chains got especially high marks for taste. On one-fourth of all visits, readers found their restaurant too noisy.

During one in 10 visits, the wait staff was slow, inattentive, pushy, messy, or mistake-prone. No surprise, perhaps, that



there were a fair number of small tippers among our respondents. During about 20 percent of visits, guests left a tip of less than 15 percent; during 2 percent of visits, they left less than 10 percent. Chains with the highest percentage of tips below 15 percent were Applebee's, Buffalo Wild Wings, Cheddar's, Country Kitchen, Don Pablo's, El Torito, Joe's Crab Shack, Logan's Roadhouse, Lone Star Steakhouse, McGrath's, Shari's, and Shoney's.

On average, though, tips were 18 percent for dinner at the casual chains and 17 percent for breakfast or lunch at a family restaurant. Women tended to be slightly more generous than men. The Capital Grille and Morton's lay claim to the most generous tippers, with patrons leaving 20 percent or more on more than 60 percent of all visits. At family restaurants, the staff at TooJay's, First Watch, The Original Pancake House, and Friendly's received the biggest tips.

Although value, taste, and service still mattered most to respondents, they're not the only attributes that help restaurants stand apart. Many cultivate a particular mood. At the Hard Rock Cafe, live music blares, and guitars, jumpsuits, and other memorabilia fill almost every inch of space. For a taste of the old West, there's Saltgrass Steak House, where food is served in informal surroundings that might conjure thoughts of a cattle drive. Mimi's Cafe? It's reminiscent of a quaint French bistro. Then there's Quaker Steak & Lube, which grew from its origin in an abandoned gas station and is a monument to muscle cars, motorcycles, and cheap gas. Cars hang from the ceiling.

Chains earning raves for mood weren't the gimmicky ones but mostly staid, pricey spots such as McCormick & Schmick's, Ruth's Chris, and Chart House (usually on a waterfront) and less-expensive, laid-back places including Abuelo's Mexican Food Embassy and Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano.

## Trends that matter

More Americans are ordering chain-restaurant food to go. Applebee's, BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, The Cheesecake Factory, and Max & Erma's, among many others, let you order online and pick up curbside. Imitating fast feeders, Shoney's has added drive-through windows. Even Morton's has a "Prime To Go" menu.

More restaurants let you call ahead for quick seating. At Hard Rock Cafe, Texas Roadhouse, The Old Spaghetti Factory,

## Eat out, but eat smart

We sent two reporters to an Applebee's for lunch. One ordered impulsively, the other intelligently, yet both enjoyed a steak, salad, and side dishes. Our impulsive diner ordered a couple of days' worth of calories (almost 4,500) and sodium (about 5,700 milligrams) and four days' worth of fat (258 grams). And no, he didn't eat all that food. Our sensible diner's tally? Less than 1,000 calories and far less fat and sodium than our glutton would have consumed. Tips that apply to any meal: Share and take some home. Here, other ways our smart diner minimized guilt and gluttony. (Nutrition numbers are from Applebee's.)

**▣ Downsize slightly.** Instead of this 9-ounce sirloin (310 calories), our sensible diner chose a 7-ounce one.

**▣ Choose smart sauces.**

The sauce and shrimp atop our indulgent diner's Shrimp 'N Parmesan Sirloin added about 360 calories and 30 grams of fat. Our smart diner's House Sirloin was topped with a light cabernet sauce, mushrooms, and onions.

**▣ Save on sides.** Our smart diner skipped this "loaded" baked potato stuffed with cheese and bacon bits (400 calories and 23 grams of fat—more with butter and sour cream) and ate steamed herbed potatoes.

**▣ Drink responsibly.** We're not talking alcohol. The frozen strawberry lemonade our impulsive diner ordered has 260 calories in 20 ounces, compared with 0 calories for iced tea with lemon.

**▣ Use dressings sparingly.**

Our indulgent diner got a house salad (which included shredded cheese) and added a hefty serving of blue cheese dressing. Our sensible diner ordered a small, bare Caesar salad and dipped greens in the side-ordered dressing.

**▣ Compromise on dessert.**

With 1,550 calories and 74 grams of fat, this cookie sundae was enough for a tableful of people. Our sensible diner ordered a bare cookie and shared.

**▣ Beware of bread.**

Some diners could easily scarf down these harmless-looking garlic breadsticks. But a side order has more than 1,100 calories and 78 grams of fat.



### HOW TO EAT SMART

Use your smart phone to download the RedLaser or ShopSavvy app and scan the code for video.



## Flapjacks to flip over?

Just as many diners judge a fast-food restaurant by its burgers, patrons at family restaurants often consider pancakes the benchmark of breakfast. To see which stack stands tallest, we had trained tasters try buttermilk pancakes at five restaurants. We skipped strawberries, chocolate chips, whipped cream, and other extras that could mask defects. And to gauge consistency, we visited three restaurants from each chain at different times of day. Results are in taste order, left to right.



### ▶ Cracker Barrel

**The claim.** Buttermilk “activates the mix so it rises higher for fluffier, more flavorful pancakes.”

**The results.** Very good overall. The pancakes—golden with crispy edges and a browned, buttery flavor—tasted made from scratch. They were tender yet chewy. Tasters detected grain notes and a pleasant sour buttermilk taste. Pancakes bought in the morning were best; after noon, they’d picked up flavors from old oil and other griddle foods. Otherwise, we would have judged them excellent. This was the only chain that served syrup with some real maple (warm, to boot).



### ▶ Perkins

**The claim.** “Our world-famous pancakes are made-from-scratch with our own secret recipe batter.”

**The results.** Very good but inconsistent. Pancakes were light, fluffy, and golden brown, with crispy edges, and did taste as if made from scratch. They had a mild flavor with grain and egg notes, but tasters couldn’t detect buttermilk flavor. At one location, the pancakes were excessively salty and had a metallic taste. The “pancake” syrup (typically a blend of corn syrup and maple flavoring) wasn’t especially artificial-tasting, as these syrups go.



### ▶ Country Kitchen

**The claim.** “We are famous for our light and fluffy homemade pancakes. They are made fresh daily with buttermilk, eggs, and a hint of vanilla and sugar.”

**The results.** Good. Although the pancakes were nicely browned with crispy edges and grain and egg tastes, the vanilla and vanillin (artificial vanilla) flavors were overpowering. There was no hint of buttermilk. Tasters compared the overall flavor to that of a cake made from a boxed mix. The pancakes did come with real butter, but the syrup tasted more like caramel than maple.

and others, you’ll get your name on the waiting list and save some time in line once you arrive.

Consumers are being given more info about ingredients, including allergens such as gluten and peanuts, the source of foods, whether sustainable farming and fishing practices have been followed, and how animals have been treated. Red Lobster, for instance, says it won’t serve endangered or over-fished species. Outback Steakhouse requires beef suppliers to have a written and monitored humane-handling policy that meets or exceeds Department of Agriculture requirements.

Some chains are going green. Ted’s Montana Grill (co-founded by Ted Turner) promises to be “99 percent plastic free.” It has paper straws, menus on recycled stock, and to-go drinks in cornstarch cups.

There may be more healthful choices for vegetarians and diners looking to restrict sodium, calories, and fat or simply to eat less. Even The Cheesecake Factory, known for gargantuan portions, acknowledges the changing landscape with its new Small Plates and SkinnyLicious entrées with fewer than 590 calories.

Readers singled out First Watch and Legal

Seafoods as most likely to offer healthful dishes. “Consumers’ focus on health when dining out continues to increase, and we believe it is a long-term trend vs. a fad,” says First Watch chief marketing officer Chris Tomasso. Least likely to sell healthful fare are Buffalo Wild Wings, Quaker Steak & Lube, Waffle House, Hooters, and Johnny Rockets, according to survey respondents.

The five chains readers cited in our 2008 survey for serving “too much food” again topped that list: Maggiano’s Little Italy, The Cheesecake Factory, Black Bear Diner, Buca di Beppo, and Claim Jumper. But the percentage of readers who said they were overfed at each of those restaurants has dropped. For example, in 2008, 51 percent of respondents felt Maggiano’s served them too much to eat, compared with 40 percent this time around.

Concern over obesity and health isn’t the only reason for smaller servings. Food prices are coming off one of their biggest one-year rises in decades. But restaurants are loath to raise prices in tough times, so many are offering smaller portions and charging the same or slightly less.

Providing nutrition numbers is to become mandatory as part of the Patient Protection

and Affordable Care Act of 2010. Food establishments with 20 or more locations will have to post calories “in a clear and conspicuous manner” on menus and menu boards. They’ll also have to make available written information such as calories from fat, sodium, protein, and carbohydrates. The numbers won’t have to appear until six months after the Food and Drug Administration publishes the final rule, which had yet to happen as of early June.

Some chains already reveal nutrition stats online or at the restaurant, but the message doesn’t seem to be getting across. Our survey respondents noticed printed numbers on just 14 percent of their visits. Forty-five percent of the time, respondents weren’t sure whether the info was available or not, suggesting that they weren’t looking for it or that it wasn’t posted prominently. Once observed, it prompted respondents to order healthier fare during 43 percent of their visits—and had no effect 57 percent of the time.

## How to save

Spirited competition among the chains means that you can use a toolbox of tactics to find bargains. Here’s how:





## ► IHOP

**The claim.** "Award-winning buttermilk pancakes with authentic country flavor."

**The results.** Good.

Uniformly golden, but they looked better than they tasted and did not taste homemade. Although they had a mild grain flavor with a bit of saltiness, they were starchy, lacked any hint of buttermilk, and had an odd texture: As tasters chewed, pancakes became a bit dense and mushy. And as pancakes cooled, they became slightly tough. The syrup was somewhat thick and lacked real maple flavor.

## ► Denny's

**The claim.** "Build a stack you'll be proud to call your own" (choose batter, mix-in, and topping).

**The results.** Good. As with IHOP, pancakes looked better than they tasted. They were consistently golden brown, with slight egg, vanilla, and brown-spice flavors, but were starchy. They lacked buttermilk flavor and tasted as if from a boxed mix. They had a nice texture at first but became chewy and tough when cool. The syrup was thick and lacked real maple flavor.

## Maple syrup vs. pancake syrup

Table syrup, the kind most chains serve, is to pure maple syrup as mushrooms are to truffles. And that may be an insult to mushrooms.

It takes 40 gallons of boiled-down tree sap to produce a gallon of maple syrup, according to New York's Upper Hudson Maple Producers Association, which explains why the price can be four or five times that of knockoffs. Water is boiled off, sugar is concentrated and caramelized, resulting in nutty, buttery, and floral flavors and a light- to dark-amber color (generally, the darker the color the more intense the flavor).

Table syrups (aka pancake syrups), on the other hand, are factory concoctions, often with lots of ingredients, including corn syrup, caramel color, gums, and artificial flavorings to make them more like the real deal. But chains know the difference and choose their words carefully. Bob Evans, Carrows, and Marie Callender's, for instance, offer "warm syrup"; Village Inn serves

"maple-flavored" syrup. First Watch's menu makes no mention of the syrups that accompany its hotcakes, but the chain sells pure maple syrup as a side order, \$1.29 for less than 2 ounces, a company spokeswoman said.

In blind tests pitting pure Grade A maple syrup against wannabes (all bought at a local store), our trained tasters said it was no contest: The complex flavors of nature can't be beat. Pure maple syrup was thin in texture, left no residue in the mouth, and had hints of caramel and vanilla. Table syrup was thicker, with corn syrup and artificial flavors. Light syrup (about 100 calories per quarter-cup instead of 200) was gummy and gelatinous; sugar-free syrup (20 calories) was sour and astringent.



**Sniff out specials.** Visit the chains' websites to find standing and rotating offers. Outback, for example, recently featured a three-course steak dinner for \$11.99; IHOP, seven meals for \$7; Denny's, all the pancakes you could eat for \$4; Red Robin, a double-patty burger with endless fries for \$6.99. Even Morton's has deals: for instance, steak, seafood, and dessert for \$59.99 a person—a bargain, by the chain's standards. If you're dining with children, look for specials like the one at TooJay's Deli that let a kid eat free in April and May after 4 p.m. with the purchase of an adult meal.

**Eat when others don't.** That's a sure-fire way to save. On Mondays and Tuesdays, Red Lobster customers get a discount on some shrimp entrées. At Applebee's, the reward for late-night dining is half-price appetizers.

**Eat at the bar.** At Bravo Cucina Italiana, guests can sit at the bar and order off the Bar Bites menu for as little as \$3.95. Until 7 p.m., Fleming's offers five cocktails, glasses of wine, and appetizers at the bar, each for \$6.

**Show your age.** On Tuesdays at Fatz Eat & Drinkz, guests 50 and older can or-

der from a special menu (\$6-to-\$8 entrées) between 3 p.m. and 10 p.m. For people 55 and older, Perkins has inexpensive lunches and dinners with two sides every day. Saltgrass Steak House and Chart House will take 10 percent off the bills of AARP members; at Denny's, AARP members save 20 percent off their bill from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. daily. Revealing your age can net benefits even if you're not over 50: At The Cheesecake Factory, the birthday celebrant gets a free scoop of ice cream.

**Join an e-club.** Almost every chain offers freebies if you're willing to share your e-mail address. You'll usually get something simply for signing up for alerts (at Maggiano's it's \$10 off next visit, at Don Pablo's it's a dip sampler). At some chains, the more you spend the more you save. Red Robin will give Red Royalty Club members their 10th burger free after they've bought nine and \$20 off their sixth visit if they eat at the chain five times during their first five weeks of membership. T.G.I. Friday's Give Me More Stripes program lets customers accrue points toward free food with each dollar spent and tosses in one "jump the line" pass to let them avoid waiting for a table. Enticements to

join Carrabba's Amici club include special prix-fixe dinners and invitations to cooking demos and wine tastings.

**Eat with others.** Applebee's, Chili's, and O'Charley's have "two for" deals consisting of one shareable appetizer and two full-sized entrées for \$20. P.F. Chang's has a four-course Meal For Two for \$40. Maggiano's and Buca di Beppo serve heaping portions on large platters, family style, and Buca di Beppo also has smaller platters designed for two or four people. (Having seen those platters, we suspect they could easily feed more.)

**Clip coupons.** "A decade ago, there was

## ► BY THE NUMBERS

# 54%

That's the percent of visits during which diners noticed nutrition numbers on the menu at Islands Fine Burgers & Drinks. It was the only chain in our survey at which diners saw such info on a majority of visits.

a stigma to using coupons,” says Darren Tristano, executive vice president of industry consultant Technomic. “Today sites like Groupon and Living Social have helped couponing go mainstream. Consumers don’t have to worry about getting funny looks any more.” Some chains, particularly casual ones, distribute coupons in the mail or via newspaper inserts. (If you’ve signed up for e-mail alerts, you might receive coupons that way, too.)

Sometimes a gift card can be as valuable as a coupon. A recent promo at Bonefish Grill gave a \$10 bonus card to people who bought \$50 worth of gift cards.

**Check in on Facebook.** That’s where many restaurants reveal their latest promotions. By “liking” the restaurant or just visiting the page, we found offers and clickable coupons for a free appetizer with a paid entrée (Chili’s), free dessert when buying the Italian dinner for two (Romano’s Macaroni Grill), and \$10 off the purchase of two dinner entrées (Carrabba’s).

**Order to go.** You can leave a smaller tip.

## How to choose

With so many good options, your choice will depend on your budget, your taste buds, and the restaurant’s location (many chains are regional).

For an inexpensive breakfast or lunch, the crepes at First Watch or house special oven-baked apple pancake at The Original Pancake House might do the trick.

For a dinner for less than \$20, you might like the barbecue at Famous Dave’s or Sonny’s, the pasta at Carino’s, the signature enchiladas at Abuelo’s, or classic chicken platters at Cheddar’s.

For a special occasion, consider the dry-aged porterhouse at The Capital Grille or the jumbo scallops at J. Alexander’s.

For a kid-friendly place, good choices include Mellow Mushroom (mainly pizza), Benihana (where theatrical chefs prepare specialties tableside), and Red Robin (with a birthday club for kids and a feathered mascot visiting occasionally). Regardless of the restaurant, 96 percent of respondents accompanied by children said that the little ones enjoyed the experience.

If you’re an omnivore, consider restaurants that readers praised for variety. A sampling: Mimi’s Cafe, Biaggi’s, Abuelo’s, Cheddar’s, Pappadeaux, The Capital Grille, P.F. Chang’s, and First Watch.

Last, if you want a quiet place to unwind, think twice about places called “roadhouse,” “bar,” or “brewery.”

## Ssshh—we’re trying to hear ourselves eat!

Survey respondents cited at least one problem during 36 percent of restaurant visits. On 8 percent of visits, there were two problems; on another 8 percent, three or more. Those numbers might seem high, but they’re down from our 2008 survey.

What hasn’t changed is the nature of the irritants. Noise (from other customers, music, TVs, or a loud kitchen staff) plagued almost a quarter of visits on average. Next-biggest complaints: dirt (on floors, tables, silverware, and condiment shakers, and in bathrooms) and poor service (inattentive, slow, sloppy, or mistake-prone). On 9 percent of visits, respondents complained about the food, especially over- or under-seasoning, unattractive presentation, and food served cold or too hot.

Most chains don’t take reservations, and long waits were common. Guests were seated immediately 61 percent of the time and waited less than 10 minutes 26 percent of the time, but on 11 percent of visits, they waited 10 to 30 minutes. Customers of The Cheesecake Factory and Houston’s had the longest waits.

## Restaurant gripes

Chains with above-average number of complaints. In alphabetical order.

	Reader complaints about ...		
	Noise	Dirt	Bad service
<b>Average, all chains</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Benihana	—	—	18
BJ’s Restaurant & Brewhouse	38	—	—
Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar	45	—	19
Cheddar’s Casual Cafe	33	—	—
The Cheesecake Factory	38	—	—
Chevys Fresh Mex	33	—	19
Chili’s	32	—	—
Denny’s	—	17	—
Don Pablo’s	—	21	—
El Torito	33	—	—
Elephant Bar Restaurant	39	—	—
Friendly’s	—	21	—
Hard Rock Cafe	45	—	22
Hooters	40	18	—
IHOP Restaurant	—	16	—
Joe’s Crab Shack	36	16	—
Johnny Rockets	33	—	—
Logan’s Roadhouse	38	19	—
Mellow Mushroom	33	—	—
Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen	44	—	—
Quaker Steak & Lube	36	—	—
Red Robin Gourmet Burgers	39	—	—
Shoney’s	—	19	—
Sonny’s Real Pit Bar-B-Q	—	18	—
T.G.I. Friday’s	38	—	—
Texas Roadhouse	51	—	—
Waffle House	—	27	—

## Guide to the survey

Ratings are based on 47,565 subscriber responses to a survey conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. Respondents told us about 110,517 visits to full-service restaurant chains between April 2010 and April 2011. Findings reflect the experiences of our readers, not necessarily those of the general population. **Reader score** reflects diners’ overall satisfaction and is not limited to the criteria in the table. A score of 100 would mean all readers were completely satisfied; 80 would mean very satisfied, on average; 60, fairly well satisfied. Even the lowest-rated chain pleased most customers. Differences in scores of fewer than 7 points are not meaningful. For most chains, **price** is the median diners paid for their own dinner and drinks minus the tip; but for family chains, price reflects the median for breakfast or lunch, including beverages and excluding the tip. A dash (—) indicates that we lacked sufficient data. Scores for **taste**, **value**, **service**, and **mood** are relative.



# Ratings Restaurants

In order of reader score, within categories.

Better ← → Worse  
● ● ● ● ●

Restaurant	Price	Reader score	Survey results			
		0 100	Taste	Value	Service	Mood

## CONTEMPORARY/TRADITIONAL AMERICAN

J. Alexander's	\$27	87	●	●	●	●
Houston's	27	84	●	●	●	●
Mimi's Cafe	15	82	●	●	●	●
Claim Jumper	19	80	●	○	●	●
The Cheesecake Factory	22	80	●	○	●	●
O'Charley's	15	79	●	○	○	●
Ninety Nine Restaurants	17	79	●	●	●	○
Max & Erma's	14	78	●	○	○	○
Chart House	34	77	●	●	●	●

## BARBECUE

Famous Dave's	17	81	●	●	●	●
Sonny's Real Pit Bar-B-Q	13	81	●	●	●	○
Smokey Bones Bar & Fire Grill	18	80	●	○	●	●

## ITALIAN

Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano	23	88	●	●	●	●
Bravo Cucina Italiana	21	86	●	●	●	●
Brio Tuscan Grille	25	86	●	●	●	●
Carrabba's Italian Grill	22	84	●	●	●	●
Maggiano's Little Italy	24	84	●	●	●	●
Carino's Italian Grill	18	83	●	●	●	●
Olive Garden	18	82	●	●	●	●
The Old Spaghetti Factory	14	80	●	●	○	●
Romano's Macaroni Grill	20	80	●	○	●	●
Buca di Beppo	21	79	●	○	●	●
Bertucci's	19	79	●	○	○	○

## MEXICAN

Abuelo's Mexican Food Embassy	16	86	●	●	●	●
Azteca Mexican Restaurants	16	81	●	●	●	●
Acapulco Mexican Restaurant y Cantina	15	79	●	○	○	●
On the Border Mexican Grill & Cantina	15	76	○	○	○	○
Don Pablo's	16	76	●	○	○	○
Chevys Fresh Mex	16	75	○	○	○	○
El Torito	16	74	○	○	○	○

## PUB STYLE OR GRILL

Cheddar's Casual Café	13	84	●	●	●	●
Fatz Eat & Drinkz	15	84	●	●	●	●
Houlihan's	19	83	●	●	●	●
Ted's Montana Grill	22	82	●	○	●	●
BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse	17	81	●	○	○	○
Elephant Bar Restaurant	18	80	●	○	●	●
Old Chicago	15	80	●	○	●	●
Granite City Food & Brewery	19	80	●	○	●	●
Texas Roadhouse	18	79	●	○	●	○
Islands Fine Burgers & Drinks	—	79	●	●	●	●
Ruby Tuesday	17	78	●	○	○	○
Uno Chicago Grill	17	77	●	○	○	○
Beef 'O' Brady's	14	77	○	○	○	○
Logan's Roadhouse	16	77	●	○	○	○
Red Robin Gourmet Burgers	14	77	●	○	○	○
Applebee's	15	76	○	○	○	○
Chili's	16	75	○	○	○	○
Quaker Steak & Lube	16	75	○	○	○	○
T.G.I. Friday's	18	74	○	○	○	○
Hooters	17	73	○	●	○	○
Hard Rock Cafe	—	71	○	●	○	○

Restaurant	Price	Reader score	Survey results			
		0 100	Taste	Value	Service	Mood

## PUB STYLE OR GRILL continued

Buffalo Wild Wings Grill & Bar	\$15	69	○	●	○	○
--------------------------------	------	----	---	---	---	---

## SEAFOOD

Bonefish Grill	26	85	●	●	●	●
Pappadeaux Seafood Kitchen	25	83	●	●	●	●
Legal Sea Foods	30	81	●	○	●	●
McCormick & Schmick's	34	81	●	○	●	●
Red Lobster	21	80	●	○	○	○
McGrath's Fish House	18	80	●	○	●	●
Bubba Gump Shrimp Co.	—	76	●	○	●	●
Joe's Crab Shack	21	72	●	●	○	○

## STEAKHOUSES

The Capital Grille	42	85	●	○	●	●
Ruth's Chris Steak House	42	84	●	○	●	●
Morton's The Steakhouse	42	83	●	●	●	●
Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar	41	83	●	○	●	●
LongHorn Steakhouse	21	82	●	○	●	●
Black Angus Steakhouse	23	81	●	●	●	●
Outback Steakhouse	21	80	●	○	●	●
Saltgrass Steak House	24	80	●	○	●	●
Lone Star Steakhouse & Saloon	20	78	●	○	○	○
Charlie Brown's Steakhouse	21	77	○	○	○	○

## UNIQUE DINNER HOUSES

Bahama Breeze	22	83	●	○	●	●
P.F. Chang's China Bistro	22	82	●	○	●	●
California Pizza Kitchen	18	81	●	○	○	○
Mellow Mushroom	15	80	●	○	○	○
The Melting Pot	41	79	●	●	●	●
Benihana	29	77	●	●	●	●

## FAMILY

First Watch	10	87	●	●	●	●
The Original Pancake House	12	84	●	●	●	●
Le Peep	11	83	●	●	●	●
Bob Evans	9	81	●	●	●	●
The Egg & I Breakfast & Lunch	10	81	●	●	●	●
Elmer's	11	81	●	●	●	●
Bakers Square Restaurant & Pies	10	80	●	●	●	○
Cracker Barrel Old Country Store	10	80	●	●	●	●
Village Inn	9	79	●	●	●	○
Black Bear Diner	11	79	●	●	○	○
Steak 'n Shake	8	79	●	○	○	○
Eat 'n Park	9	79	○	○	○	○
Perkins Restaurant & Bakery	9	79	●	●	○	○
TooJay's Original Gourmet Deli	13	78	●	●	○	○
Ruby's Diner	13	78	○	○	○	○
Country Kitchen	9	76	○	○	○	○
Shari's Restaurant	11	76	○	○	○	○
Marie Callender's Restaurant & Bakery	13	76	○	○	○	○
Carrows Restaurant	10	75	○	○	○	○
Coco's Bakery Restaurant	11	75	○	○	○	○
Waffle House	8	75	○	●	○	○
IHOP Restaurant	10	75	○	○	○	○
Denny's	9	74	○	○	○	○
Shoney's	9	72	○	○	○	○
Johnny Rockets	11	72	○	○	○	○
Friendly's	11	70	○	○	○	○



**SURGICAL INFECTION** Patrick Roth of Dartmouth, Mass., can't walk unassisted since he experienced several complications after surgery.

# How safe is your hospital?

Our new Ratings find that too many pose risks

**H**OSPITALS SHOULD BE places you go to get better, but too often the opposite happens.

Infections, surgical mistakes, and other medical harm contribute to the deaths of 180,000 hospital patients a year, according to projections based on a 2010 report from the Department of Health and Human Services. Another 1.4 million are seriously hurt by their hospital care. And those figures apply only to Medicare patients. What happens to other people is less clear because most hospital errors go unreported and hospitals report on only a fraction of things that can go wrong.

"There is an epidemic of health-care harm," says Rosemary Gibson, a patient-safety advocate and author. More than 2.25 million Americans will probably die from medical harm in this decade, she

says. "That's like wiping out the entire populations of North Dakota, Rhode Island, and Vermont. It's a man-made disaster."

Some hospitals have responded to the crisis with safety initiatives such as electronic prescribing to help prevent drug errors and checklists to prevent infections, with some success. Rates of central-line bloodstream infections, for example, have dropped by 32 percent since 2008, according to the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But more needs to be done. "Hospitals haven't given safety the attention it deserves," says Peter Pronovost, M.D., senior vice president for patient safety and quality at Johns Hopkins Medicine in Baltimore. Nor has the government, he says. "Medical harm is probably one of the three leading causes of death in the U.S., but

the government doesn't adequately track it as it does deaths from automobiles, plane crashes, and cancer. It's appalling."

That lack of information not only makes it difficult to define the extent of the problem but also makes it challenging for patients to know about the safety of the hospitals in their communities.

To address that problem, CONSUMER REPORTS has for the first time rated hospitals for safety, using the most current data available to us at the time of our analysis. It includes information from government and independent sources on 1,159 hospitals in 44 states. For this article, we also interviewed patients, physicians, hospital administrators, and safety experts; reviewed medical literature; and looked at hospital inspections and investigations.

Still, our Ratings include only 18 percent of U.S. hospitals because data on patient harm still isn't reported fully or consistently nationwide. "Hospitals that volunteer safety information, regardless of their score, deserve credit, since the first step in safety is accountability," says John Santa, M.D., director of the Consumer Reports Health Ratings Center. "But the fact that consumers can't get a full picture of most hospitals in the U.S. underscores the need for more public reporting."



Despite that limitation, our safety Ratings provide a unique way to compare hospitals in your community. And they yield important insights into the state of hospital safety nationwide—and what you need to do to protect yourself, or someone you care for, when entering a hospital.

## What we found

We focus on six categories in our safety Ratings: infections, readmissions, communication, CT scanning, complications, and mortality. Some experts question those measures. Readmission rates, for example, might be higher among hospitals that care for patients with little home or community support, says David M. Shahian, M.D., professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School and associate medical director at the Center for Quality and Safety at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. But our Ratings are “based on the best data we have about what happens to patients in hospitals,” Santa says.

Here are some of the most important findings from our analysis:

- Bad things happen in all hospitals, but they happen a lot in some. The lowest-scoring hospital, Sacred Heart Hospital in Chicago, earned just a 16 on our 100-point safety scale and reported a rate of bloodstream infections that was more than twice the national benchmark. The hospital declined to comment.
- Even high-scoring hospitals can do better. Billings Clinic in Montana was at the top of our list—but it got a safety score of just 72. “The work is hard,” says Mark Rumans, M.D., the hospital’s physician-in-chief. “We are far from perfect.”
- Some well-known hospitals have less-than-outstanding safety scores. That includes Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, with a safety score of 45; Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles, 43; Cleveland Clinic, 39; New York-Presbyterian, New York, 32; and Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York, 30.
- Our Ratings are an important measure, but they’re not the only source you should consult. They don’t, for example, assess how successful hospitals are at treating medical conditions. So before a planned hospital stay, consult multiple sources, such as Hospital Compare ([hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://hospitalcompare.hhs.gov)), run by the federal government, and the Leapfrog Group ([leapfroggroup.org](http://leapfroggroup.org)), an independent organization that tracks hospital safety and quality. Some of the data we use come from those sources.

## Things that should never happen in a hospital

There’s never an excuse for operating on the wrong patient or body part. But our medical experts say that several less dramatic events should also never or at least very rarely occur in hospitals. Those include the complications listed below, which are part of our Ratings.

**1 Bedsores.** These painful wounds, usually on the ankles, back, buttocks, hips, or other bony areas, can develop if a patient is left in one position too long. Frequent repositioning and special pads, cushions, and mattresses can prevent them. If you see early signs, including patches of skin that have reddened, let the nursing staff know.

**2 Collapsed lungs.** If doctors are not careful, they can puncture the lungs when inserting a catheter or needle into the chest. Your doctor should use an ultrasound as guidance, especially if you’re at high risk because of chronic lung disease.

**3 Central venous catheter-related bloodstream infections.** A doctor or nurse should make sure that these tubes, used to deliver medicine and nutrients, are kept clean and are removed as soon as they’re no longer necessary.

**4 Postoperative hip fractures.** To prevent a fall that can break your hip, ask for help when you get out of bed. And don’t take more pain medication than you need or walk if you are groggy.

**5 Blood clots after surgery.** Some surgeries, such as those to replace a hip or knee, can cause blood clots to form in the legs. Those clots can break loose and travel to the lungs, a deadly complication called a pulmonary embolism. Moving about and walking soon after surgery can help prevent the clots, as can blood thinners and special stockings.

**6 Postoperative sepsis.** This occurs when a serious infection overwhelms the body, leading to failure of the kidneys, liver, lungs, and other organs. Make sure that everyone who touches you washes their hands and that the hospital follows infection-prevention guidelines. Early signs include either high or low body temperature plus rapid breathing and pulse. Treatment includes measures to rein in the infection and control blood pressure.

**7 Opening of a wound after surgery.** A wound that opens in the days following an operation is an infection waiting to happen. Ask how to care for your surgical wound, how long it should take to heal, and what to do if it doesn’t.

**8 Accidental punctures or cuts.** Surgeons can accidentally puncture or cut an organ or blood vessel, which can extend your hospital stay. Finding an experienced, skilled surgeon might reduce the risk.

## Deadly infections

Despite worsening back pain, Patrick Roth of Dartmouth, Mass., loved to ride his bicycle. But that was before back surgery in 2007 at age 65. The procedure was followed by several complications, including an infection with a potentially deadly bacterium. Roth

## ‘Medical harm is probably one of the three leading causes of death.’

says he didn’t understand he had the infection until he transferred to a new hospital. Now he rides a mobility scooter instead of a bike and is learning to live with the side effects of daily antibiotics, he says.

About one in 20 hospitalized patients will

develop an infection. They can be devastating, deadly even, and many can be prevented. Dirty instruments, improperly sterilized catheters or needles, and the contaminated hands of doctors, nurses, or other health-care workers are common causes.

We rate hospitals on infections that develop after surgery, those caused by central-line catheters in intensive-care units, or both. The catheters are IVs that deliver drugs and nutrients but can also introduce serious infections into the bloodstream. Some states require that hospitals report data for one or both types of infections. And some hospitals volunteer central-line data to Leapfrog.

An estimated 290,000 surgical-site infections occur each year in U.S. hospitals, and Roth’s is an example of the agony they can cause. A few days after his surgery Roth was in so much pain he had to return to the hospital. He was there for 12 days,

most of which he can't remember because of the pain medication he was given. (Roth was initially treated at Carney Hospital in Boston. We don't have data for the period he was hospitalized. But the hospital received a 61 in our current safety score and top marks for avoiding infections.)

Roth's wife, Barbara, says he was hallucinating and "would scream for 2 to 3 hours at a time." A CT scan taken several months later showed that a screw from his surgery had broken, but Roth says his doctors don't want him to risk another operation. He can no longer walk unassisted. "The pain becomes too intense," he says. And to this day the Roths have not received "even an acknowledgment or an apology for what he went through," Barbara Roth says. The hospital said it could not comment on a specific patient.

Only 544 of the hospitals in our Ratings have data for surgical-site infections, from 14 states that require their public reporting. Of those hospitals, 82 reported zero such infections.

Infections linked to central-line catheters may be even more worrisome. They kill up to 16,250 patients a year, research suggests. They're also almost entirely preventable. Yet 202 hospitals reported infections at rates higher than the benchmark used by the CDC, and only 148 reported zero infections.

"Central-line infections are the canary in the coal mine for patient safety," says Pronovost at Johns Hopkins Medicine. In one study, 60 percent of hospitals that used an infection-prevention checklist he developed eliminated all central-line infections in their intensive-care units for at least a year. And follow-up research shows that those hospitals saw a 10 percent drop in their overall death rates.

"Any hospital should be able to get to zero bloodstream infections, or close to it," Pronovost says. And a hospital that does well in preventing those infections "has something good going on." On the other hand, he says, be concerned about hospitals that do poorly in that measure.

Johns Hopkins Hospital had less than half the rate of infections of the national

benchmark. But we couldn't rate it for safety because Maryland hospitals don't participate in the standard Medicare payment system that's also used to collect data for some of the measures in our Ratings.

**What you can do.** Ask whether the hospital uses a checklist of best practices for inserting and maintaining central lines and how you or someone caring for you can help monitor those lines. In addition:

- Make sure that all staff and visitors wash their hands before touching you.
- Ask every day whether any catheters or other tubes can be removed.
- Before surgery ask whether you're prone to infection because of a chronic disease, such as diabetes. Smoking increases infection risk, so take steps to kick the habit.
- Ask whether shaving your surgical site is necessary. Nicks can grant bacteria entry.
- Make sure you understand instructions for caring for your wound. If you notice redness and pain at the surgery site or if you develop a fever, call your doctor.
- Heartburn drugs called proton pump in-

hibitors increase the risk of intestinal infections and pneumonia. If you're taking one, ask whether you should stop.

## Readmissions

Having to return to the hospital soon after going home can be a sign that something went wrong during the initial stay, such as an infection that worsens after you get home. And the more often you enter a hospital, the greater the chance something else will go wrong. Research suggests that up to three-quarters of readmissions may be preventable.

Our readmissions rating is based on data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which tracks patients hospitalized for heart attack, heart failure, and pneumonia who are readmitted to a hospital within 30 days of being discharged. No hospital earned our highest score for readmissions; 166 hospitals received our lowest score.

**What you can do.** Usually the sooner you get home the better. But you shouldn't be discharged if you feel disoriented, faint, or unsteady; have pain that's not controlled by oral drugs; can't go to the bathroom alone; have trouble urinating or moving your bowels; or can't keep food or drink down. In addition, follow these steps:

- See a discharge planner well in advance of your departure to arrange for services or supplies you'll need at home.



**CASCADING CRISIS** Mary Flowers, M.D., says her father died after his intestines were punctured during a routine procedure and he developed bedsores and a fatal infection.

## Have you been harmed?

If you think you've been injured in the hospital, see a health-care provider, contact your state health department, get a complete copy of your medical records, and consider sharing your story. Consumers Union's Safe Patient Project, which

advocates for legislation to protect patients from medical harm, collects such stories at [SafePatientProject.org/share\\_your\\_story](http://SafePatientProject.org/share_your_story). ProPublica, an independent newsroom, does too and recently started a ProPublica Patient Harm Community on Facebook.



- Get a written summary of what to do when you get home, including drugs you need, how to care for wounds, how active you can be, and when you can shower, drive, return to work, and eat normally.
- Get results of tests done while in the hospital and ask what tests you'll need after you leave and when you'll need them.
- See your primary-care doctor within 10 days of going home.

## Unclear instructions

Clear communication in the hospital is hard to come by: Almost 500 hospitals earned our lowest score for communication about new medications and discharge plans, and none earned our top score. That's a problem because drug errors in hospitals are common and sometimes serious, and poor discharge planning can lead to readmissions. The scores are based on questions answered by millions of discharged patients in a federally mandated survey.

**What you can do.** Take notes during your discharge planning if you can, and take a friend or relative to serve as an extra set of ears. To prevent confusion about your medication, follow these steps:

- Keep a list of all your prescription and over-the-counter medications, including dietary supplements and vitamins.
- If you don't understand why you are taking certain drugs, or how to take them, ask again until you do.
- Learn about the potential side effects and what should you do if you have one.

## Radiation overload

CT scans can provide essential diagnostic information. But they pose risks, too. Radiation from CT scans—which are equivalent

# No hospital got top scores for readmissions or communication.

to between 100 and 500 chest X-rays—might contribute to an estimated 29,000 future cancers a year, a 2009 study suggests.

Our Ratings report the percentage of chest and abdominal CT scans that are ordered twice for the same patient, once with

contrast and once without. Probably less than 1 percent of patients undergoing chest CT scans should get double scans, says James Brink, M.D., chairman of the department of diagnostic radiology at Yale University School of Medicine. Double scans of the abdomen are needed more frequently, often to define abnormalities in the liver, kidney, and pancreas, he says.

But only 28 percent of the hospitals in our Ratings had double-scan rates of 5 percent or less in both categories, which is the cutoff we use for a top rating. Brink says that referring doctors often assume that double scans provide more useful information than single scans. Radiologists should question such orders, he says.

**What you can do.** If you're scheduled to get two CT scans of your chest or abdomen, ask whether both are necessary. Also ask whether any CT is really required and whether an imaging test that does not emit radiation, such as an MRI or ultrasound, could be used instead.

## What needs to happen

The federal government recently provided funding of \$218 million to 26 hospital

## Why some hospitals succeed—and others don't

Top-scoring hospitals have found different ways to improve safety. Billings Hospital in Montana had our top safety score, in part because it reported very low rates of double CT scans and bloodstream infections. Mark Rumans, M.D., the hospital's physician-in-chief, says that doctors who practice there are part of an integrated system, which fosters teamwork.

Lancaster General, in Pennsylvania, which had the best readmission score among the hospitals in our Ratings, says heart-failure readmission rates have stayed low for seven years. The hospital says its overall readmission rates have also been low thanks to a strong network of primary-care doctors and a team approach to care.

Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, one of our highest-scoring teaching hospitals, says it saw a 23 percent reduction in sepsis, a particularly serious infection, and a 34 percent decline in preventable deaths since 2006. "We set goals for medical directors and made them part of their performance appraisals," says John McWhorter, the hospital's president.

### Why bad things happen

When hospitals get low scores, other problems may be at play, as we found when we reviewed inspection and investigation

reports conducted by state and federal health departments at three low-scoring hospitals and obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests.

Sacred Heart Hospital in Chicago, our lowest-rated hospital, was cited for a Feb. 25 incident in which an emergency-room doctor declined to provide care to an unresponsive woman in her car in the hospital's parking lot. She was transported to another hospital, where she was pronounced dead, according to the documents. The inspection reports mentioned rusty surgical tools, a hole in an operating-room wall, nurses who failed to follow precautions to prevent falls and bedsores, and a lab refrigerator so dirty that it "created the potential for contamination of the specimens and infection to the staff."

The documents we have for Our Lady of the Resurrection, another low-scoring Chicago hospital, cited failures such as misuse of patient restraints, failure to ensure that nurses could hear patient alarms, and failure to provide timely discharge counseling.

Inspectors at Kimball Medical Center in Lakewood, N.J., which also received low scores, noted substandard cleaning, misuse of restraints, and a failure to properly report adverse events.

When we looked at two top hospitals, we spotted fewer citations. We found only one

problem, a medication error, at Alton Memorial Hospital, Illinois' highest-scoring hospital, since 2009. Similarly, Lancaster General was cited just twice since 2009, according to the records, for not training emergency-room staff on how to comply with a federal law and for transferring patients without full consent.

### Hospitals respond

Of the three low-scoring hospitals mentioned above, only Our Lady of the Resurrection responded to a request for comment. It said the hospital tries to correct problems brought to its attention. In addition, the hospital says it "had only one central-line-associated bloodstream infection over the entire past year" and "zero hospital-acquired conditions for more than seven months." Harlem Hospital Center, in New York, another low-scoring hospital, acknowledged that it needed to improve in some areas. It said it is "committed to offering high-quality health care to all New Yorkers regardless of their ability to pay." Kings County Hospital Center, in Brooklyn, N.Y., said its patients speak more than 100 languages. Both said they had recently seen drops in rates of infections and double CT scans. If those improvements are maintained and publicly reported, we will include them in future updated Ratings.

groups nationwide to improve hospital safety and provided up to \$500 million for programs to help Medicare patients transition from hospital to home. And hospitals now have financial incentives to use electronic health records.

But more needs to be done. “Those carrots are fine, but we need some sticks, too,” says Lisa McGiffert, director of the Safe Patient Project at Consumers Union, the advocacy arm of Consumer Reports. For example, Medicare withholds payments for some procedures that lead to patient harm, but it should also require hospitals to pay for the follow-up tests and treatments that those errors lead to, she says.

Consumers Union believes that a national system should track and publicly report medical errors. The Institute of Medicine recommended that more than a decade ago. “The public assumes that someone keeps track of all that goes wrong, but that is just not the case,” McGiffert says.

Also, Consumers Union says hospital administrators and regulators need to listen more to the people most affected by medical harm: patients. Regulators must investigate those complaints and use them to identify hospitals with patterns of problems. Changes in the courtroom could help, too, by relaxing the gag orders and secret settlements that often prevent harmed patients from telling their stories. “The best cure for medical harm is full disclosure,” McGiffert says.

## Hospital safety: Highest and lowest scores

The 10 hospitals at the top of our Ratings are in 10 states. They are in big cities and small towns. The Mayo Clinic in Phoenix is a teaching hospital; others are small community hospitals. The message: Success can happen anywhere. The lowest-scoring hospitals tend to cluster in metropolitan areas, suggesting that urban hospitals face special challenges. Their safety scores in our 100-point scale are shown below.

### TOP 10 HOSPITALS

1. Billings Clinic Billings, Mont.	72
2. Saint Clare's Hospital Weston, Wis.	71
3. Alton Memorial Hospital Alton, Ill.	71
4. Central Vermont Medical Center Berlin, Vt.	71
5. Kadlec Medical Center Richland, Wash.	71
6. St. John's Hospital Springfield, Mo.	70
7. Mayo Clinic Hospital Phoenix	70
8. Northern Michigan Regional Hospital Petoskey, Mich.	69
9. Bon Secours St. Francis Health System Greenville, S.C.	69
10. Memorial Hospital of Union County Marysville, Ohio	68

### BOTTOM 10 HOSPITALS

1. Sacred Heart Hospital Chicago	16
2. Harlem Hospital Center New York	20
3. Lake Regional Health System Osage Beach, Mo.	22
4. Kings County Hospital Center Brooklyn, N.Y.	22
5. Our Lady of the Resurrection Medical Center Chicago	23
6. Kimball Medical Center Lakewood, N.J.	24
7. St. Rose Dominican Hospitals-San Martin Campus Las Vegas	24
8. Clinch Valley Medical Center Richlands, Va.	25
9. Westchester Medical Center Valhalla, N.Y.	25
10. Hanford Community Medical Center Hanford, Calif.	25

Mary Flowers, M.D., of Montgomery, Ala., agrees. She says her father entered the hospital for a procedure related to dialysis “and never walked out, because of one error after another.” Problems included a punctured colon, bedsores, and a serious infection. The biggest problem, she

says, wasn't the mistakes but the time it took for the hospital to acknowledge them. “I'm a doctor—I know we are not perfect,” she says. “But we need to listen to our patients and, when mistakes happen, own up so we can fix them, or at least keep them from happening again.”

## About the Ratings

We have safety Ratings for 1,159 of the 6,268 hospitals in the U.S. They're presented to magazine readers in four regional editions. A national list of all hospitals with a safety score is available on our iPad edition and to website subscribers at [ConsumerReports.org/hospitalratings](http://ConsumerReports.org/hospitalratings). That page also gives information on more than 3,000 other hospitals that don't have enough data for a safety score but for which we have some information. It also includes a full description of our methodology. Reporting periods vary depending on the hospital and the rating category. All data except infection information come from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Infection data come from states and the Leapfrog Group.

**Safety score** combines six categories of hospital safety into a score between 1 and 100. Displayed scores are rounded, but hospitals are listed in order of their precise score. Look for large differences between hospitals; small differences are not meaningful. We also show a hospital's rating in four of those categories: infections, readmissions, communication, and scanning. Each gets up to 20 points of the safety score. We footnote hospitals that are better or worse than the average in complications and mortality, each worth up to 10 points. Those

without footnotes are average or similar.

**Infections** reflects a hospital's success in avoiding infections from central-line catheters used in intensive-care units and/or infections after cesarean section, hernia repair, hip or knee replacement, hysterectomy, spinal fusion, or coronary bypass, colon, or gallbladder surgery.

**Readmissions** represents the chance that a patient who has had a heart attack, heart failure, or pneumonia will have to be readmitted to a hospital within 30 days of his or her initial discharge.

**Communication** indicates how clearly staff explain new medications and discharge planning to patients.

**Scanning** reflects the percentage of chest and/or abdominal CT scans that are ordered twice for the same patient, once with contrast and once without.

**Complications** looks at a set of eight adverse events, including bedsores, collapsed lungs, central-line-associated bloodstream infections, and accidental punctures or cuts during surgery, as well as four post-surgical complications: bloodstream infections, hip fractures, blood clots in the lungs or legs, and the reopening of wounds.

**Mortality** assesses a set of six causes of death in the hospital: heart attack, heart failure, stroke, stomach bleeding, hip fracture, and pneumonia.

### Why these hospitals aren't listed

- Veterans Affairs and children's hospitals because the government doesn't require them to participate in a survey of patients that we use to determine ratings for communication.
- Some specialty hospitals because they don't treat patients with conditions used in our readmissions rating. That includes such hospitals as the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York and the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.
- Hospitals that don't have enough data, have data we consider too old, have data discrepancies, or don't report their data in a way we can use. That includes many hospitals, including some familiar ones, such as Duke University Hospital in Durham, N.C.; Emory University Hospital in Atlanta; Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit; Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore; the University of Chicago Medical Center; and the University of Colorado Hospital in Aurora.

### HOW TO CHOOSE A HOSPITAL

Use your smart phone to download the RedLaser or ShopSavvy app and scan the code for video.





# Ratings Hospital safety

In rank order, within states.

Better ← → Worse  


Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

## CONNECTICUT

Middlesex Hospital Middletown <sup>③</sup>	64	●	○	●	●
The William W. Backus Hospital Norwich	62	●	●	●	●
St. Vincent's Medical Center Bridgeport	54	●	●	●	●
Waterbury Hospital Waterbury	54	●	●	●	●
Manchester Memorial Hospital Manchester	54	○	○	●	●
Saint Mary's Hospital Waterbury	53	○	●	●	●
Lawrence & Memorial Hospital New London <sup>① ④</sup>	52	○	○	●	●
Hartford Hospital Hartford <sup>④</sup>	52	●	●	●	●
Norwalk Hospital Norwalk	51	●	●	●	●
Stamford Hospital Stamford	51	●	●	●	●
Danbury Hospital Danbury	48	○	●	●	●
Bristol Hospital Bristol <sup>④</sup>	48	○	●	●	●
The Charlotte Hungerford Hospital Torrington	47	●	○	●	●
Hospital of Saint Raphael New Haven	44	○	●	●	●
Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center Hartford <sup>④</sup>	44	○	●	●	●
Bridgeport Hospital Bridgeport	42	○	●	●	○
Yale-New Haven Hospital New Haven	41	○	●	●	●
MidState Medical Center Meriden	41	○	●	●	○
The Hospital of Central Connecticut New Britain <sup>② ④</sup>	36	●	●	●	●
University of Connecticut Health Center, John Dempsey Hospital Farmington <sup>②</sup>	28	○	●	●	●

## DELAWARE

Bayhealth Medical Center Dover <sup>① ③</sup>	55	●	●	●	●
Nanticoke Memorial Hospital Seaford <sup>③</sup>	54	○	○	●	○
Christiana Care Health System Newark	54	○	●	●	●
St. Francis Hospital Wilmington	43	○	●	●	●

## MAINE

Central Maine Medical Center Lewiston	65	●	○	●	●
MaineGeneral Medical Center-Waterville Campus Waterville	59	○	○	○	●
Eastern Maine Medical Center Bangor	57	●	○	●	●
Maine Medical Center Portland <sup>②</sup>	46	●	○	●	●

## MASSACHUSETTS

Health Alliance Hospitals Leominster	66	●	○	●	●
Mercy Medical Center Springfield <sup>③</sup>	64	●	●	●	●
Milford Regional Medical Center Milford	64	●	●	○	●
Carney Hospital Boston	61	●	●	●	●
Beverly Hospital Beverly	61	●	○	●	●
Milton Hospital Milton	61	●	●	○	●
Cooley Dickinson Hospital Northampton	60	●	●	●	●
New England Baptist Hospital Boston	60	●	●	○	●
Emerson Hospital Concord	60	●	●	●	●
Baystate Medical Center Springfield <sup>①</sup>	60	○	○	●	●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

## MASSACHUSETTS continued

Saint Vincent Hospital Worcester	58	●	●	●	●
South Shore Hospital South Weymouth	58	●	●	○	●
Saints Medical Center Lowell	58	●	●	●	●
Southcoast Hospitals Group Fall River <sup>①</sup>	58	●	●	●	●
Berkshire Medical Center Pittsfield <sup>③</sup>	57	●	○	○	●
Harrington Memorial Hospital Southbridge	57	●	●	●	●
Caritas St. Elizabeth's Medical Center Brighton <sup>③</sup>	56	●	●	○	●
Holyoke Medical Center Holyoke	56	○	○	●	●
Heywood Hospital Gardner	56	●	●	●	●
Falmouth Hospital Falmouth <sup>③</sup>	56	●	○	●	●
Cape Cod Hospital Hyannis	54	●	○	●	●
Caritas Norwood Hospital Norwood	54	●	●	●	●
UMass Memorial Medical Center Worcester	53	●	●	●	●
Faulkner Hospital Boston	53	○	●	○	●
North Adams Regional Hospital North Adams	53	○	○	●	●
North Shore Medical Center Salem	53	○	○	●	●
Brigham and Women's Hospital Boston	53	○	●	○	●
Winchester Hospital Winchester	52	○	●	●	●
Newton-Wellesley Hospital Newton Lower Falls	52	●	○	●	●
Caritas Holy Family Hospital and Medical Center Methuen	51	●	●	●	○
Lowell General Hospital Lowell	51	●	●	●	●
Saint Anne's Hospital Fall River	51	○	●	●	●
Merrimack Valley Hospital Haverhill	51	○	●	●	●
Mount Auburn Hospital Cambridge	50	●	●	●	●
Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center Brockton	50	○	●	●	●
Anna Jaques Hospital Newburyport	49	●	●	●	●
Hallmark Health System Melrose	48	○	●	●	●
Lawrence General Hospital Lawrence <sup>④</sup>	48	●	●	●	●
Quincy Medical Center Quincy	47	○	●	●	●
Lahey Clinic Hospital Burlington	46	○	●	●	○
Morton Hospital and Medical Center Taunton	46	●	●	●	●
Jordan Hospital Plymouth	45	●	●	●	●
Sturdy Memorial Hospital Attleboro <sup>④</sup>	45	○	●	●	●
Massachusetts General Hospital Boston <sup>② ④</sup>	45	○	●	●	●
UMass Memorial-Marlborough Hospital Marlborough	44	●	●	●	●
MetroWest Medical Center Framingham	44	○	●	●	●
Baystate Franklin Medical Center Greenfield	44	●	●	●	●
Tufts Medical Center Boston	43	○	●	●	○
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Boston <sup>② ③</sup>	42	○	●	●	●
Boston Medical Center Boston <sup>②</sup>	42	○	●	●	●
Cambridge Health Alliance Cambridge	38	●	●	●	●

<sup>①</sup> Complications are better than average. <sup>②</sup> Complications are worse than average. <sup>③</sup> Mortality is better than average. <sup>④</sup> Mortality is worse than average.

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

<b>Frisbie Memorial Hospital</b> Rochester	67	●	●	○	●
<b>Wentworth-Douglass Hospital</b> Dover	67	●	○	○	●
<b>St. Joseph Hospital</b> Nashua	66	●	○	●	●
<b>Catholic Medical Center</b> Manchester	64	●	○	●	●
<b>Exeter Hospital</b> Exeter	62	●	○	○	●
<b>Cheshire Medical Center</b> Keene	62	●	●	●	●
<b>Portsmouth Regional Hospital</b> Portsmouth	55	○	●	○	●
<b>Concord Hospital</b> Concord	55	○	○	○	●
<b>Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center</b> Lebanon <sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup>	54	●	○	○	●
<b>Elliot Hospital</b> Manchester	53	●	○	●	●
<b>Lakes Region General Hospital</b> Laconia <sup>4</sup>	49	○	●	●	●
<b>Parkland Medical Center</b> Derry	47	●	●	○	●

## NEW JERSEY

<b>Deborah Heart and Lung Center</b> Browns Mills	62	○	○	○	●
<b>Newton Medical Center</b> Newton	59	●	●	●	●
<b>Clara Maass Medical Center</b> Belleville <sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup>	59	●	●	●	●
<b>Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County</b> Willingboro	57	●	●	●	●
<b>Hunterdon Medical Center</b> Flemington	54	○	○	●	●
<b>Virtua Memorial</b> Mount Holly	54	○	●	●	●
<b>Morristown Medical Center</b> Morristown <sup>4</sup>	54	●	●	●	●
<b>Warren Hospital</b> Phillipsburg	54	●	●	●	●
<b>Monmouth Medical Center</b> Long Branch <sup>3</sup>	53	●	●	●	●
<b>St. Francis Medical Center</b> Trenton	53	●	●	●	●
<b>Kennedy Memorial Hospitals-University Medical Center</b> Cherry Hill <sup>3</sup>	52	●	●	●	●
<b>South Jersey Healthcare-Regional Medical Center</b> Vineland	51	○	●	●	●
<b>Virtua Berlin</b> Berlin <sup>4</sup>	50	●	●	●	●
<b>CentraState Healthcare System</b> Freehold	50	●	●	●	●
<b>Ocean Medical Center</b> Brick Township <sup>3</sup>	49	●	●	●	●
<b>Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital</b> New Brunswick <sup>2</sup>	49	●	●	●	●
<b>Bayshore Community Hospital</b> Holmdel	48	●	●	●	●
<b>Jersey Shore University Medical Center</b> Neptune <sup>2</sup>	47	○	●	●	●
<b>Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton</b> Hamilton	46	○	●	●	●
<b>Hackensack University Medical Center</b> Hackensack <sup>3</sup>	46	○	●	●	●
<b>Saint Barnabas Medical Center</b> Livingston <sup>2</sup>	45	●	●	●	○
<b>Mountainside Hospital</b> Montclair	45	●	●	●	●
<b>Saint Michael's Medical Center</b> Newark <sup>1</sup>	45	○	●	●	●
<b>Christ Hospital</b> Jersey City <sup>4</sup>	45	●	●	●	●
<b>Underwood-Memorial Hospital</b> Woodbury	44	○	●	●	●
<b>LibertyHealth-Jersey City Medical Center</b> Jersey City	44	●	●	●	●
<b>Saint Clare's Health System</b> Denville	43	●	●	●	●
<b>Overlook Medical Center</b> Summit <sup>4</sup>	43	○	●	●	●
<b>AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center</b> Atlantic City	43	○	●	●	●
<b>Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center</b> Camden	43	●	●	●	●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

## NEW JERSEY continued

<b>Englewood Hospital and Medical Center</b> Englewood	42	○	●	●	●
<b>Raritan Bay Medical Center</b> Perth Amboy	42	○	●	●	●
<b>Virtua West Jersey Hospital-Voorhees</b> Voorhees <sup>4</sup>	41	○	●	●	●
<b>Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Rahway</b> Rahway	41	○	●	●	●
<b>East Orange General Hospital</b> East Orange	41	●	●	●	○
<b>Trinitas Regional Medical Center</b> Elizabeth	41	●	●	●	●
<b>Saint Peter's University Hospital</b> New Brunswick <sup>2</sup>	40	○	●	●	●
<b>Valley Hospital</b> Ridgewood <sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup>	40	●	●	●	●
<b>University Medical Center at Princeton</b> Princeton	39	○	●	●	●
<b>Cooper Health System</b> Camden <sup>2</sup>	38	○	●	●	●
<b>Riverview Medical Center</b> Red Bank	38	●	●	●	●
<b>Capital Health Regional Medical Center</b> Trenton	38	●	●	●	●
<b>Shore Memorial Hospital</b> Somers Point	36	●	●	●	○
<b>Holy Name Medical Center</b> Teaneck	36	●	●	●	●
<b>St. Mary's Hospital</b> Passaic <sup>4</sup>	36	○	●	●	●
<b>Cape Regional Medical Center</b> Cape May Court House	35	●	●	●	○
<b>Newark Beth Israel Medical Center</b> Newark	34	○	●	●	○
<b>St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center</b> Paterson <sup>4</sup>	34	○	●	●	●
<b>Capital Health-Mercer Campus</b> Trenton <sup>2</sup>	34	●	●	●	●
<b>University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-University Hospital</b> Newark <sup>2</sup>	33	●	●	●	○
<b>Somerset Medical Center</b> Somerville <sup>4</sup>	31	○	●	●	○
<b>JFK Medical Center</b> Edison <sup>2</sup>	29	○	●	●	○
<b>Kimball Medical Center</b> Lakewood	24	●	●	●	●

## NEW YORK

<b>Cayuga Medical Center at Ithaca</b> Ithaca	61	○	○	●	●
<b>Benedictine Hospital</b> Kingston <sup>1</sup> <sup>4</sup>	60	●	●	●	●
<b>Peconic Bay Medical Center</b> Riverhead	59	●	●	●	●
<b>Saratoga Hospital</b> Saratoga Springs	57	○	●	○	●
<b>St. Francis Hospital</b> Roslyn <sup>1</sup> <sup>4</sup>	57	○	●	○	●
<b>NYU Langone Medical Center</b> New York <sup>3</sup>	56	○	○	●	●
<b>St. Peter's Hospital</b> Albany <sup>3</sup>	56	○	●	●	●
<b>Mount St. Mary's Hospital and Health Center</b> Lewiston	56	●	○	●	●
<b>Putnam Hospital Center</b> Carmel	55	●	●	●	●
<b>Albany Memorial Hospital</b> Albany	53	○	●	●	●
<b>Community Memorial Hospital</b> Hamilton	53	●	●	●	○
<b>Peninsula Hospital Center</b> Far Rockaway <sup>4</sup>	52	●	●	●	●
<b>Good Samaritan Hospital</b> Suffern <sup>1</sup>	52	●	●	●	●
<b>St. Luke's Cornwall Hospital</b> Newburgh <sup>1</sup>	52	○	●	●	●
<b>Samaritan Hospital</b> Troy	52	●	●	●	●
<b>Sisters of Charity Hospital of Buffalo</b> Buffalo	52	●	●	●	●

<sup>1</sup> Complications are better than average. <sup>2</sup> Complications are worse than average. <sup>3</sup> Mortality is better than average. <sup>4</sup> Mortality is worse than average.



Better ← → Worse

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

# NEW YORK continued

St. Joseph Hospital Bethpage	51	○	●	●	●
Nyack Hospital Nyack	51	●	●	●	●
Bassett Medical Center Cooperstown	51	○	●	●	●
Canton-Potsdam Hospital Potsdam	51	●	●	●	●
Arnot Ogden Medical Center Elmira	51	○	●	●	●
Rome Memorial Hospital Rome <sup>[4]</sup>	51	●	●	●	○
Richmond University Medical Center Staten Island	50	●	●	●	●
Northern Dutchess Hospital Rhinebeck	50	●	●	●	○
Thompson Health Canandaigua <sup>[4]</sup>	50	●	●	○	○
Our Lady of Lourdes Memorial Hospital Binghamton <sup>[1]</sup>	50	●	●	●	●
Huntington Hospital Huntington	50	○	●	●	●
St. Charles Hospital Port Jefferson	50	●	●	●	●
Saint Francis Hospital and Health Centers Poughkeepsie	50	●	●	●	●
United Health Services Hospitals-Binghamton Binghamton <sup>[4]</sup>	50	●	●	●	●
Winthrop-University Hospital Mineola	50	○	●	●	●
St. Mary's Healthcare Amsterdam <sup>[3]</sup>	49	●	●	○	○
Glens Falls Hospital Glens Falls	49	○	●	●	●
Albany Medical Center Albany	49	○	●	●	●
Mercy Hospital Buffalo	49	●	○	●	●
Southside Hospital Bay Shore <sup>[4]</sup>	49	●	●	●	●
Geneva General Hospital Geneva <sup>[4]</sup>	49	●	●	○	○
Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center West Islip <sup>[1] [4]</sup>	48	○	●	●	●
Hudson Valley Hospital Center Cortlandt Manor	47	●	●	●	●
John T. Mather Memorial Hospital Port Jefferson	46	●	●	●	●
Stony Brook University Medical Center Stony Brook	46	●	●	●	●
St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center Syracuse <sup>[2]</sup>	46	○	●	●	●
Crouse Hospital Syracuse <sup>[4]</sup>	46	○	●	●	●
Woman's Christian Association Hospital Jamestown <sup>[4]</sup>	45	○	○	●	●
St. Mary's Hospital Troy	45	●	●	●	●
Northern Westchester Hospital Mount Kisco	45	○	●	●	●
Samaritan Medical Center Watertown	45	○	○	●	○
Glen Cove Hospital Glen Cove <sup>[4]</sup>	45	●	●	●	○
Erie County Medical Center Buffalo	45	●	●	●	○
Mercy Medical Center Rockville Centre	44	●	●	●	●
Staten Island University Hospital Staten Island	44	●	●	●	●
Kingston Hospital Kingston <sup>[4]</sup>	44	●	●	●	●
Vassar Brothers Medical Center Poughkeepsie <sup>[4]</sup>	44	●	●	●	●
White Plains Hospital Center White Plains <sup>[4]</sup>	43	○	●	●	●
Long Island Jewish Medical Center New Hyde Park <sup>[4]</sup>	43	○	●	●	●
Phelps Memorial Hospital Center Sleepy Hollow	43	●	○	●	●
Maimonides Medical Center Brooklyn	43	○	●	●	●
Franklin Hospital Valley Stream	43	○	●	●	●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

# NEW YORK continued

Jamaica Hospital Medical Center Jamaica	42	●	●	●	●
St. Barnabas Hospital Bronx	42	○	●	●	●
North Shore University Hospital at Plainview Plainview <sup>[4]</sup>	42	○	●	●	●
Kenmore Mercy Hospital Kenmore	42	○	●	●	●
Lutheran Medical Center Brooklyn <sup>[4]</sup>	42	●	●	●	●
SUNY Downstate Medical Center University Hospital of Brooklyn Brooklyn	42	●	●	●	●
Sound Shore Medical Center of Westchester New Rochelle	42	●	●	●	●
New York Hospital Queens Flushing <sup>[4]</sup>	41	●	●	●	●
South Nassau Communities Hospital Oceanside	41	●	●	●	●
Brooks Memorial Hospital Dunkirk	41	●	●	●	●
New York Westchester Square Medical Center Bronx <sup>[4]</sup>	40	●	●	●	●
Bellevue Hospital Center New York	40	●	●	●	●
Brooklyn Hospital Center Brooklyn	40	●	●	●	●
Southampton Hospital Southampton	40	●	●	●	●
Unity Hospital Rochester	40	●	●	●	●
Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital Medical Center Plattsburgh <sup>[4]</sup>	39	○	●	●	●
Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare Utica <sup>[4]</sup>	39	○	●	●	●
Upstate Medical University Syracuse <sup>[2] [4]</sup>	39	○	●	●	●
St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center New York	39	○	●	●	●
Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center Bronx	39	●	●	●	●
Clifton Springs Hospital and Clinic Clifton Springs <sup>[4]</sup>	39	●	●	○	○
Queens Hospital Center Jamaica	38	●	●	●	●
North Shore University Hospital Manhasset <sup>[4]</sup>	37	○	●	●	●
New York Downtown Hospital New York <sup>[4]</sup>	37	●	●	●	●
St. James Mercy Health System Hornell	36	●	●	●	●
Columbia Memorial Hospital Hudson	36	●	●	●	○
Lenox Hill Hospital New York <sup>[2]</sup>	36	○	●	●	●
Montefiore Medical Center Bronx <sup>[4]</sup>	36	○	●	●	●
St. Elizabeth Medical Center Utica <sup>[4]</sup>	36	○	●	●	○
New York Methodist Hospital Brooklyn <sup>[4]</sup>	36	○	●	●	●
St. John's Riverside Hospital Yonkers	36	●	●	●	●
Orange Regional Medical Center Middletown	36	○	●	●	●
Flushing Hospital Medical Center Flushing <sup>[4]</sup>	36	○	●	●	●
Lawrence Hospital Center Bronxville	36	●	●	●	●
St. John's Episcopal Hospital-South Shore Far Rockaway <sup>[4]</sup>	35	○	●	●	●
Highland Hospital of Rochester Rochester <sup>[2]</sup>	34	○	○	●	●
New York Community Hospital Brooklyn <sup>[4]</sup>	34	●	●	●	●
Strong Memorial Hospital of the University of Rochester Rochester <sup>[2] [4]</sup>	34	○	●	●	●
Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center Brooklyn	34	●	●	●	●
Nicholas H. Noyes Memorial Hospital Dansville	34	●	●	○	●

Better ← → Worse

Hospital	Safety score	Categories
	0 100	Infections Readmissions Communication Scanning

#### NEW YORK continued

Beth Israel Medical Center New York <sup>4</sup>	32	○ ● ● ● ●
New York-Presbyterian Hospital New York <sup>2</sup>	32	○ ● ● ● ○
Brookhaven Memorial Hospital Medical Center Patchogue <sup>4</sup>	32	● ● ● ● ●
Nassau University Medical Center East Meadow <sup>4</sup>	32	● ● ● ● ●
Forest Hills Hospital Forest Hills <sup>4</sup>	32	● ● ● ● ●
St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center Smithtown <sup>4</sup>	31	○ ● ● ● ○
Wyckoff Heights Medical Center Brooklyn <sup>4</sup>	31	● ● ● ● ●
Brookdale Hospital Medical Center Brooklyn <sup>4</sup>	31	● ● ● ● ●
Woodhull Medical and Mental Health Center Brooklyn	30	● ● ● ● ○
Coney Island Hospital Brooklyn	30	● ● ● ● ○
Mount Sinai Hospital New York <sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup>	30	○ ● ● ● ●
Kaleida Health Buffalo <sup>4</sup>	30	○ ● ● ● ●
United Memorial Medical Center Batavia <sup>4</sup>	28	● ● ● ● ○
Olean General Hospital Olean	27	● ● ● ● ●
Jacobi Medical Center Bronx	27	● ● ● ● ○
Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center Health Care System Bronx	26	○ ● ● ● ●
St. Joseph's Medical Center Yonkers <sup>4</sup>	26	● ● ● ● ●
Westchester Medical Center Valhalla <sup>4</sup>	25	○ ● ● ● ●
Kings County Hospital Center Brooklyn	22	● ● ● ● ○
Harlem Hospital Center New York	20	● ● ● ● ●

#### PENNSYLVANIA

Lancaster General Health Lancaster <sup>3</sup>	68	● ● ● ● ○
UPMC Hamot Erie	64	● ● ● ● ●
Lehigh Valley Hospital Allentown <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>	61	● ● ● ● ●
Moses Taylor Hospital Scranton	58	● ● ● ● ○
Lehigh Valley Hospital-Muhlenberg Bethlehem <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>	58	● ● ● ● ●
Reading Hospital and Medical Center West Reading <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>	53	○ ● ● ● ●
Community Medical Center Healthcare System Scranton <sup>1</sup>	49	● ● ● ● ●
Allegheny General Hospital Pittsburgh <sup>3</sup>	46	● ● ● ● ●
Hahnemann University Hospital Philadelphia <sup>2</sup>	44	○ ● ● ● ●
Pinnacle Health System Harrisburg <sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup>	37	● ● ● ● ○

#### RHODE ISLAND

Miriam Hospital Providence	56	● ● ● ● ●
Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island Pawtucket	54	● ● ● ● ●
St. Joseph Health Services of Rhode Island North Providence <sup>4</sup>	51	● ● ● ● ●
Roger Williams Medical Center Providence	46	● ● ● ● ●
Kent County Memorial Hospital Warwick	46	○ ● ● ● ●
Rhode Island Hospital Providence <sup>2</sup>	36	● ● ● ● ●

<sup>1</sup> Complications are better than average. <sup>2</sup> Complications are worse than average. <sup>3</sup> Mortality is better than average. <sup>4</sup> Mortality is worse than average.

Hospital	Safety score	Categories
	0 100	Infections Readmissions Communication Scanning

#### VERMONT

Central Vermont Medical Center Berlin	71	● ● ● ● ●
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital Brattleboro	63	● ● ● ● ●
Northwestern Medical Center St. Albans	58	○ ● ● ● ●
Rutland Regional Medical Center Rutland	50	● ● ● ● ●
Southwestern Vermont Medical Center Bennington	49	● ● ● ● ●
Fletcher Allen Health Care Burlington <sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup>	46	○ ● ● ● ●

#### VIRGINIA

Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center Mechanicsville <sup>3</sup>	67	● ● ● ● ●
Rockingham Memorial Hospital Harrisonburg <sup>3</sup>	63	● ● ● ● ●
Winchester Medical Center Winchester	60	● ● ● ● ●
Virginia Hospital Center-Arlington Arlington <sup>3</sup>	60	○ ● ● ● ●
Riverside Walter Reed Hospital Gloucester	57	● ● ● ● ●
Inova Loudoun Hospital Leesburg	57	● ● ● ● ●
Bon Secours-DePaul Medical Center Norfolk	57	● ● ● ● ●
Reston Hospital Center Reston	55	● ● ● ● ●
Inova Alexandria Hospital Alexandria	55	● ● ● ● ●
Riverside Regional Medical Center Newport News	53	● ● ● ● ●
Lewis-Gale Medical Center Salem	53	○ ● ● ● ●
Prince William Hospital Manassas	53	○ ● ● ● ●
Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Fairfax	53	● ● ● ● ●
Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital Virginia Beach <sup>4</sup>	53	● ● ● ● ●
Augusta Health Fishersville	53	○ ● ● ● ●
Sentara CarePlex Hospital Hampton <sup>4</sup>	52	● ● ● ● ●
Sentara Norfolk General Hospital Norfolk <sup>4</sup>	52	● ● ● ● ●
Sentara Leigh Hospital Norfolk <sup>4</sup>	51	● ● ● ● ●
Inova Fairfax Hospital Falls Church <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>	51	○ ● ● ● ●
Sentara Obici Hospital Suffolk <sup>4</sup>	51	● ● ● ● ●
Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital Richmond <sup>3</sup>	51	○ ● ● ● ●
Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center Midlothian <sup>2</sup>	49	● ● ● ● ●
CJW Medical Center Richmond	48	● ● ● ● ●
Carilion Medical Center Roanoke <sup>4</sup>	48	○ ● ● ● ●
Fauquier Hospital Warrenton	47	● ● ● ● ●
Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center Portsmouth	46	● ● ● ● ●
Sentara Potomac Hospital Woodbridge	45	● ● ● ● ●
Martha Jefferson Hospital Charlottesville	45	● ● ● ● ●
Inova Mount Vernon Hospital Alexandria	45	● ● ● ● ●
Henrico Doctors' Hospital Richmond	44	○ ● ● ● ●
Centra Lynchburg General Hospital Lynchburg <sup>4</sup>	44	○ ● ● ● ●
Mary Washington Hospital Fredericksburg <sup>2</sup>	43	● ● ● ● ●
VCU Health System Richmond <sup>2</sup>	41	● ● ● ● ●
Chesapeake Regional Medical Center Chesapeake	41	● ● ● ● ●
Memorial Hospital Martinsville <sup>4</sup>	40	○ ● ● ● ●
Southside Regional Medical Center Petersburg	40	● ● ● ● ●
University of Virginia Medical Center Charlottesville <sup>4</sup>	39	● ● ● ● ●
Danville Regional Medical Center Danville	39	○ ● ● ● ●
Clinch Valley Medical Center Richlands	25	● ● ● ● ●



# Ratings Hospital safety

In rank order, within states.

Better ← → Worse  
● ● ● ● ●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0 100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning

## ALABAMA

Walker Baptist Medical Center Jasper	57	●	○	○	○
Shelby Baptist Medical Center Alabaster	53	●	○	○	○
Brookwood Medical Center Birmingham ④	51	○	○	○	○
Providence Hospital Mobile ④	51	●	○	○	○
Gadsden Regional Medical Center Gadsden	49	○	○	○	○
Princeton Baptist Medical Center Birmingham ②	46	○	○	○	○
Huntsville Hospital Huntsville	42	○	○	○	○
Crestwood Medical Center Huntsville ④	37	○	○	○	○

## FLORIDA

Florida Hospital Memorial Medical Center Daytona Beach ③	67	●	○	○	○
St. Mary's Medical Center West Palm Beach	61	●	○	○	○
Mayo Clinic Jacksonville Jacksonville	61	○	○	○	○
Homestead Hospital Homestead	58	●	○	○	○
Delray Medical Center Delray Beach ① ③	57	○	○	○	○
Fawcett Memorial Hospital Port Charlotte ③	56	○	○	○	○
Capital Regional Medical Center Tallahassee	56	○	○	○	○
Regional Medical Center-Bayonet Point Hudson ①	55	○	○	○	○
Raulerson Hospital Okeechobee	55	●	○	○	○
Ocala Regional Medical Center Ocala ③	54	○	○	○	○
Aventura Hospital and Medical Center Aventura ③	54	○	○	○	○
Westside Regional Medical Center Plantation	54	●	○	○	○
Florida Hospital Heartland Medical Center Sebring ③	53	○	○	○	○
Brandon Regional Hospital Brandon	53	●	○	○	○
Northwest Medical Center Margate ① ③	53	○	○	○	○
Memorial Hospital Jacksonville Jacksonville	52	○	○	○	○
Orange Park Medical Center Orange Park	51	○	○	○	○
Good Samaritan Medical Center West Palm Beach ③	51	○	○	○	○
Orlando Regional Medical Center Orlando	50	●	○	○	○
South Miami Hospital Miami	50	○	○	○	○
South Bay Hospital Sun City Center ②	49	●	○	○	○
Gulf Coast Medical Center Panama City	49	○	○	○	○
Hialeah Hospital Hialeah	48	●	○	○	○
North Shore Medical Center Miami ①	48	○	○	○	○
West Boca Medical Center Boca Raton	48	○	○	○	○
Baptist Hospital of Miami Miami	47	○	○	○	○
Osceola Regional Medical Center Kissimmee	47	●	○	○	○
Doctors Hospital Coral Gables	47	○	○	○	○
Kendall Regional Medical Center Miami ③	47	○	○	○	○
North Florida Regional Medical Center Gainesville	47	○	○	○	○

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0 100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning

## FLORIDA continued

Palms West Hospital Loxahatchee	47	○	○	○	○
JFK Medical Center Atlantis ② ③	45	○	○	○	○
Blake Medical Center Bradenton ③	45	○	○	○	○
Coral Gables Hospital Coral Gables	44	○	○	○	○
Sacred Heart Hospital of Pensacola Pensacola	44	○	○	○	○
Palmetto General Hospital Hialeah	43	●	○	○	○
Columbia Hospital West Palm Beach	43	○	○	○	○
St. Lucie Medical Center Port St. Lucie	43	○	○	○	○
Lawnwood Regional Medical Center Fort Pierce	42	○	○	○	○
West Florida Hospital Pensacola	41	○	○	○	○
Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center Palm Beach Gardens ② ③	40	○	○	○	○
Oak Hill Hospital Brooksville	39	○	○	○	○
Fort Walton Beach Medical Center Fort Walton Beach ④	39	○	○	○	○
Plantation General Hospital Plantation	37	○	○	○	○
Central Florida Regional Hospital Sanford	35	○	○	○	○

## GEORGIA

Emory Eastside Medical Center Snellville ③	62	○	○	○	○
Doctors Hospital Augusta	57	●	○	○	○
North Fulton Regional Hospital Roswell	55	○	○	○	○
Redmond Regional Medical Center Rome	55	○	○	○	○
Cartersville Medical Center Cartersville	53	○	○	○	○
WellStar Kennestone Hospital Marietta	51	●	○	○	○
St. Joseph's Candler Hospital Savannah	49	○	○	○	○
Spalding Regional Medical Center Griffin	48	●	○	○	○
St. Joseph's Hospital Savannah	47	○	○	○	○
Coliseum Medical Centers Macon	46	○	○	○	○
Atlanta Medical Center Atlanta ②	45	○	○	○	○
WellStar Douglas Hospital Douglasville	45	●	○	○	○
Fairview Park Hospital Dublin	44	○	○	○	○
WellStar Cobb Hospital Austell	43	○	○	○	○
Palmyra Medical Centers Albany	43	○	○	○	○
Memorial Health Savannah ② ③	42	○	○	○	○
South Fulton Medical Center Atlanta	25	○	○	○	○

## KENTUCKY

Manchester Memorial Hospital Manchester	47	●	○	○	○
Norton Hospital Louisville	39	○	○	○	○

## LOUISIANA

Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center Baton Rouge ④	53	○	○	○	○
--	----	---	---	---	---

① Complications are better than average. ② Complications are worse than average. ③ Mortality is better than average. ④ Mortality is worse than average.

Hospital	Safety score	Categories
	0 100	Infections Readmissions Communication Scanning

### LOUISIANA continued

Baton Rouge General Medical Center Baton Rouge	44	○ ○ ● ○
Lakeview Regional Medical Center Covington	39	○ ● ● ○
Rapides Regional Medical Center Alexandria <sup>④</sup>	38	● ● ● ●
Tulane Medical Center New Orleans <sup>②</sup>	32	○ ○ ● ●
Regional Medical Center of Acadiana Lafayette	30	○ ● ● ●

### MISSISSIPPI

Baptist Memorial Hospital-Golden Triangle Columbus <sup>④</sup>	47	● ● ● ○
Baptist Memorial Hospital-DeSoto Southaven	46	● ● ● ●
Garden Park Medical Center Gulfport	37	○ ● ● ○
Baptist Memorial Hospital-North Mississippi Oxford <sup>④</sup>	36	○ ● ● ○

### MISSOURI

St. John's Hospital Springfield	70	● ● ● ●
Boone Hospital Center Columbia	65	● ○ ○ ●
Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital St. Peters <sup>③</sup>	62	● ● ● ●
Missouri Baptist Medical Center St. Louis <sup>③</sup>	60	● ● ● ●
Barnes-Jewish West County Hospital St. Louis	60	● ○ ● ●
Skaggs Regional Medical Center Branson	59	● ○ ● ●
St. John's Mercy Hospital Washington	57	○ ○ ● ●
Saint Luke's East-Lee's Summit Lee's Summit	57	○ ● ○ ●
St. Luke's Hospital Chesterfield <sup>②</sup> <sup>③</sup>	56	● ● ● ●
Lester E. Cox Medical Centers Springfield	56	○ ○ ● ●
Christian Hospital St. Louis <sup>③</sup>	52	● ● ● ○
Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City Kansas City <sup>②</sup>	52	○ ● ● ●
Heartland Regional Medical Center St. Joseph	51	● ● ● ●
Liberty Hospital Liberty	51	● ● ● ●
Centerpoint Medical Center Independence	51	○ ● ● ●
Audrain Medical Center Mexico	51	○ ○ ○ ●
St. Mary's Medical Center Blue Springs	50	○ ● ● ●
North Kansas City Hospital North Kansas City <sup>②</sup> <sup>③</sup>	50	○ ● ● ●
Hannibal Regional Hospital Hannibal	49	● ● ● ○
St. John's Mercy Medical Center St. Louis	49	○ ● ● ●
St. Anthony's Medical Center St. Louis <sup>③</sup>	47	○ ● ● ○
Saint Luke's Northland Hospital-Barry Road Kansas City	46	● ● ● ●
St. Joseph Medical Center Kansas City	45	● ● ● ●
Capital Region Medical Center Jefferson City	45	○ ● ● ●
Missouri Delta Medical Center Sikeston	45	○ ● ● ○
University of Missouri Hospitals and Clinics Columbia	43	○ ● ● ○
Southeast Hospital Cape Girardeau	43	○ ● ● ●
St. Alexius Hospital-Broadway Campus St. Louis	43	● ● ● ●
Research Medical Center Kansas City	42	○ ● ● ●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories
	0 100	Infections Readmissions Communication Scanning

### MISSOURI continued

Saint Francis Medical Center Cape Girardeau <sup>④</sup>	42	○ ○ ● ○
Barnes-Jewish Hospital St. Louis <sup>②</sup>	41	○ ● ● ●
Des Peres Hospital St. Louis	40	○ ● ● ○
Bothwell Regional Health Center Sedalia <sup>④</sup>	39	○ ● ● ○
Freeman Health System Joplin	37	● ● ● ●
Truman Medical Center-Hospital Hill Kansas City	36	● ● ● ●
Ozarks Medical Center West Plains	36	● ○ ● ○
Jefferson Regional Medical Center Crystal City	34	○ ● ● ○
Phelps County Regional Medical Center Rolla <sup>④</sup>	33	● ○ ● ○
Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center Poplar Bluff <sup>④</sup>	29	○ ● ● ●
Saint Louis University Hospital St. Louis <sup>②</sup>	28	● ● ● ●
Lake Regional Health System Osage Beach <sup>④</sup>	22	● ● ● ●

### NORTH CAROLINA

Frye Regional Medical Center Hickory	60	○ ○ ● ●
Gaston Memorial Hospital Gastonia <sup>③</sup>	58	○ ○ ● ●
Rex Healthcare Raleigh <sup>②</sup> <sup>③</sup>	53	● ● ● ●
Onslow Memorial Hospital Jacksonville <sup>④</sup>	47	○ ● ● ●
University of North Carolina Hospitals Chapel Hill <sup>②</sup> <sup>④</sup>	45	○ ● ○ ●
Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center Winston-Salem <sup>④</sup>	32	○ ● ● ○

### OKLAHOMA

OU Medical Center Oklahoma City <sup>②</sup> <sup>④</sup>	33	● ● ● ○
---	----	---------

### SOUTH CAROLINA

Bon Secours St. Francis Health System Greenville	69	● ● ● ●
Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital Charleston	63	● ○ ● ●
Springs Memorial Hospital Lancaster	60	● ● ● ●
McLeod Regional Medical Center Florence	60	● ● ● ●
Oconee Medical Center Seneca	59	● ○ ● ●
Loris Community Hospital Loris	56	● ● ● ●
Roper Hospital Charleston	56	● ○ ○ ●
Hillcrest Hospital Simpsonville	55	○ ○ ○ ●
Spartanburg Regional Medical Center Spartanburg <sup>③</sup>	55	○ ○ ● ●
Mary Black Memorial Hospital Spartanburg	55	● ● ● ●
Palmetto Health Richland Columbia <sup>②</sup>	54	○ ○ ● ●
Beaufort Memorial Hospital Beaufort	54	● ● ● ●
Greenville Memorial Hospital Greenville <sup>②</sup>	53	○ ● ● ●
Providence Hospital Columbia <sup>④</sup>	53	○ ○ ● ●
Piedmont Medical Center Rock Hill	52	○ ● ● ●
Baptist Easley Hospital Easley	52	○ ● ● ●
Greer Memorial Hospital Greer	51	○ ● ● ●








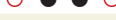
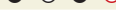
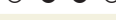








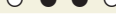
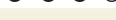



① Complications are better than average. ② Complications are worse than average. ③ Mortality is better than average. ④ Mortality is worse than average.






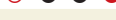



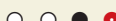





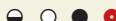

Better ← → Worse  


Hospital	Safety score	Categories
	0 100	Infections Readmissions Communication Scanning

## SOUTH CAROLINA continued

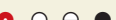







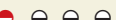










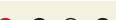


Self Regional Healthcare Greenwood	51	
Lexington Medical Center West Columbia <sup>4</sup>	51	
Grand Strand Regional Medical Center Myrtle Beach <sup>4</sup>	50	
Conway Medical Center Conway	50	
MUSC Medical Center of Medical University of South Carolina Charleston	50	
Village Hospital Greer	50	
Colleton Medical Center Walterboro	49	
Newberry County Memorial Hospital Newberry <sup>4</sup>	49	
East Cooper Medical Center Mount Pleasant	49	
AnMed Health Medical Center Anderson	48	
Waccamaw Community Hospital Murrells Inlet	48	
Palmetto Health Baptist Columbia	48	
Aiken Regional Medical Centers Aiken <sup>4</sup>	47	
Laurens County Health Care System Clinton <sup>4</sup>	47	
Regional Medical Center Orangeburg	46	
Hilton Head Hospital Hilton Head Island	46	
Trident Medical Center Charleston <sup>4</sup>	41	
KershawHealth Camden	40	
Georgetown Memorial Hospital Georgetown	38	
Wallace Thomson Hospital Union	36	
Clarendon Memorial Hospital Manning	36	
Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center Hartsville	34	
Carolinas Hospital System Florence <sup>4</sup>	30	

## TENNESSEE













Saint Thomas Hospital Nashville <sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup>	63	
Cookeville Regional Medical Center Cookeville <sup>1</sup>	61	
Maury Regional Hospital Columbia <sup>3</sup>	58	
Blount Memorial Hospital Maryville <sup>3</sup>	58	
Baptist Hospital Nashville	56	
Memorial Health Care System Chattanooga <sup>1</sup>	55	
Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge Oak Ridge	53	
Regional Hospital of Jackson Jackson	53	
Baptist Memorial Hospital-Memphis Memphis	52	
Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center Knoxville	52	
University of Tennessee Medical Center Knoxville	50	
Centennial Medical Center Nashville	49	
Parkwest Medical Center Knoxville	48	
Wellmont Holston Valley Medical Center Kingsport	48	
Mercy Medical Center St. Mary's Knoxville	47	

Hospital	Safety score	Categories
	0 100	Infections Readmissions Communication Scanning

## TENNESSEE continued

Takoma Regional Hospital Greenville	47	
Skyline Medical Center Nashville	45	
University Medical Center Lebanon	45	
Southern Hills Medical Center Nashville	45	
Wellmont Bristol Regional Medical Center Bristol	45	
Indian Path Medical Center Kingsport	45	
Saint Francis Hospital-Bartlett Bartlett	43	
Middle Tennessee Medical Center Murfreesboro <sup>4</sup>	43	
Summit Medical Center Hermitage	42	
Jackson-Madison County General Hospital Jackson <sup>4</sup>	41	
Horizon Medical Center Dickson	40	
Erlanger Medical Center Chattanooga <sup>2</sup>	38	
Parkridge Medical Center Chattanooga	38	
Vanderbilt University Medical Center Nashville <sup>2</sup>	37	
Saint Francis Hospital Memphis <sup>4</sup>	37	
Methodist Healthcare Memphis Hospitals Memphis <sup>4</sup>	36	
Skyridge Medical Center Cleveland <sup>4</sup>	35	
Regional Medical Center at Memphis Memphis	34	
Johnson City Medical Center Johnson City	32	
Williamson Medical Center Franklin <sup>4</sup>	32	
Sumner Regional Medical Center Gallatin	31	
Gateway Medical Center Clarksville <sup>4</sup>	31	

## TEXAS

Baylor University Medical Center Dallas	67	
St. David's Medical Center Austin	64	
Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Fort Worth Fort Worth	63	
Clear Lake Regional Medical Center Webster	61	
Lake Pointe Medical Center Rowlett	61	
Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Southwest Fort Worth Fort Worth	59	
Baylor All Saints Medical Center at Fort Worth Fort Worth <sup>3</sup>	59	
Texas Health Arlington Memorial Hospital Arlington <sup>3</sup>	58	
St. David's North Austin Medical Center Austin	58	
Methodist Stone Oak Hospital San Antonio	58	
St. David's South Austin Medical Center Austin	57	
Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas Dallas	55	

Better ← → Worse  
 ● ● ○ ● ●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories
	0 100	Infections Readmissions Communication Scanning

## TEXAS continued

Methodist Hospital San Antonio ①	55	● ○ ● ●
Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Hurst-Euless-Bedford Bedford	54	● ○ ● ○
Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Plano Plano	53	● ● ● ○
Cypress Fairbanks Medical Center Houston ③	51	● ● ● ●
Medical Center of McKinney McKinney	51	● ● ● ●
Good Shepherd Medical Center Longview ① ③	51	● ● ○ ●
Mother Frances Hospital-Tyler Tyler ③	49	○ ○ ● ●
Park Plaza Hospital Houston	48	● ○ ● ●
Baylor Medical Center at Garland Garland	48	● ○ ● ●
The Methodist Hospital Houston ② ③	47	○ ○ ● ○
Centennial Medical Center Frisco	47	● ● ● ●
Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Denton Denton	47	● ● ● ●
Baylor Medical Center at Irving Irving	47	● ● ● ●
Baylor Regional Medical Center at Grapevine Grapevine	46	● ○ ● ●
Houston Northwest Medical Center Houston	46	○ ○ ● ○
Huguley Memorial Medical Center Fort Worth	45	● ● ● ●
Denton Regional Medical Center Denton	45	○ ● ● ●
North Hills Hospital North Richland Hills	44	● ● ● ○
Medical Center of Plano Plano	43	○ ● ● ●
Methodist Richardson Medical Center Richardson	42	● ● ● ●
Plaza Medical Center of Fort Worth Fort Worth	42	● ○ ● ○
Methodist Charlton Medical Center Dallas	42	○ ○ ● ●
Methodist Mansfield Medical Center Mansfield	42	○ ● ● ●
Medical City Dallas Hospital Dallas ②	40	○ ● ● ●
Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare El Paso	39	○ ● ● ●
Midland Memorial Hospital Midland ③	39	● ○ ● ●
Methodist Dallas Medical Center Dallas	38	● ○ ● ●
Sierra Medical Center El Paso	38	● ● ● ●
Kingwood Medical Center Kingwood	36	● ● ● ○
Providence Memorial Hospital El Paso ② ③	36	○ ● ● ●
Baylor Medical Center at Carrollton Carrollton	35	● ○ ● ●
Medical Center of Arlington Arlington	33	● ● ● ●
Medical Center Health System Odessa	32	○ ● ● ●
Valley Regional Medical Center Brownsville	32	● ● ● ●
Medical Center of Lewisville Lewisville	29	● ● ● ●

## VIRGINIA

Bon Secours Memorial Regional Medical Center Mechanicsville ③	67	● ○ ● ●
Rockingham Memorial Hospital Harrisonburg ③	63	● ● ● ●
Winchester Medical Center Winchester	60	● ● ● ●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories
	0 100	Infections Readmissions Communication Scanning

## VIRGINIA continued

Virginia Hospital Center-Arlington Arlington ③	60	○ ● ● ●
Riverside Walter Reed Hospital Gloucester	57	● ● ● ●
Inova Loudoun Hospital Leesburg	57	● ● ● ●
Bon Secours-DePaul Medical Center Norfolk	57	● ○ ● ●
Reston Hospital Center Reston	55	● ● ● ●
Inova Alexandria Hospital Alexandria	55	● ● ● ●
Riverside Regional Medical Center Newport News	53	● ○ ● ●
Lewis-Gale Medical Center Salem	53	○ ● ● ●
Prince William Hospital Manassas	53	○ ● ● ●
Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Fairfax	53	● ● ● ●
Sentara Virginia Beach General Hospital Virginia Beach ④	53	● ● ● ●
Augusta Health Fishersville	53	○ ○ ○ ●
Sentara CarePlex Hospital Hampton ④	52	● ● ● ●
Sentara Norfolk General Hospital Norfolk ④	52	● ● ● ●
Sentara Leigh Hospital Norfolk ④	51	● ○ ● ●
Inova Fairfax Hospital Falls Church ② ③	51	○ ● ● ●
Sentara Obici Hospital Suffolk ④	51	● ○ ● ●
Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital Richmond ③	51	○ ● ● ●
Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center Midlothian ②	49	● ● ● ○
CJW Medical Center Richmond	48	● ○ ● ●
Carilion Medical Center Roanoke ④	48	● ○ ● ●
Fauquier Hospital Warrenton	47	● ● ● ●
Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center Portsmouth	46	● ● ● ●
Sentara Potomac Hospital Woodbridge	45	● ● ● ●
Martha Jefferson Hospital Charlottesville	45	● ● ● ●
Inova Mount Vernon Hospital Alexandria	45	● ● ● ●
Henrico Doctors' Hospital Richmond	44	● ○ ● ●
Centra Lynchburg General Hospital Lynchburg ④	44	○ ● ● ●
Mary Washington Hospital Fredericksburg ②	43	● ● ● ●
VCU Health System Richmond ②	41	● ● ● ●
Chesapeake Regional Medical Center Chesapeake	41	● ● ● ●
Memorial Hospital Martinsville ④	40	○ ● ● ●
Southside Regional Medical Center Petersburg	40	● ● ● ○
University of Virginia Medical Center Charlottesville ④	39	● ● ● ●
Danville Regional Medical Center Danville	39	○ ● ● ○
Clinch Valley Medical Center Richlands	25	● ● ● ●

## WEST VIRGINIA

Monongalia General Hospital Morgantown ①	60	● ● ● ○
--	----	---------

① Complications are better than average. ② Complications are worse than average. ③ Mortality is better than average. ④ Mortality is worse than average.



# Ratings Hospital safety

In rank order, within states.

Better ← → Worse  
● ● ● ● ●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0 100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning

## ILLINOIS

Alton Memorial Hospital Alton <sup>3</sup>	71	●	○	○	●
Illinois Valley Community Hospital Peru	65	●	●	○	●
FHN Memorial Hospital Freeport	64	●	○	●	●
Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital Barrington <sup>3</sup>	64	●	●	●	●
Decatur Memorial Hospital Decatur <sup>1</sup>	63	○	●	○	●
Kishwaukee Community Hospital DeKalb	62	●	●	●	●
Memorial Hospital Belleville <sup>3</sup>	62	●	●	●	●
Pekin Hospital Pekin	60	●	●	●	●
Swedish Covenant Hospital Chicago <sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup>	60	●	●	●	●
Morris Hospital & Healthcare Centers Morris	60	●	●	●	●
Blessing Hospital Quincy	59	●	●	●	●
Herrin Hospital Herrin	59	●	●	●	●
Adventist La Grange Memorial Hospital La Grange <sup>3</sup>	58	●	●	●	●
St. Mary's Hospital Decatur	58	●	●	●	●
Trinity Rock Island Rock Island	57	●	●	●	●
Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center Mattoon	57	○	○	○	●
Riverside Medical Center Kankakee <sup>1</sup>	57	●	●	●	●
Rush-Copley Medical Center Aurora	57	●	●	●	●
Passavant Area Hospital Jacksonville <sup>4</sup>	56	●	●	●	●
Ingalls Memorial Hospital Harvey <sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup>	56	●	●	●	●
Heartland Regional Medical Center Marion	55	●	●	●	●
Holy Cross Hospital Chicago <sup>1</sup>	55	●	●	●	●
Palos Community Hospital Palos Heights <sup>3</sup>	55	●	●	●	●
Saint Joseph Hospital Chicago	55	●	●	●	●
Memorial Hospital of Carbondale Carbondale	55	●	●	●	●
Advocate Lutheran General Hospital Park Ridge	54	●	●	●	●
Elmhurst Memorial Hospital Elmhurst	54	●	○	●	●
Advocate Christ Medical Center Oak Lawn <sup>3</sup>	54	●	●	●	●
Central DuPage Hospital Aurora	54	●	○	●	○
Advocate South Suburban Hospital Hazel Crest <sup>3</sup>	54	○	●	●	●
MetroSouth Medical Center Blue Island <sup>3</sup>	54	●	●	●	●
West Suburban Medical Center Oak Park <sup>1</sup>	54	●	●	●	●
Carle Foundation Hospital Urbana <sup>2</sup>	53	●	●	●	●
Adventist Hinsdale Hospital Hinsdale <sup>3</sup>	53	●	●	●	○
Saint Anthony's Health Center Alton	53	●	●	●	●
Silver Cross Hospital Joliet <sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup>	53	○	●	●	●
Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital Downers Grove <sup>3</sup>	53	○	●	●	○
Northwest Community Hospital Arlington Heights <sup>3</sup>	53	●	●	●	●
Methodist Medical Center of Illinois Peoria	53	●	●	○	○
Centegra Hospital-McHenry McHenry <sup>3</sup>	52	●	●	●	○

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0 100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning

## ILLINOIS continued

Resurrection Medical Center Chicago <sup>3</sup>	51	●	●	●	○
OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center Rockford	51	○	●	●	●
Provena Covenant Medical Center Urbana <sup>2</sup>	50	●	●	●	●
Anderson Hospital Maryville	50	●	●	●	○
Advocate Trinity Hospital Chicago <sup>3</sup>	49	●	●	●	●
Provena Mercy Medical Center Aurora	49	●	●	●	●
SwedishAmerican Hospital Rockford	48	○	●	●	●
Alexian Brothers Medical Center Elk Grove Village <sup>3</sup>	48	●	●	●	○
Louis A. Weiss Memorial Hospital Chicago <sup>3</sup>	48	○	●	●	●
St. Alexius Medical Center Hoffman Estates <sup>3</sup>	47	●	●	●	●
Gateway Regional Medical Center Granate City	47	●	●	●	○
Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center Chicago	46	○	●	●	●
NorthShore Evanston Hospital Evanston <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>	45	●	●	●	○
Rockford Memorial Hospital Rockford	45	○	●	●	●
Provena St. Mary's Hospital Kankakee	45	●	●	●	○
Provena Saint Joseph Hospital Elgin <sup>3</sup>	45	●	●	●	●
Little Company of Mary Hospital and Health Care Centers Evergreen Park	44	○	●	●	●
Edward Hospital Naperville <sup>3</sup>	44	●	●	●	●
Mercy Hospital and Medical Center Chicago <sup>3</sup>	44	●	●	●	●
Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center Joliet <sup>3</sup>	44	●	●	●	●
Centegra Hospital-Woodstock Woodstock <sup>3</sup>	44	○	●	●	○
Delnor Hospital Geneva	43	●	●	●	●
University of Illinois Medical Center at Chicago Chicago <sup>2</sup>	43	●	●	●	○
Proctor Hospital Peoria <sup>4</sup>	43	●	●	●	○
Memorial Medical Center Springfield <sup>2</sup> <sup>4</sup>	43	●	●	●	●
St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital Effingham <sup>4</sup>	43	●	●	●	○
St. Margaret's Hospital Spring Valley <sup>4</sup>	43	○	●	●	●
Rush University Medical Center Chicago <sup>2</sup>	43	○	●	●	●
OSF Saint Francis Medical Center Peoria <sup>4</sup>	43	●	●	●	○
OSF St. Mary Medical Center Galesburg <sup>4</sup>	43	●	●	○	●
Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital Lake Forest	42	●	●	●	●
Saints Mary & Elizabeth Medical Center Chicago	42	○	●	●	●
Advocate Condell Medical Center Libertyville <sup>3</sup>	42	●	●	●	●
Northwestern Memorial Hospital Chicago <sup>2</sup>	41	●	●	●	●
MacNeal Hospital Berwyn	41	○	●	●	○
Franciscan St. James Hospital and Health Centers Olympia Fields <sup>3</sup>	40	○	●	●	●
Loyola University Medical Center Maywood <sup>2</sup>	40	○	●	●	○
Adventist GlenOaks Hospital Glendale Heights	40	●	●	●	●
Westlake Hospital Melrose Park	39	●	●	●	○

<sup>1</sup> Complications are better than average. <sup>2</sup> Complications are worse than average. <sup>3</sup> Mortality is better than average. <sup>4</sup> Mortality is worse than average.

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0 100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning

**ILLINOIS** continued

St. John's Hospital Springfield	39	○	○	●	●
Sherman Hospital Elgin	39	●	●	●	●
Advocate BroMenn Medical Center Normal <sup>④</sup>	38	●	○	●	●
Mount Sinai Hospital Chicago	37	○	●	●	●
Rush Oak Park Hospital Oak Park	35	●	●	●	○
Norwegian American Hospital Chicago	35	●	●	●	●
Saint Francis Hospital Evanston	35	●	●	●	●
St. Elizabeth's Hospital Belleville <sup>③</sup>	34	○	●	●	●
John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County Chicago	33	○	●	●	○
NorthShore Skokie Hospital Skokie	33	○	●	●	●
OSF St. Joseph Medical Center Bloomington <sup>④</sup>	32	●	●	●	●
Gottlieb Memorial Hospital Melrose Park	32	○	●	●	●
St. Mary's Hospital Centralia	32	○	●	○	●
Thorek Memorial Hospital Chicago	30	●	●	●	●
Vista Medical Center East Waukegan	29	○	●	●	●
Roseland Community Hospital Chicago	28	●	●	●	●
St. Bernard Hospital and Health Care Center Chicago	28	○	●	●	○
Our Lady of the Resurrection Medical Center Chicago <sup>①</sup>	23	●	●	●	●
Sacred Heart Hospital Chicago	16	●	●	●	●

**INDIANA**

St. Vincent Indianapolis Hospital Indianapolis <sup>①</sup> <sup>③</sup>	60	●	○	●	●
Union Hospital Terre Haute <sup>①</sup>	56	●	●	●	●
St. Mary's Medical Center of Evansville Evansville	56	○	●	●	●
Deaconess Hospital Evansville	53	●	●	●	●
Saint John's Health System Anderson	48	●	●	●	●
Terre Haute Regional Hospital Terre Haute	44	●	●	●	●
Indiana University Health La Porte Hospital La Porte <sup>④</sup>	42	●	○	●	●

**KANSAS**

Menorah Medical Center Overland Park	61	●	●	●	●
Wesley Medical Center Wichita	53	●	●	●	●
Overland Park Regional Medical Center Overland Park	52	●	●	●	●
Shawnee Mission Medical Center Shawnee Mission	43	●	●	●	○
Via Christi Hospitals Wichita Wichita	42	●	○	●	●

**MICHIGAN**

Northern Michigan Regional Hospital Petoskey	69	●	○	○	●
MidMichigan Medical Center-Midland Midland	64	●	○	●	●
Munson Medical Center Traverse City	64	●	○	○	●
Bronson Methodist Hospital Kalamazoo	64	●	○	●	●
Mercy Health Partners, Mercy Campus Muskegon	63	●	○	●	●
Allegiance Health Jackson	63	●	○	●	●
Lapeer Regional Medical Center Lapeer <sup>③</sup>	62	●	●	●	●
Battle Creek Health System Battle Creek	62	●	●	●	●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0 100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning

**MICHIGAN** continued

Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital Commerce Township <sup>③</sup>	61	●	●	●	●
St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Ypsilanti <sup>③</sup>	60	●	●	●	●
Beaumont Hospital Grosse Pointe Grosse Pointe <sup>③</sup>	58	●	●	●	●
Port Huron Hospital Port Huron <sup>①</sup>	57	●	●	●	●
St. John Macomb-Oakland Hospital Warren <sup>③</sup>	57	●	●	●	●
Sparrow Hospital Lansing	55	○	●	●	●
Providence Hospital Southfield <sup>③</sup>	55	●	●	●	●
Spectrum Health Butterworth Hospital Grand Rapids	55	○	○	●	●
Metro Health Hospital Wyoming	54	●	●	○	●
Harper University Hospital/Hutzel Women's Hospital Detroit <sup>③</sup>	54	●	●	●	●
St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Pontiac <sup>③</sup>	52	●	○	●	●
Beaumont Hospital-Royal Oak Royal Oak <sup>②</sup> <sup>③</sup>	52	●	●	●	●
University of Michigan Hospitals and Health Centers Ann Arbor	50	○	●	○	●
St. John Providence Macomb-Oakland Hospital, Oakland Center Madison Heights <sup>③</sup>	49	○	●	●	●
Beaumont Hospital-Troy Troy <sup>③</sup>	49	○	●	●	●
Botsford Hospital Farmington Hills <sup>③</sup>	48	○	●	●	●
St. John Hospital and Medical Center Detroit <sup>③</sup>	46	●	●	●	○
Dickinson County Healthcare System Iron Mountain	44	●	○	●	●
Mercy Memorial Hospital System Monroe	42	●	●	●	●
Garden City Hospital Garden City	41	○	●	●	●
Covenant Medical Center Saginaw <sup>④</sup>	38	●	●	●	●
St. Mary Mercy Hospital Livonia <sup>①</sup> <sup>③</sup>	37	○	●	●	●
Detroit Receiving Hospital/University Health Center Detroit	35	●	●	●	●
Sinai-Grace Hospital Detroit <sup>③</sup>	35	●	●	●	●

**MINNESOTA**

Woodwinds Health Campus Woodbury	65	●	○	●	●
Mayo Clinic-Saint Marys Hospital Rochester <sup>①</sup>	65	○	●	○	●
Essentia Health St. Joseph's Medical Center Brainerd	64	●	●	○	●
Essentia Health Duluth Duluth	64	●	○	●	●
Ridgeview Medical Center Waconia	63	●	●	●	●
Mayo Clinic-Methodist Hospital Rochester <sup>①</sup>	63	●	●	●	●
St. Joseph's Hospital Saint Paul	63	●	○	●	●
Lake Region Healthcare Corporation Fergus Falls	62	●	●	○	●
Mayo Clinic Health System in Mankato Mankato	61	●	○	●	●
Douglas County Hospital Alexandria	61	●	●	○	●
St. Cloud Hospital Saint Cloud	58	○	●	○	●
Fairview Southdale Hospital Edina	58	●	●	●	●
Mayo Clinic Health System in Albert Lea Albert Lea	57	○	○	●	●
Mercy Hospital Coon Rapids	55	○	●	●	●
Essentia Health St. Mary's Medical Center Duluth	55	●	○	●	●
Abbott Northwestern Hospital Minneapolis <sup>③</sup>	55	●	●	●	●

<sup>①</sup> Complications are better than average. <sup>②</sup> Complications are worse than average. <sup>③</sup> Mortality is better than average. <sup>④</sup> Mortality is worse than average.



Better ← → Worse  


Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

#### MINNESOTA continued

Rice Memorial Hospital Willmar	54	○	●	○	●
St. Luke's Hospital Duluth <sup>3</sup>	54	○	●	●	●
Cambridge Medical Center Cambridge	54	●	●	○	●
Methodist Hospital St. Louis Park <sup>3</sup>	53	●	○	●	●
Unity Hospital Fridley	53	●	●	●	●
Lakeview Hospital Stillwater	53	●	○	○	●
Fairview Red Wing Medical Center Red Wing	51	●	○	○	●
North Memorial Health Care Robbinsdale	51	○	●	●	●
Buffalo Hospital Buffalo	50	●	●	○	●
Sanford Bemidji Medical Center Bemidji	50	●	●	●	●
St. John's Hospital St. Paul	50	●	●	●	●
Regions Hospital St. Paul	49	○	●	●	●
St. Francis Regional Medical Center Shakopee	49	●	●	●	●
Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital Grand Rapids	47	●	●	●	●
Fairview Ridges Hospital Burnsville	47	●	●	●	●
University of Minnesota Medical Center, Fairview Minneapolis <sup>2</sup>	42	●	●	●	●
Owatonna Hospital Owatonna	42	○	○	●	●
United Hospital St. Paul	40	●	●	●	●
Essentia Health St. Mary's Hospital-Detroit Lakes Detroit Lakes	37	●	○	●	○
Olmsted Medical Center Rochester	31	●	●	○	●

#### MISSOURI

St. John's Hospital Springfield	70	●	●	●	●
Boone Hospital Center Columbia	65	●	○	○	●
Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital St. Peters <sup>3</sup>	62	●	●	●	●
Missouri Baptist Medical Center St. Louis <sup>3</sup>	60	●	●	●	●
Barnes-Jewish West County Hospital St. Louis	60	●	○	●	●
Skaggs Regional Medical Center Branson	59	●	○	●	●
St. John's Mercy Hospital Washington	57	○	○	●	●
Saint Luke's East-Lee's Summit Lee's Summit	57	○	●	○	●
St. Luke's Hospital Chesterfield <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>	56	●	●	●	●
Lester E. Cox Medical Centers Springfield	56	○	○	●	○
Christian Hospital St. Louis <sup>3</sup>	52	●	●	●	○
Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City Kansas City <sup>2</sup>	52	○	●	●	●
Heartland Regional Medical Center St. Joseph	51	●	●	●	●
Liberty Hospital Liberty	51	●	●	●	●
Centerpoint Medical Center Independence	51	○	●	●	●
Audrain Medical Center Mexico	51	○	○	○	●
St. Mary's Medical Center Blue Springs	50	○	●	●	●
North Kansas City Hospital North Kansas City <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>	50	○	●	●	●
Hannibal Regional Hospital Hannibal	49	●	●	○	●
St. John's Mercy Medical Center St. Louis	49	○	●	●	●
St. Anthony's Medical Center St. Louis <sup>3</sup>	47	○	●	●	○

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

#### MISSOURI continued

Saint Luke's Northland Hospital-Barry Road Kansas City	46	●	●	●	●
St. Joseph Medical Center Kansas City	45	●	●	●	●
Capital Region Medical Center Jefferson City	45	○	●	●	●
Missouri Delta Medical Center Sikeston	45	○	●	●	○
University of Missouri Hospitals and Clinics Columbia	43	○	●	●	○
Southeast Hospital Cape Girardeau	43	○	●	●	●
St. Alexius Hospital-Broadway Campus St. Louis	43	●	●	●	●
Research Medical Center Kansas City	42	○	●	●	●
Saint Francis Medical Center Cape Girardeau <sup>4</sup>	42	○	○	●	○
Barnes-Jewish Hospital St. Louis <sup>2</sup>	41	○	●	●	●
Des Peres Hospital St. Louis	40	○	●	●	○
Bothwell Regional Health Center Sedalia <sup>4</sup>	39	○	●	●	○
Freeman Health System Joplin	37	●	●	●	●
Truman Medical Center-Hospital Hill Kansas City	36	●	●	●	●
Ozarks Medical Center West Plains	36	●	○	●	○
Jefferson Regional Medical Center Crystal City	34	●	●	●	○
Phelps County Regional Medical Center Rolla <sup>4</sup>	33	●	○	●	○
Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center Poplar Bluff <sup>4</sup>	29	○	●	●	●
Saint Louis University Hospital St. Louis <sup>2</sup>	28	●	●	●	●
Lake Regional Health System Osage Beach <sup>4</sup>	22	●	●	●	●

#### NEBRASKA

Nebraska Medical Center Omaha	53	○	●	●	●
Creighton University Medical Center Omaha <sup>2</sup>	48	●	●	●	○

#### OHIO

Memorial Hospital of Union County Marysville	68	●	○	○	●
Christ Hospital Cincinnati <sup>3</sup>	68	●	●	●	●
Kettering Medical Center Kettering <sup>3</sup>	67	●	○	●	●
Mercy Hospital Fairfield Fairfield <sup>3</sup>	66	●	●	●	●
Licking Memorial Hospital Newark <sup>3</sup>	65	●	●	●	●
Flower Hospital Sylvania <sup>3</sup>	65	●	○	●	●
Mercy Hospital Anderson Cincinnati <sup>3</sup>	65	●	●	●	●
The Toledo Hospital Toledo <sup>3</sup>	64	●	○	●	●
Madison County Hospital London	64	●	●	●	●
Good Samaritan Hospital Cincinnati <sup>3</sup>	64	●	●	○	●
Summa Wadsworth-Rittman Hospital Wadsworth	64	●	●	●	●
Blanchard Valley Health System Findlay	63	●	○	●	●
St. John Medical Center Westlake <sup>3</sup>	62	●	○	●	●
Good Samaritan Hospital Dayton <sup>3</sup>	62	●	●	●	●
Union Hospital Dover <sup>3</sup>	62	●	●	●	●
Sycamore Medical Center Miamisburg	62	●	●	●	●
Brown County General Hospital Georgetown	61	●	○	●	●
Grant Medical Center Columbus	61	●	●	●	●

Better ← → Worse  
● ● ○ ● ●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

OHIO continued

Mount Carmel St. Ann's Westerville	61	●	●	●	●
Pomerene Hospital Millersburg	61	●	●	●	●
St. Rita's Medical Center Lima	61	●	○	●	●
Dublin Methodist Hospital Dublin	60	●	○	●	●
Marion General Hospital Marion <sup>③</sup>	60	○	●	●	●
Parma Community General Hospital Parma	59	●	●	●	●
Doctors Hospital Columbus	59	●	●	●	●
Genesis HealthCare System Zanesville	58	●	●	●	●
Fort Hamilton Hospital Hamilton <sup>③</sup>	58	●	●	●	●
Mercy Tiffin Hospital Tiffin	58	●	○	○	●
Lake Health Concord Township <sup>③</sup>	58	○	●	●	●
Southwest General Health Center Middleburg Heights <sup>③</sup>	58	●	●	●	●
Mercy St. Vincent Medical Center Toledo <sup>②</sup> <sup>③</sup>	58	●	●	●	●
St. Elizabeth Boardman Health Center Boardman	57	●	●	●	●
Grady Memorial Hospital Delaware	57	○	○	●	●
Miami Valley Hospital Dayton <sup>②</sup> <sup>③</sup>	57	●	●	●	●
Fairfield Medical Center Lancaster <sup>①</sup>	57	○	●	●	●
Mercy St. Anne Hospital Toledo <sup>③</sup>	56	●	○	○	●
Upper Valley Medical Center Troy	56	●	●	●	●
Van Wert County Hospital Van Wert	56	●	○	○	●
Southern Ohio Medical Center Portsmouth <sup>③</sup>	56	●	●	●	●
Akron General Medical Center Akron <sup>②</sup> <sup>③</sup>	56	●	●	●	●
Affinity Medical Center Massillon <sup>③</sup>	56	○	●	●	●
Riverside Methodist Hospital Columbus	55	●	●	●	●
Wayne Hospital Greenville	55	○	○	●	●
Ohio State University Medical Center Columbus <sup>②</sup> <sup>③</sup>	55	●	●	●	●
Aultman Hospital Canton	55	●	○	●	●
Holzer Medical Center Gallipolis <sup>③</sup>	54	●	●	●	●
Bethesda North Hospital Cincinnati <sup>③</sup>	54	○	●	●	●
Lima Memorial Health System Lima	54	○	●	●	●
St. Luke's Hospital Maumee	54	●	●	●	●
Robinson Memorial Hospital Ravenna	54	●	●	●	●
Firelands Regional Health System Sandusky	54	●	○	●	●
Mount Carmel Columbus <sup>②</sup>	53	●	●	●	●
Bay Park Community Hospital Oregon	53	○	●	●	●
Summa Health System Akron	52	○	●	●	●
Adena Health System Chillicothe <sup>③</sup>	52	●	●	●	●
Lutheran Hospital Cleveland	52	○	●	●	●
Marymount Hospital Garfield Heights <sup>③</sup>	52	●	●	●	●
Mercer County Joint Township Community Hospital Coldwater	52	●	●	○	○
The Jewish Hospital Cincinnati <sup>③</sup>	51	●	●	●	●
Fairview Hospital Cleveland	51	○	●	●	●
Samaritan Regional Health System Ashland	51	○	○	○	○
Joint Township District Memorial Hospital St. Marys <sup>③</sup>	51	○	○	●	●
MedCentral-Mansfield Hospital Mansfield	51	●	●	●	●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

OHIO continued

Summa Barberton Citizens Hospital Barberton	51	●	●	●	●
Mercy Hospital Mount Airy Cincinnati <sup>③</sup>	50	○	○	●	●
St. Vincent Charity Medical Center Westlake	50	○	●	●	●
McCullough-Hyde Memorial Hospital Oxford	50	●	○	●	●
Mercy Medical Center Canton	50	○	○	●	●
Northside Medical Center Youngstown	50	●	●	●	●
Lakewood Hospital Lakewood	50	●	●	●	●
Berger Health System Circleville	49	○	●	●	●
Salem Community Hospital Salem	49	●	○	●	●
Mary Rutan Hospital Bellefontaine	48	●	○	●	●
Community Hospitals and Wellness Centers Bryan	48	●	○	●	●
Alliance Community Hospital Alliance	48	●	○	●	○
Mercy St. Charles Hospital Oregon	48	○	●	●	●
University Hospitals Geauga Regional Hospital Chardon	48	○	●	●	●
Atrium Medical Center Franklin	47	○	●	●	●
Ashtabula County Medical Center Ashtabula	47	●	●	●	●
Medina Hospital Medina	46	●	●	●	○
Euclid Hospital Euclid	46	●	●	●	●
Wood County Hospital Bowling Green	46	●	●	●	●
Marietta Memorial Hospital Marietta <sup>③</sup>	46	●	●	●	●
Fisher-Titus Medical Center Norwalk	44	●	●	●	●
St. Joseph Health Center Warren	44	●	●	●	○
MetroHealth Medical Center Cleveland <sup>②</sup>	43	○	●	●	●
St. Elizabeth Health Center Youngstown <sup>②</sup>	43	●	●	●	●
University Hospital Cincinnati <sup>②</sup> <sup>③</sup>	42	●	●	●	●
Clinton Memorial Hospital Wilmington	42	●	●	●	○
Mercy Hospital Clermont Batavia	42	○	●	●	●
Wilson Memorial Hospital Sidney	42	○	○	●	●
Trumbull Memorial Hospital Warren	42	●	●	●	○
Mercy Regional Medical Center Lorain <sup>③</sup>	41	○	●	●	○
Memorial Hospital Fremont	41	○	○	○	●
Knox Community Hospital Mount Vernon <sup>④</sup>	41	●	○	●	●
University Hospitals Case Medical Center Cleveland <sup>②</sup>	41	○	●	●	○
South Pointe Hospital Warrensville Heights <sup>③</sup>	40	●	●	●	●
Grandview Medical Center Dayton <sup>③</sup>	40	○	●	●	●
O'Brien Memorial Hospital Athens	39	○	●	●	●
Cleveland Clinic Foundation Cleveland <sup>②</sup>	39	●	●	●	○
Hillcrest Hospital Cleveland <sup>②</sup>	36	●	●	●	○
East Ohio Regional Hospital Martins Ferry	35	○	●	●	○
East Liverpool City Hospital East Liverpool <sup>④</sup>	35	●	●	●	●
Southeastern Ohio Regional Medical Center Cambridge	34	●	●	○	○
Mercy Hospital Western Hills Cincinnati	33	●	●	●	○
Trinity Health System Steubenville	32	●	●	●	●
The University of Toledo Medical Center Toledo <sup>②</sup>	28	●	●	●	○

WISCONSIN

Saint Clare's Hospital Weston	71	●	○	○	●
Bellin Memorial Hospital Green Bay <sup>③</sup>	63	●	○	○	○
Aspirus Wausau Hospital Wausau	56	○	○	●	●

<sup>①</sup> Complications are better than average. <sup>②</sup> Complications are worse than average. <sup>③</sup> Mortality is better than average. <sup>④</sup> Mortality is worse than average.

# Ratings Hospital safety

In order of safety score, within states.

Better ← → Worse  
● ● ○ ● ●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0 100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning

## ALASKA

Alaska Regional Hospital Anchorage	54	●	●	●	●
------------------------------------	----	---	---	---	---

## ARIZONA

Mayo Clinic Hospital Phoenix <sup>[3]</sup>	70	●	●	●	●
Banner Baywood Medical Center Mesa <sup>[3]</sup>	63	●	●	●	●
Banner Gateway Medical Center Gilbert <sup>[3]</sup>	63	●	●	●	●
Scottsdale Healthcare Thompson Peak Scottsdale	61	●	●	●	●
Banner Boswell Medical Center Sun City <sup>[1] [3]</sup>	60	●	●	●	●
Banner Thunderbird Medical Center Glendale <sup>[3]</sup>	60	●	●	●	●
Scottsdale Healthcare-Osborn Scottsdale <sup>[3]</sup>	56	○	●	●	●
Banner Desert Medical Center Mesa <sup>[3]</sup>	55	○	●	●	●
Banner Estrella Medical Center Phoenix <sup>[3]</sup>	54	●	●	●	●
Yuma Regional Medical Center Yuma	53	●	●	●	○
Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center Phoenix <sup>[3]</sup>	53	○	○	●	○
Scottsdale Healthcare Shea Scottsdale <sup>[2]</sup>	48	●	○	●	●
Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center Sun City West <sup>[3]</sup>	46	●	●	●	●
St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center Phoenix <sup>[2]</sup>	42	●	●	●	●

## CALIFORNIA

Bakersfield Heart Hospital Bakersfield <sup>[3]</sup>	68	●	○	●	●
Sutter Auburn Faith Hospital Auburn	68	●	○	○	●
Woodland Healthcare Woodland	68	●	○	●	●
Mercy Medical Center Redding Redding	65	●	○	●	●
Shasta Regional Medical Center Redding <sup>[3]</sup>	65	●	○	●	●
Alhambra Hospital Medical Center Alhambra <sup>[3]</sup>	64	●	○	●	●
Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento Sacramento	64	●	○	●	●
Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System Salinas	64	●	○	●	●
Tri-City Regional Medical Center Hawaiian Gardens <sup>[3]</sup>	62	●	●	●	●
Sutter Roseville Medical Center Roseville <sup>[2]</sup>	62	●	○	●	●
Memorial Medical Center Modesto	62	●	●	●	●
Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital Santa Rosa <sup>[4]</sup>	61	●	●	●	●
St. Joseph's Medical Center Stockton	61	●	●	●	●
Marian Medical Center Santa Maria	61	●	○	●	●
Paradise Valley Hospital National City	60	●	○	●	●
Sutter Solano Medical Center Vallejo	60	●	●	●	●
Saint Francis Memorial Hospital San Francisco	60	●	○	●	●
Dominican Hospital Santa Cruz	59	●	○	●	●
Contra Costa Regional Medical Center Martinez	59	●	●	●	●
St. Joseph Hospital Orange	59	●	○	●	●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0 100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning

## CALIFORNIA continued

Marin General Hospital Greenbrae	58	●	●	●	●
Sherman Oaks Hospital Sherman Oaks <sup>[3]</sup>	58	●	●	●	●
Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center Chula Vista	58	●	○	●	●
Anaheim Regional Medical Center Anaheim	58	●	●	●	●
Enloe Medical Center Chico <sup>[4]</sup>	57	●	●	●	●
Bakersfield Memorial Hospital Bakersfield	57	●	●	●	●
St. Mary Medical Center Long Beach	57	●	●	●	●
Queen of the Valley Medical Center Napa	57	●	●	●	●
St. Rose Hospital Hayward	57	●	●	●	●
Mercy Hospital of Folsom Folsom	57	●	●	●	●
O'Connor Hospital San Jose	57	●	●	●	●
San Antonio Community Hospital Upland <sup>[3]</sup>	57	○	○	●	●
Emanuel Medical Center Turlock	57	●	○	●	●
St. Mary's Medical Center San Francisco	57	●	●	●	●
Mills-Peninsula Health Services Burlingame	57	●	○	●	●
Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital Valencia	57	●	●	●	●
Stanford Hospital and Clinics Palo Alto	57	●	○	●	●
ValleyCare Medical Center Pleasanton	56	●	○	●	○
Feather River Hospital Paradise	56	●	●	●	○
Mercy San Juan Medical Center Carmichael	55	●	●	●	●
Mercy General Hospital Sacramento	54	●	●	●	○
Scripps Memorial Hospital-Encinitas Encinitas	54	●	●	●	●
Sutter Medical Center of Santa Rosa, Chanate Campus Santa Rosa	53	●	○	●	●
Methodist Hospital of Southern California Arcadia	53	○	○	●	●
San Joaquin General Hospital French Camp	53	●	●	●	●
Scripps Green Hospital La Jolla <sup>[2]</sup>	53	●	○	●	●
Methodist Hospital of Sacramento Sacramento	53	●	●	●	●
St. Mary Medical Center Apple Valley	53	●	●	●	●
LAC/University of Southern California Medical Center Los Angeles	52	●	●	●	●
Alvarado Hospital San Diego	52	●	●	●	●
Scripps Mercy Hospital San Diego <sup>[3]</sup>	52	○	●	●	●
St. Luke's Hospital San Francisco	52	○	○	●	●
Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center Glendale	52	●	●	●	●
Palmdale Regional Medical Center Palmdale	52	●	●	●	●
Regional Medical Center of San Jose San Jose	52	●	●	●	●
Seton Medical Center Daly City	52	●	●	●	●
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center Los Angeles <sup>[2]</sup>	52	●	○	●	●
Orange Coast Memorial Medical Center Fountain Valley	51	●	○	●	○

<sup>[1]</sup> Complications are better than average. <sup>[2]</sup> Complications are worse than average. <sup>[3]</sup> Mortality is better than average. <sup>[4]</sup> Mortality is worse than average.



Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0	100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication
					Scanning

**CALIFORNIA** continued

<b>Santa Clara Valley Medical Center</b> San Jose	51	●	○	●	○
<b>Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center</b> Torrance	51	○	●	●	●
<b>Sequoia Hospital</b> Redwood City	50	○	○	●	●
<b>Providence Holy Cross Medical Center</b> Mission Hills	50	○	○	●	●
<b>Lakewood Regional Medical Center</b> Lakewood	50	○	●	●	●
<b>Doctors Medical Center</b> Modesto <sup>②</sup>	50	●	●	●	●
<b>Los Alamitos Medical Center</b> Los Alamitos <sup>④</sup>	50	●	○	●	●
<b>Eden Medical Center</b> Castro Valley	50	●	○	●	●
<b>Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital</b> Whittier <sup>③</sup>	50	●	●	●	●
<b>Washington Hospital Healthcare System</b> Fremont	50	●	●	●	●
<b>Mercy Hospitals of Bakersfield</b> Bakersfield	49	●	●	●	●
<b>NorthBay Medical Center</b> Fairfield	49	●	●	●	●
<b>Sharp Memorial Hospital</b> San Diego <sup>②</sup> <sup>④</sup>	49	●	●	●	●
<b>Lodi Memorial Hospital</b> Lodi	48	○	●	●	●
<b>Huntington Memorial Hospital</b> Pasadena <sup>②</sup>	48	●	●	●	●
<b>St. Joseph Hospital</b> Eureka	48	●	○	●	○
<b>UCSF Medical Center</b> San Francisco	48	○	●	●	○
<b>John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek</b> Walnut Creek <sup>③</sup>	48	○	○	●	○
<b>Saddleback Memorial Medical Center</b> Laguna Hills <sup>①</sup>	48	○	○	●	○
<b>Los Robles Hospital and Medical Center</b> Thousand Oaks	48	●	○	●	○
<b>St. Helena Hospital</b> Saint Helena	48	●	●	●	●
<b>UC San Diego Health System</b> San Diego <sup>③</sup>	48	○	●	●	○
<b>Desert Regional Medical Center</b> Palm Springs	48	●	●	●	○
<b>Northridge Hospital Medical Center-Roscoe Boulevard Campus</b> Northridge	48	○	○	●	●
<b>Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian</b> Newport Beach <sup>④</sup>	48	●	●	●	●
<b>San Gabriel Valley Medical Center</b> San Gabriel	48	●	●	●	●
<b>John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital</b> Indio	47	●	○	●	●
<b>San Francisco General Hospital Medical Center</b> San Francisco	47	●	●	●	●
<b>Doctors Medical Center-San Pablo Campus</b> San Pablo	47	○	●	●	●
<b>Riverside Community Hospital</b> Riverside	47	○	○	●	●
<b>St. Jude Medical Center</b> Fullerton	47	○	○	●	○
<b>Alameda County Medical Center</b> Oakland	46	○	●	●	●
<b>Riverside County Regional Medical Center</b> Moreno Valley	46	○	●	●	●
<b>Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center</b> Burbank <sup>①</sup>	46	●	●	●	●
<b>Marshall Medical Center</b> Placerville	46	●	●	●	○
<b>Fresno Heart and Surgical Hospital</b> Fresno	46	●	●	○	●
<b>Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula</b> Monterey <sup>④</sup>	46	●	○	●	●
<b>Community Hospital of San Bernardino</b> San Bernardino	46	●	○	●	●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0	100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication
					Scanning

**CALIFORNIA** continued

<b>Palomar Medical Center</b> Escondido	46	●	○	●	○
<b>Downey Regional Medical Center</b> Downey	46	●	●	●	●
<b>Sharp Grossmont Hospital</b> La Mesa <sup>④</sup>	45	●	●	●	○
<b>West Anaheim Medical Center</b> Anaheim <sup>③</sup>	45	●	●	●	●
<b>Scripps Memorial Hospital-La Jolla</b> La Jolla <sup>②</sup>	45	○	○	●	●
<b>Fremont-Rideout Health Group</b> Marysville <sup>④</sup>	44	○	●	●	●
<b>Tri-City Medical Center</b> Oceanside	44	●	○	●	○
<b>Centinel Hospital Medical Center</b> Inglewood <sup>①</sup> <sup>③</sup>	44	●	●	●	○
<b>Community Memorial Health System</b> Ventura	44	●	○	●	●
<b>Good Samaritan Hospital</b> Los Angeles	44	●	●	●	●
<b>St. John's Pleasant Valley Hospital</b> Camarillo	43	○	○	●	○
<b>Beverly Hospital</b> Montebello	43	●	●	●	○
<b>California Pacific Medical Center</b> San Francisco	43	●	●	●	○
<b>St. Francis Medical Center</b> Lynwood	43	●	●	●	●
<b>Ronald Reagan University of California Los Angeles Medical Center</b> Los Angeles <sup>②</sup>	43	●	●	●	○
<b>Good Samaritan Hospital</b> San Jose <sup>②</sup> <sup>④</sup>	42	○	○	●	●
<b>Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital</b> Santa Barbara <sup>④</sup>	42	●	○	●	○
<b>Pomeroado Hospital</b> Poway	42	○	○	●	○
<b>Arrowhead Regional Medical Center</b> Colton	42	●	●	●	●
<b>Torrance Memorial Medical Center</b> Torrance	42	●	●	●	●
<b>St. Vincent Medical Center</b> Los Angeles <sup>①</sup>	42	●	○	●	○
<b>Whittier Hospital Medical Center</b> Whittier	42	●	○	●	○
<b>LAC-Olive View-UCLA Medical Center</b> Sylmar	42	○	●	●	○
<b>Natividad Medical Center</b> Salinas	41	●	●	●	●
<b>John Muir Medical Center, Concord</b> Concord	41	○	○	●	●
<b>Citrus Valley Medical Center-Inter-Community Campus</b> Covina	41	○	○	●	●
<b>Western Medical Center-Santa Ana</b> Santa Ana	41	○	○	●	○
<b>California Hospital Medical Center</b> Los Angeles	41	●	●	●	●
<b>Simi Valley Hospital and Health Care Services</b> Simi Valley	41	●	○	●	○
<b>Glendale Adventist Medical Center</b> Glendale	41	○	●	●	○
<b>Saint Agnes Medical Center</b> Fresno <sup>④</sup>	41	○	●	●	●
<b>Mercy Medical Center Merced</b> Merced	41	●	●	●	●
<b>Long Beach Memorial Medical Center</b> Long Beach	41	○	●	●	○
<b>St. John's Regional Medical Center</b> Oxnard	40	○	●	●	○
<b>Hemet Valley Medical Center</b> Hemet	40	○	●	●	○
<b>Providence Tarzana Medical Center</b> Tarzana	39	●	●	●	●
<b>Clovis Community Medical Center</b> Clovis <sup>②</sup>	39	●	○	●	●
<b>Santa Monica-UCLA Medical Center and Orthopaedic Hospital</b> Santa Monica <sup>②</sup>	39	●	●	●	○
<b>University of California, Davis Medical Center</b> Sacramento <sup>②</sup>	38	○	●	●	○

<sup>①</sup> Complications are better than average. <sup>②</sup> Complications are worse than average. <sup>③</sup> Mortality is better than average. <sup>④</sup> Mortality is worse than average.

Better ← → Worse

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

## CALIFORNIA continued

LAC-Harbor-University of California at Los Angeles Medical Center Torrance	38				
Foothill Presbyterian Hospital Glendora	38				
Antelope Valley Hospital Lancaster <sup>[4]</sup>	38				
Kern Medical Center Bakersfield	38				
Fountain Valley Regional Hospital and Medical Center Fountain Valley	38				
Sutter Delta Medical Center Antioch	37				
University of California, Irvine Healthcare Orange <sup>[2]</sup>	37				
Eisenhower Medical Center Rancho Mirage	37				
Garden Grove Hospital and Medical Center Garden Grove <sup>[3]</sup>	37				
La Palma Intercommunity Hospital La Palma	36				
Community Regional Medical Center Fresno <sup>[4]</sup>	36				
Greater El Monte Community Hospital South El Monte	36				
Los Angeles Community Hospital Los Angeles	36				
USC University Hospital Los Angeles <sup>[2]</sup>	36				
Placentia-Linda Hospital Placentia	35				
Brotman Medical Center Culver City	35				
Redlands Community Hospital Redlands	35				
Valley Presbyterian Hospital Van Nuys	34				
Garfield Medical Center Monterey Park	33				
Parkview Community Hospital Medical Center Riverside	33				
Corona Regional Medical Center Corona <sup>[4]</sup>	32				
Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center San Luis Obispo	32				
Loma Linda University Medical Center Loma Linda <sup>[2]</sup>	32				
Mission Hospital Mission Viejo <sup>[2]</sup>	32				
Olympia Medical Center Los Angeles	31				
West Hills Hospital and Medical Center West Hills	31				
Menifee Valley Medical Center Sun City	30				
Twin Cities Community Hospital Templeton <sup>[4]</sup>	30				
Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center Los Angeles	30				
Kaweah Delta Medical Center Visalia <sup>[4]</sup>	29				
St. Bernardine Medical Center San Bernardino	28				
Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center San Pedro San Pedro	26				
Hanford Community Medical Center Hanford <sup>[4]</sup>	25				

## COLORADO

Yampa Valley Medical Center Steamboat Springs	67				
North Colorado Medical Center Greeley <sup>[3]</sup>	66				
Mercy Regional Medical Center Durango	64				
Poudre Valley Hospital Fort Collins	62				
Medical Center of the Rockies Loveland	62				

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
		Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning
	0 100				

## COLORADO continued

Colorado Plains Medical Center Fort Morgan	61				
Vail Valley Medical Center Vail	61				
Exempla Lutheran Medical Center Wheat Ridge <sup>[3]</sup>	61				
Platte Valley Medical Center Brighton	59				
McKee Medical Center Loveland <sup>[3]</sup>	59				
Exempla Good Samaritan Medical Center Lafayette	59				
Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center Denver <sup>[2]</sup>	59				
St. Mary's Hospital and Medical Center Grand Junction	59				
Longmont United Hospital Longmont <sup>[3]</sup>	59				
Rose Medical Center Denver	58				
Exempla Saint Joseph Hospital Denver	58				
Denver Health Medical Center Denver	57				
Parker Adventist Hospital Parker	57				
Boulder Community Hospital Boulder	56				
St. Anthony North Hospital Westminster	55				
Parkview Medical Center Pueblo <sup>[2]</sup>	55				
Delta County Memorial Hospital Delta	53				
North Suburban Medical Center Thornton	52				
St. Anthony Central Hospital Denver <sup>[2]</sup>	52				
Medical Center of Aurora Aurora	51				
Penrose-St. Francis Health Services Colorado Springs	51				
Sterling Regional MedCenter Sterling	49				
Sky Ridge Medical Center Lone Tree	49				
Swedish Medical Center Englewood <sup>[2]</sup>	48				
Littleton Adventist Hospital Littleton	47				
Avista Adventist Hospital Louisville	47				
Community Hospital Grand Junction	46				
St. Thomas More Hospital Canon City <sup>[4]</sup>	44				
St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center Pueblo <sup>[2]</sup>	44				
Memorial Health System Colorado Springs	44				
Porter Adventist Hospital Denver	43				
San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center Alamosa	41				
Montrose Memorial Hospital Montrose	38				

## IDAHO

West Valley Medical Center Caldwell	63				
Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center Idaho Falls <sup>[4]</sup>	53				

## MONTANA

Billings Clinic Billings <sup>[1]</sup>	72				
Community Medical Center Missoula	48				

Better ← → Worse  
 ● ● ○ ● ●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0 100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning

## NEVADA

Southern Hills Hospital and Medical Center Las Vegas	55	●	○	●	○
Desert Springs Hospital Medical Center Las Vegas	53	●	○	●	●
St. Rose Dominican Hospitals-Siena Campus Henderson	49	○	○	○	○
Northern Nevada Medical Center Sparks	48	○	○	●	●
Spring Valley Hospital Medical Center Las Vegas	46	●	○	●	○
North Vista Hospital North Las Vegas	45	○	○	●	○
Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center Las Vegas	44	○	○	●	●
University Medical Center Las Vegas [2]	44	○	○	●	●
Renown Regional Medical Center Reno [4]	43	○	○	●	●
Centennial Hills Hospital Medical Center Las Vegas	43	○	○	●	●
Valley Hospital Medical Center Las Vegas [4]	41	●	○	●	○
MountainView Hospital Las Vegas [2]	38	○	○	●	○
Summerlin Hospital Medical Center Las Vegas	37	○	○	●	○
St. Rose Dominican Hospitals-Rose de Lima Campus Henderson	33	○	○	●	○
St. Rose Dominican Hospitals-San Martin Campus Las Vegas [2]	24	○	○	●	●

## NEW MEXICO

Presbyterian Hospital Albuquerque [2]	50	○	○	○	○
---------------------------------------	----	---	---	---	---

## OREGON

Salem Hospital Salem	63	●	○	○	●
Saint Alphonsus Medical Center-Ontario Ontario	61	●	○	○	○
Three Rivers Community Hospital and Health Center Grants Pass	60	○	○	○	●
Willamette Valley Medical Center McMinnville	60	●	○	○	○
Providence Willamette Falls Medical Center Oregon City	60	●	○	○	●
Providence Portland Medical Center Portland [2]	60	●	○	○	●
St. Charles Medical Center-Bend Bend	59	○	○	○	●
McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center Springfield	58	○	○	○	●
Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend Springfield	58	○	○	○	●
Providence St. Vincent Medical Center Portland [2]	57	○	○	○	●
Sky Lakes Medical Center Klamath Falls [4]	56	●	○	○	●
Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center Gresham	55	○	○	○	●
Adventist Medical Center Portland	55	●	○	○	○
Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center Corvallis [2]	54	○	○	○	●
Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital and Medical Center Portland	54	○	○	○	○
Mercy Medical Center Roseburg	54	○	○	○	●
Tuality Healthcare Hillsboro	54	○	○	○	●

Hospital	Safety score	Categories			
	0 100	Infections	Readmissions	Communication	Scanning

## OREGON continued

Rogue Valley Medical Center Medford	54	○	○	○	○
Legacy Meridian Park Hospital Tualatin	53	○	○	○	○
Sacred Heart Medical Center Eugene	52	○	○	○	○
Legacy Emanuel Hospital and Health Center Portland [2]	52	○	○	○	○
Silverton Hospital Silverton	49	○	○	○	○
Ashland Community Hospital Ashland	45	○	○	○	○
Samaritan Albany General Hospital Albany	44	○	○	○	○
Providence Medford Medical Center Medford	41	○	○	○	○
OHSU Hospital Portland [2]	40	○	○	○	○
Bay Area Hospital Coos Bay [4]	40	○	○	○	○

## UTAH

Ogden Regional Medical Center Ogden	60	○	○	○	○
St. Mark's Hospital Salt Lake City	57	○	○	○	○
Timpanogos Regional Hospital Orem	55	○	○	○	○

## WASHINGTON

Kadlec Medical Center Richland [3]	71	○	○	○	○
Evergreen Healthcare Kirkland [3]	67	○	○	○	○
St. Francis Hospital Federal Way	65	○	○	○	○
Virginia Mason Medical Center Seattle [3]	65	○	○	○	○
Providence St. Peter Hospital Olympia	62	○	○	○	○
Northwest Hospital & Medical Center Seattle	61	○	○	○	○
Tacoma General Hospital Tacoma	60	○	○	○	○
St. Joseph Medical Center Tacoma [2]	57	○	○	○	○
St. Clare Hospital Tacoma [2]	56	○	○	○	○
Overlake Hospital Medical Center Bellevue	53	○	○	○	○
Providence Regional Medical Center Everett Everett [3]	52	○	○	○	○
Valley Medical Center Renton	52	○	○	○	○
Harrison Medical Center Bremerton	52	○	○	○	○
University of Washington Medical Center Seattle [2]	51	○	○	○	○
Swedish Medical Center-Cherry Hill Campus Seattle [2]	49	○	○	○	○
Harborview Medical Center Seattle [2]	49	○	○	○	○
Multicare Good Samaritan Hospital Puyallup	48	○	○	○	○
Swedish Health Services Seattle [2]	46	○	○	○	○
Auburn Regional Medical Center Auburn	41	○	○	○	○

## WYOMING

Wyoming Medical Center Casper [4]	58	○	○	○	○
-----------------------------------	----	---	---	---	---

[1] Complications are better than average. [2] Complications are worse than average. [3] Mortality is better than average. [4] Mortality is worse than average.





# Sleep tighter

Our survey of 26,451 readers finds insomnia rampant but treatable

**I F YOU STRUGGLE** to keep your eyes open during the day, you're not alone. Almost 60 percent of subscribers we surveyed about their sleep habits said they had trouble falling or staying asleep, or woke up still feeling tired, at least three times a week.

It's not surprising that the top reason cited for inadequate sleep among working respondents was job-related stress. And unemployed respondents were even more likely to have sleep problems than those with jobs (69 percent and 59 percent, respectively). But our data yielded some good news, too: Most problem sleepers had found at least one treatment that helped them. And while prescription sleep aids were deemed the most helpful, a number of people who tried alternative methods, such as regular exercise, meditation, yoga, and deep-breathing exercises, said they helped a lot. That suggests that for at least some insomniacs, help is within reach without the side effects.

Other key findings from our survey included the following:

- Trouble staying asleep was the most common problem, cited by 57 percent of

respondents. Of those, one in three woke up three or more times during a typical night. Women and obese people were more likely than others in our survey to have sleep problems.

- Problem sleepers reported having experienced trouble sleeping for 12 years on average. And 9 percent had struggled with sleep for more than half their lives.

- Almost half of those who tried prescription sleep drugs like zolpidem (Ambien

and generic) or over-the-counter medication like Tylenol PM reported side effects such as next-day drowsiness. The dietary supplements melatonin and valerian caused fewer side effects, but they were also found to be less effective.

- About one-third of problem sleepers said that they snored loudly (or had been told that they did), and 77 percent woke up feeling unrested three or more days a week. Together, frequent snoring and

## Good in bed: What makes a star sleeper

Because our survey included not just problem sleepers but also 8,900 "good sleepers"—people who reported few or no sleep difficulties over the past 30 days—we made some comparisons. Several practices were significantly more common among people who slept soundly:

- Exercising during the day
- Unwinding for 30 minutes before bed
- Going to bed and waking up at a set time
- Engaging in sexual activity before bed

But even good sleepers aren't perfect. Some said that in the past week they left their cell phones on overnight, ate a big meal close to bedtime, or consumed alcohol or caffeine

within several hours of going to bed, all considered threats to sound slumber. And 6 percent admitted that they checked e-mail or Facebook during the night.

Those findings could reflect that some people are just born good sleepers and aren't hindered even by bad habits. Or it could suggest that certain sleep-related behaviors matter more than others. (Some good sleepers also got chemical help: One in 10 said they took prescription medication to help them sleep.) Either way, it makes sense for people who have trouble sleeping to consider some of the steps above.

waking up tired are the hallmark symptoms of sleep apnea. But overall, only 16 percent had received a diagnosis of apnea or used a CPAP mask, the treatment typically prescribed for the disorder.

### The walking tired

Much of what we found in our online survey of subscribers, conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center in February, echoed the findings of other research. For example, 30 percent of employed adults reported sleeping 6 hours or less in a study released in April by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Most people should aim for at least 7 hours.) And in a recent poll by the National Sleep Foundation, one-fifth of pilots said they had made a serious error at work due to sleepiness.

Our subscribers aren't necessarily representative of the general population. But a nationally representative poll of 1,016 adults we conducted found almost identical percentages of people reporting problematic sleep.

"We are currently a sleep-deprived nation," says Steven Scharf, M.D., Ph.D.,

### BY THE NUMBERS

## What's keeping you up

These were the top three factors cited by readers as causing or contributing to sleep problems:



director of the Sleep Disorders Center at the University of Maryland. That's in part because we push our bodies to keep going in our 24/7 culture instead of setting limits and shutting down at night, he adds. But our bodies aren't adapted for simply skipping sleep when it's not convenient. Even small deficits can cause decreases in motor skills and memory, and ongoing lack of sleep can contribute to a slew of medical disorders including heart problems, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes.

### What worked, what didn't

The sleep-deprived have no shortage of options from which to choose. At some point, 40 percent of problem sleepers said

they had tried over-the-counter sleep aids, and 30 percent took prescription medication. Overall, prescription drugs were deemed more effective for improving sleep than nonprescription options, which in turn were rated more effective than the dietary supplements melatonin or valerian. Newer prescription sleeping pills, such as zolpidem and eszopiclone (Lunesta), and older sleep drugs called benzodiazepines, such as temazepam (Restoril and generic), received some of the highest ratings for helpfulness by our survey respondents.

Some readers tried drugs that aren't approved specifically for insomnia but have sedating effects, like the anti-anxiety drug alprazolam (Xanax and generic) and the

## Do you have sleep apnea?

If you've been nudged awake by a bedmate and told that you're snoring—loudly—more times than you care to admit, it might not be just your relationship that's at risk. Frequent, loud snoring, coupled with daytime drowsiness, could indicate obstructive sleep apnea, a disorder in which your breathing stops repeatedly for 10 seconds or longer. The lapses in oxygen and the resulting interruptions to sleep in turn increase the risk of health conditions including high blood pressure and heart disease.

"Snoring and sleep apnea aren't just cosmetic issues," says Todd Swick, M.D., an assistant clinical professor of neurology at the University of Texas School of Medicine in Houston and medical director of Apnix Sleep Diagnostics, a sleep-medicine lab. "Sleep apnea can lead to significant health problems, and in many cases, significant morbidity and mortality."

Roughly one in six respondents to our survey told us that they had received a diagnosis of sleep apnea from a doctor. Of them, 75 percent reported that they currently use a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine, which gently blows air into the throat to keep the airway open during sleep. It's the most common treatment for apnea.



But our survey also uncovered a group of about 2,400 people, or 9 percent of the respondents, who might suffer from sleep apnea based on their responses but haven't received a diagnosis. Fewer than a quarter of them had seen a doctor about their snoring and ongoing tiredness.

### Confirming apnea

Anyone can have sleep apnea, but it's most common among people who are obese, male, and middle-aged or older. In addition to loud snoring and daytime tiredness, symptoms

include morning headaches, mood swings, and difficulty concentrating. If you don't have a bedmate and aren't sure whether you snore, you could try using a voice-activated pocket recorder for a couple of nights.

If you suspect you have apnea, first try self-help measures, including losing weight, sleeping on your side (not your back), and avoiding alcohol and sedating medication. If you still have symptoms, make an appointment with your primary-care doctor and keep a daily log, including how many hours you sleep each night, how you feel when you wake up and throughout the day, and whether you took medication or consumed alcohol or caffeine. Also track whether you exercised and at what times.

Your doctor might recommend a diagnostic sleep test, which can take place at a lab or even at home using a portable device. If you receive a diagnosis of apnea, CPAP is the standard for treatment, but it can require some adaptation. Swick, who has apnea himself, suggests wearing the mask for about 30 minutes before bed to adjust to how it feels and practice breathing through your nose.

"It took me about six weeks to get used to it," Swick says. "Now I can't sleep without it, and most of my patients feel the same way."

antidepressant trazodone. Three percent of respondents who tried prescription drugs took an opiate pain reliever such as oxycodone (OxyContin). They were more likely than those taking other medication to report numerous unpleasant side effects including dizziness, headaches, and stomach problems. Our medical advisers say opiates shouldn't be used off-label to treat sleep problems.

Not everyone uses sleep medication as recommended. At least 30 percent of those who took the newer sleep aids, benzodiazepines, or trazodone said they had used them at least 27 of the previous 30 nights, even though most of the drugs are approved for no longer than 10 days of continuous use. (Trazodone, which is approved for daily use, is an exception.) Taking such medication for longer can lead to dependency and rebound insomnia, and it increases the risk of side effects such as next-day grogginess and reduced effectiveness over time.

Aside from regular exercise, which 41 percent of problem sleepers had tried, few people overall had used most of the alternative therapies we asked about. But a number of those who tried most methods said they helped a lot, especially mind-body practices like meditation, yoga, and deep breathing. And many others said they helped at least a little. Keep in mind that respondents in our survey based their answers on personal experience, so the results can't be compared with scientific clinical trials.

## What you can do

**Start with lifestyle changes.** Given the risks of sleep medication, it makes sense to first try behavioral steps, such as waking up at the same time every day, taking time to unwind before bedtime, and getting exercise during the day, particularly in the morning. (For more ideas, see the box on page 29.) You might also try a white-noise machine (\$20 and up), as 20 percent of problem sleepers in our survey did. Forty-three percent of those who tried the devices said they helped them sleep better.

**Explore alternative methods.** They don't cause side effects, so you can try several at the same time, with or without the short-term use of medication. That might make more sense than taking melatonin or valerian, which rated about the same as the higher-scoring alternative methods.

**Cautiously consider medication if needed.** For a short-term sleep problem such as jet lag or stress, first try a nonprescription sleep aid containing diphenhydramine, our experts advise. If you're still counting sheep after three nights, talk with your doctor about trying generic zolpidem. Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs considers it the best initial prescription option for insomnia because of its efficacy, relative safety, and low price. But check with your doctor before taking any sleep aids, since they can interact with other medication and may cause different side effects in different people.

**Treat underlying conditions.** Anxiety, arthritis, chronic pain, depression, heartburn, high blood pressure, hot flashes, leg cramps, and prostate enlargement can all interfere with sleep. Having one or more such conditions was the strongest predictor in our survey of sleep problems and related daytime symptoms, such as low energy and slowed reaction times.

**Don't make drugs a permanent solution.** Sleeping pills can be helpful for a few nights, but for ongoing insomnia a better option might be cognitive behavioral

## Getting professional help

One-third of problem sleepers had sought help from a medical professional. We found some minor differences in their experiences. Those who went to a pulmonologist or a sleep specialist were more likely to undergo sleep testing or be prescribed a CPAP mask than those seeing other types of providers.

Primary-care doctors were rated as slightly less helpful by those who saw them than pulmonologists, sleep specialists, or psychiatrists. Still, it makes sense for most people to start with their primary-care doctor and then get a referral to a specialist if needed, says Shelby Freedman Harris, Psy.D., director of behavioral sleep medicine at the Montefiore Medical Center in New York.

therapy (CBT), which helps you learn new behavior and mental techniques to improve sleep. Some sleep centers offer CBT; to find one, go to [sleepcenters.org](http://sleepcenters.org). Or use the online therapist finders at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies ([abct.org](http://abct.org)) and the American Psychological Association ([locator.apa.org](http://locator.apa.org)).

## Ratings Sleep aids

Treatment	% who used	% helped a lot
	0	100
<b>PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION</b> <sup>[1]</sup>		
Newer sleep medication (such as Ambien and Lunesta)	17%	71%
Benzodiazepines approved for insomnia (such as Halcion and Restoril)	2	67
Benzodiazepines not approved for insomnia (such as Klonopin and Xanax)	10	59
Trazodone	2	56
Opiates (such as OxyContin)	3	42
<b>SUPPLEMENTS</b> <sup>[1]</sup>		
Melatonin	15	31
Valerian	2	29
<b>OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION</b> <sup>[1]</sup>		
NyQuil	3	43
Drugs with diphenhydramine (such as Advil PM, Tylenol PM, and Benadryl)	30	41
<b>ALTERNATIVE METHODS</b> <sup>[2]</sup>		
Meditation	8	31
Yoga	5	28
Exercise	53	27
Progressive relaxation	9	24
Diet management	23	23
Deep-breathing exercises	13	22
Aromatherapy	3	9

<sup>[1]</sup> Source: 2012 Consumer Reports survey of 8,858 people with sleep problems who used medication in the past 30 days. Differences of fewer than 10 points are not meaningful. <sup>[2]</sup> Source: 2012 Consumer Reports survey of 8,138 people with sleep problems who tried alternative methods in the past 30 days. Differences of fewer than 5 points are not meaningful.





**SLEEP IN** The best way to make sure a mattress will be comfortable once you get it home is to lie on it in the store for at least 10 minutes.

# Mattresses

Comfort doesn't have to cost you big bucks

**A**BOUT 75 PERCENT of those who bought a new mattress reported that it helped them sleep better. But paying more didn't always translate into higher satisfaction the morning after. Nor did buying from a major retailer. Lying down on the mattress for at least 10 minutes in the store remains the best way to find the right mattress.

That's what subscribers told us about more than 17,500 experiences buying and sleeping on mattresses in a survey by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. Though most were satisfied overall with their purchases, they also gave us an earful on the shopping process, which many manufacturers and retailers make as confusing as possible. Here's what they had to say:

**Memory foam and air beds satisfy.** Subscribers who bought memory foam and inflatable air beds were more likely to tell us they were sleeping better than those who purchased traditional innersprings. So it's not surprising that Tempur-Pedic memory foam and Sleep Number air beds were most cited as improving sleep.

**Price-matching offers are meaningless.** If you want value as well as comfort, you'll run into a long-standing business practice that makes it almost impossible to comparison shop. Mattress makers offer some lines nationally, but when those brands are sold through major chains such as Macy's, Sears, and Sleepy's, they're for lines exclusive to those chains. And each retailer usually gives the mattress a different name. As a result, there's no way for you to know which mattress is actually the same as or comparable to one in another store. So price guarantees really don't guarantee much.

If you prefer not to play those games, buy from a retailer that sells its own mattress brands, such as Denver Mattress, Ikea, and the Original Mattress Factory.

**Big names get little praise.** Readers who shopped at Sleepy's, "the mattress professionals," were significantly less satisfied than those who bought at top-rated stores. Though Macy's and Sears rated better than Sleepy's, they also got mostly lukewarm marks, with Sears getting dinged for service and selection. As for major

bed brands, Sealy and Serta were the ones readers were least likely to buy again.

**Price doesn't guarantee happiness.** Tempur-Pedic, almost \$2,500 for a queen, was among the highest in overall brand satisfaction—and among the brands respondents said they'd get again. But the Original Mattress Factory, with a median price of \$855 for a queen, and Ikea, \$515, also rated highly. Sleep Number and Kingsdown cost roughly \$1,800 for a queen-size mattress. But those who bought a Sleep Number mattress were much more likely to say they would buy the brand again and that the mattress helped them sleep better.

**A new box spring isn't a must.** Though most respondents replaced their box spring with their mattress, roughly 80 percent of those who kept their old box spring reported that they were sleeping

## DID YOU KNOW?

# 2 million

That's about how many discarded mattresses in the U.S. are recycled and rebuilt every year. Most states require tags that say that a mattress has used, though not necessarily sanitized, materials. So look for "all-new material."

## Five shopping strategies

▶ Start out with the least expensive bed from a few top brands, and work your way up in cost. Hint: Stores keep the priciest models up front.

▶ You might think the firmest beds are best, but medical studies haven't concluded that they're better for pain sufferers. Check out a few types, from plush to firm. Keep in mind that those terms might mean different things across brands.

▶ Ask about trial periods, return policies, and restocking and pickup fees before buying—especially at warehouse clubs such as Costco or Sam's Club, where you can't try out mattresses. The clubs rated highly for price but not service.

▶ Inspect the mattress and box spring upon delivery. If it's stained or damaged, insist on a replacement.

▶ Don't buy a mattress without a label. Check the one that's delivered to ensure that its label states "all-new material."

better after replacing just their mattress. So if your box spring isn't broken and is still structurally sound, consider keeping it and saving several hundred dollars. One caveat: Some brands require you buy their box spring to get full warranty coverage. You might want to avoid those brands.

**Haggling helps.** Mattresses have hefty markups. That's why 50 percent off "sales" are common. More expensive models have even higher margins. Yet only 34 percent of respondents tried to negotiate price at the store. Those who did saved a median of \$115, with almost a third saving \$150 or more. Whether or not you haggle, never pay full price. And always factor in delivery and haul-away costs.

**Pain drives some selection.** Readers with arthritis, joint problems, or chronic back pain were more likely to report improved sleep from their new mattress than people without those problems—and more likely to say their sleep improved very much. They tended to buy brands with a reputation for helping with sleep problems or back or neck pain, particularly Select Comfort and Tempur-Pedic.

### SEE OUR GUIDE TO MATTRESSES

Use your smart phone to download the RedLaser or ShopSavvy app and scan the code for video.



## Ratings Mattress brands

In order of reader score.

Better ← → Worse  
● ● ● ● ●

Order	Brand	Median price paid (queen)	Reader score	Survey results		
				Would definitely buy again	Improved sleep	Highly satisfied with price
			0 100			
1	Tempur-Pedic	\$2,465	84	●	●	●
2	Original Mattress Factory	855	83	●	○	●
3	Sleep Number (Select Comfort)	1,835	80	●	●	●
4	Ikea	515	80	●	○	●
5	Denver Mattress	845	75	○	○	●
6	Simmons	1,140	74	○	○	○
7	Spring Air	*	72	●	○	○
8	Kingsdown	1,810	72	○	○	●
9	Serta	860	71	●	○	○
10	Sealy	855	70	●	●	○
11	Stearns & Foster	1,440	68	○	○	○

\*We lack sufficient data for purchases of queen-size mattresses for this brand but found it to be generally among the lower-priced brands.

## Ratings Stores

In order of reader score.

Better ← → Worse  
● ● ● ● ●

Order	Retailer	Median price paid (queen)	Reader score	Survey results				
				Quality	Service	Price	Delivery	Selection
			0 100					
1	Original Mattress Factory	\$ 870	89	●	●	●	●	●
2	Costco	710	87	○	●	●	●	●
3	Denver Mattress	845	83	○	○	○	○	○
4	Sleep Train	1,765	83	○	○	○	●	○
5	Sleep Number (Select Comfort)	1,835	81	○	○	○	○	○
6	Ikea	515	81	○	●	●	-	○
7	Macy's	1,245	78	○	○	○	○	○
8	Mattress Firm	1,430	78	○	○	○	○	○
9	Sears	870	78	○	○	○	○	○
10	Sam's Club	610	77	○	●	●	-	●
11	American Mattress	1,195	77	○	○	○	○	○
12	Mattress Warehouse	935	76	○	○	○	○	○
13	Mattress Giant	1,260	75	○	○	○	○	○
14	Mattress Discounters	1,195	75	○	○	○	○	○
15	Sleepy's	1,485	72	○	○	○	○	○

## Guide to the Ratings

Mattress-brand Ratings are based on 12,557 responses about mattresses purchased new between 2007 and June 2011. Retailer Ratings are based on 5,821 shopping experiences at walk-in retailers between 2009 and June 2011. Findings reflect the experiences of our subscribers but not necessarily those of the general population. **Reader score** reflects overall satisfaction with a particular brand or retailer. Retailer Ratings were tied most closely to service, perceived mattress quality, and price, but are not limited to the factors listed under survey results. A score of 100 would mean all respondents were completely satisfied; 80 would mean very satisfied; 60, fairly well satisfied. Differences of fewer than 6 points are not meaningful. "-" signifies not applicable or insufficient sample size.





# Tech to go!

Best choices in smart phones, tablets, e-book readers, cameras, and more

## INSIDE

Beachproofing your gear page 36  
E-book readers page 37  
Tablets page 38  
Smart phones page 40  
Digital cameras page 42  
Plus Laptops page 47

**T**HE LATEST HANDHELD DEVICES are thinner, lighter, and more powerful than those of even a year or two ago. Despite those advances, prices continue to drop, with more \$100 smart phones and \$250 tablets on the market, to mention just two examples.

Gadgets are also becoming more versatile, but chances are you'll still be toting around more than one this summer. The smart phone is the

closest thing to an all-in-one mobile device, but it still doesn't offer all the capabilities of a stand-alone camera for capturing images, a tablet for Web surfing and gaming, or an e-book reader for reading type, especially when you're outdoors. This special section features advice on shopping for mobile devices and Ratings of more than 150 recommended smart phones, tablets, e-book readers, and digital cameras, including 24 CR Best Buys.

**FIVE PICKS**  
Clockwise from top left, the Apple iPad, Barnes & Noble Nook Color, Sony SLT-A77V, Nikon Coolpix AW100, and Panasonic Lumix DMC-ZS15.





## Displays get bigger and better

**As screens** in just about every mobile category grow, there's more size overlap. Most smart phones in our Ratings have a display measuring 4 inches or larger, and some now approach or exceed the 5-inch mark, a size that was once exclusive to e-book readers and tablets. Tablets come in more sizes between 7 and 10 inches, and soon there will be a Toshiba tablet with a 13-inch screen, pushing into laptop territory. LCD screens now fill the back of most point-and-shoot cameras, with more approaching the size of those on smaller smart phones. E-book readers are an exception to the rule. The displays on most remain 6 or 7 inches, the best compromise for easy reading and maximum portability.

Displays on smart phones and tablets have become more responsive to touch (a feature most have) and refresh more quickly, in part because of speedy dual- and quad-core processors. They also offer dazzling detail. Examples include the high-resolution Retina displays on the iPhone 4 and 4S and the newest, third-generation iPad, as well as high-definition displays from HTC, LG, and Samsung.

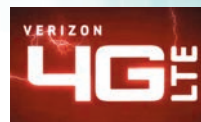
Chances are that the screen on any mobile device in our Ratings of recommended models will suffice. But opt for a model with a higher-rated display to get the most enjoyment from color images on a tablet or to more easily read type in a smaller font size on a phone or an e-book reader.



**Samsung's highly rated Galaxy Note phone, shown full size here, has the largest display in our Ratings. At 5.3 inches, it's a full inch larger than those on many models, such as the smaller phone shown behind. The extra real estate is great for reading, gaming, and the like, but it hampers one-handed use of the phone, which might also fit less easily in your pocket.**

## Faster connections

**Almost all** of the recommended smart phones and the tested tablets with wireless-carrier



capability use faster 4G networks as well as older 3G ones. (E-book readers continue to use 3G, which is more than adequate for their data needs.) That promises faster data downloads and possibly higher bills.

All of the major carriers—with a nudge from the Federal Communications Commission, supported by Consumers Union, the advocacy arm of Consumer Reports—have agreed to provide free alerts when you approach your data limits to minimize “bill shock” from overage charges. Carriers have also said they'll soon offer data plans to allow families using multiple devices to share a monthly data allocation. Pricing of such plans isn't known.

Whenever possible, use Wi-Fi for data-intensive tasks such as streaming video. The number of free Wi-Fi hot spots is growing, in part because of a recent pact among Bright House Networks, Cablevision, Comcast, Cox, and Time Warner Cable to share their 50,000 Wi-Fi hot spots around the country with one another's subscribers as a perk to cable users.

## Thinner profiles

**Mobile devices** continue to get slimmer, thanks in part to design changes such as thinner batteries that surround circuitry. Cameras, for example, have become remarkably thin. Yet some slim models have retained, and even increased, a powerful optical zoom, which tends to add bulk; the model shown below offers an ample 5x zoom, for example.

But making a device smaller and increasing the power of its processor and battery can increase surface heat, as we found in tests of the iPad 2 and the warmer (though still safe), newest iPad. And there's a downside to wraparound batteries: You can't swap them in and out yourself.

**SKINNY WINNERS** The thinnest tested smart phone and tablet—the HTC One S, right, and Toshiba Excite LE, far right—are each about 0.3 inches thick. The Sony Cyber-shot TX66, below, is only about 0.5 inches thick; it isn't yet rated.



## ► Devices learn to share

**Manufacturers are heading** toward integrated operating systems that promise to make it easier to access applications, multimedia content, personal data, and messages from any device.

Microsoft is launching an integrated OS this fall. While it may have different names for different devices—including Windows 8, Windows RT (for some tablets), and Windows Phone 8 (Apollo)—it promises to bring a more uniform interface to Microsoft's multiple platforms. Apple already allows you to download apps—once restricted to devices that use the company's mobile OS—to Mac computers. The launch of Apple's new computer OS, Mountain Lion, this summer will bring more features. They include being able to send unlimited free messages from



**A CONSISTENT LOOK** The Windows 8 OS promises to bring the “tiled” interface of Windows phones to tablets and PCs.

your Mac to other Apple owners and have the messages sync with your iPhone and iPad.

Another cross-platform trend is a growing ability to transfer content from handheld devices to your TV. On Macs with the new OS, you'll be able to use AirPlay mirroring, which will let you view what's on an iPad or iPhone 4S on your TV set via an Apple TV console. And TV manufacturers, including LG, Panasonic, and Samsung, now offer the ability (either built into the set or via downloadable apps) to transfer content such as videos and photos from mobile devices to your TV.

### ► DID YOU KNOW?

Many handhelds have maximum temperatures for use, storage, or both that can be easily reached in summer. For example, 95° F is the hottest temperature recommended for iPhones, iPads, and Kindles. Check the guidelines for your gear.

## Beachproofing your gear: It's in the bag



**PRICEY PROTECTION** The DryCase Tablet bag, \$38, can be vacuum-sealed and has a waterproof headphone jack.

**Taking a tablet**, phone, or e-book reader to the beach is second nature—and also nerve-wracking, given how easily water and sand can wreck gear.

We've told readers to use zipper or slider food bags to protect devices. But you can also buy special bags that makers claim offer maximum protection, some with features that include headphone jacks.

So we took the Hefty Slider Bag, which costs 10 to 13 cents depending on size, and tested it against five such bags: the DryCase, \$29, and larger DryCase Tablet, \$38, the Lavod LMB-011, \$19, the Seattle Sports Dry Doc, \$16, and the Trendy Digital WaterGuard, \$16.

The special bags stayed dry inside when we gave each a brief dunking in water. They also kept out sand sprinkled along their seals. But the Hefty bag also passed both tests.

All the bags allowed us to control key functions of the devices. Screens could be swiped and pressed, for example, and volume and brightness controls could be adjusted.

We could even shoot photos, though the images were cloudy, especially when shot

through the thicker bags. The bags' shiny plastic also increased glare, so you may want to use them in the shade.

The tighter the bag, the easier the device was to use. While the DryCase bags were the priciest, they have a unique vacuum-sealing feature plus a headphone jack that's protected against sand and water.

It took a few tries to eliminate wrinkling, but eventually we were able to seal the DryCase using the bulb-shaped hand pump that's included. But you should be able to create a passable vacuum seal with many other bags by closing the seal all but the last half-inch or so, then pushing the air out before closing it completely.

**Bottom line.** Bagging your gear is a chore, but we recommend it for the beach or any other place where handhelds might be ruined. Any zipper or slider bag will probably provide passable protection, and the price is certainly right. Even a special bag will probably be less expensive than such alternatives as a special, supposedly weatherproof case, which also permanently adds weight and bulk.

Buy a few bags in different sizes to see which ones fit your gadgets the best. Consider replacing them periodically, particularly if sand has scratched the surface and affected how clearly you can see the screen and use its controls. Place devices in the bags before you leave home, and try not to remove them until you're back home and have brushed sand and water off.

But to take decent photos on the beach, you'll need to unseal and remove your phone or camera. If that worries you, you can buy one of the heavy-duty cases or a new rugged model designed to be weatherproof. The latter includes the recommended Samsung Rugby Smart, from AT&T, in our smart-phone Ratings on page 40 and some recommended cameras in the Ratings on page 44.



**BETTER DEAL** A 10-cent zipper or slider bag can protect gear at the beach. You can even make calls through the plastic.



# E-book readers

**Why get an e-book reader** when you could peruse e-books on a tablet or phone? Reader screens are bigger than those on phones and more legible outdoors than phone or tablet displays. Readers weigh less than same-sized tablets and run longer on a charge. And readers offer few distractions. With most, you can't check e-mail or go online, so you focus on reading, just as you do with a physical book or magazine.

## Overview

Rated models have 6- or 7-inch screens. All have black-and-white e-ink screens except **5** and **13**, which have color LCD screens.

- ✓ **CR Best Buy** These recommended models stand out for low price.
- ✓ **Recommended** These are strong performers, including in the most important attributes.

## BEST VALUES

- 2 Barnes & Noble** \$100 **CR Best Buy**
- 6 Amazon** \$110 **CR Best Buy**
- 7 Amazon** \$80 **CR Best Buy**
- 8 Kobo** \$80 **CR Best Buy**
- 12 Amazon** \$100 **CR Best Buy**

These models have only Wi-Fi, a type of connectivity we think suffices for most people. **2** offers standout touch navigation, is fairly light, and is among the fastest at start-up and page turns. Of the two Kindles without a touch screen, **7** is almost identical to **6** but costs \$30 less because it carries ads and special offers from Amazon. (Consider their pricier predecessors, **3** and **4**, mostly if you prefer a physical keyboard to the virtual keyboard on the newer models.) **12** is their touch-screen sibling, also with ads and special offers. Its very large maximum type size would make it a fine choice for sight-impaired readers. **6** is among the lightest e-book readers we've tested in this size; it, too, has an exceptionally large maximum type size.

## BEST FOR NIGHTTIME READING

- 1 Barnes & Noble** \$140

This sibling of the Nook Simple Touch, **2**, adds LED lighting, handy in a dark room. The light can be turned off when not needed. Using the light full-time halves the claimed battery life to 30 days, still ample for most users. Its built-in antiglare screen protector (a \$20 option for the Nook Simple Touch) reduces glare in bright light but slightly impairs readability in regular lighting.

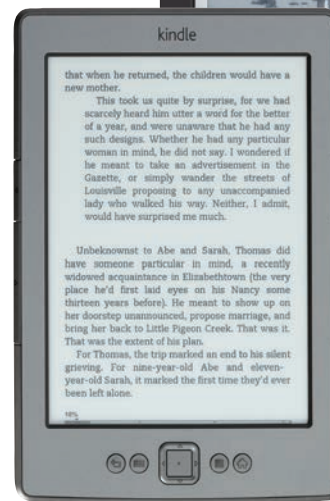
## BEST COLOR MODEL

- 5 Barnes & Noble** \$170

The Nook Color is a fine budget alternative to higher-priced tablets for reading e-magazines and illustrated e-books. If you mostly plan to stream video and surf the Web rather than read, a better tablet's faster processor would be a plus.



1 Barnes & Noble



7 Amazon



8 Kobo

## Ratings

**Recommended models only** From 22 tested.

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Test results					Features		Screen			
				0	Readability	Versatility	Responsiveness	Page turn	Navigation	File support	Battery life (claimed)	Weight (oz.)	Display size (in.)	Touch	Color
				P   F   G   VG   E											
	1	Barnes & Noble Nook Simple Touch with GlowLight	\$140	<div><div>83</div></div>						60 days/ 30 with GlowLight	7.1	6.0			
	2	Barnes & Noble Nook Simple Touch Reader	100	<div><div>82</div></div>						60 days	7.5	6.0			
	3	Amazon Kindle Keyboard 3G	190	<div><div>79</div></div>						60 days	8.2	6.0			
	4	Amazon Kindle Keyboard 3G with Special Offers	140	<div><div>79</div></div>						60 days	8.2	6.0			
	5	Barnes & Noble Nook Color	170	<div><div>77</div></div>						up to 8 hr.	15.8	6.8			
	6	Amazon Kindle without Special Offers	110	<div><div>74</div></div>						30 days	5.9	6.0			
	7	Amazon Kindle with Special Offers	80	<div><div>74</div></div>						30 days	5.9	6.0			
	8	Kobo eReader Touch Edition	80	<div><div>72</div></div>						30 days	6.6	6.0			
	9	Amazon Kindle Touch 3G without Special Offers	190	<div><div>71</div></div>						60 days	7.6	6.0			
	10	Amazon Kindle Touch 3G with Special Offers	150	<div><div>71</div></div>						60 days	7.6	6.0			
	11	Amazon Kindle Touch without Special Offers	140	<div><div>68</div></div>						60 days	7.4	6.0			
	12	Amazon Kindle Touch with Special Offers	100	<div><div>68</div></div>						60 days	7.4	6.0			
	13	Kobo Vox eReader	180	<div><div>67</div></div>						7 hours	14.5	7.0			
	14	Sony Reader Wi-Fi PRS-T1	130	<div><div>67</div></div>						>30 days	5.8	5.9			

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

- ✓ CR Best Buy
- ✓ Recommended



# Tablets

**Tablets** are the perfect choice for a take-it-with-you, do-it-all device, good for e-mail, Web surfing, action games and more. Displays on these recommended models are crisp and bright enough for you to enjoy movies, books, magazines, or a video chat with friends and family.

## Ratings

**Recommended models only** From 49 tested.

B1 Apple



D1 Samsung

● Excellent  
 ● Very good  
 ○ Good  
 ○ Fair  
 ● Poor

✓ CR Best Buy  
 ✓ Recommended

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Screen size (in.)	Test results							Features & specs				
						Ease of use	Display	Touch response	Versatility	Portability	Battery life (hr.)	Weight (lb.)	Internal storage (GB)	Operating system	Can act as Wi-Fi hot spot	Memory-card reader	Camera

### A 9- TO 10-INCH SCREEN, 3G/4G+WI-FI

✓	1	Apple iPad (4G, 16GB) (3rd gen.)	\$630	85	9.7	●	●	●	●	●	11.6	1.5	16, 32, or 64	iOS 5.0			●	●
✓	2	Samsung Galaxy Tab 8.9 (4G, 16GB)	630	84	8.9	●	●	●	●	●	8.9	1.0	16	Android 3.2			●	●
✓	3	Apple iPad 2 (3G, 16GB)	530	82	9.7	●	●	●	●	●	11.6	1.3	16, 32, or 64	iOS 5.0			●	●
✓	4	Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1 (4G, 16GB)	700	80	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	8.9	1.3	16 or 32	Android 3.1	●		●	●
✓	5	Motorola Droid Xyboard 10.1 (4G, 16GB)	700	80	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	8.9	1.3	16, 32, or 64	Android 3.2	●		●	●

### B 9- TO 10-INCH SCREEN, WI-FI-ONLY

✓	1	Apple iPad (16GB) (3rd gen.)	500	84	9.7	●	●	●	●	●	11.5	1.5	16, 32, or 64	iOS 5.0			●	
✓	2	Asus Eee Pad Transformer Prime TF201 (32GB)	500	83	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	8.5	1.3	32 or 64	Android 4.0			●	●
✓	3	Samsung Galaxy Tab 2 (10.1) (16GB)	400	83	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	12.4	1.3	16	Android 4.0			●	●
✓	4	Samsung Galaxy Tab 8.9 (16GB)	400	82	8.9	●	●	●	●	●	8.4	1.0	16 or 32	Android 3.1			●	●
✓	5	Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1 (16GB)	450	81	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	9.3	1.2	16 or 32	Android 3.1			●	●
✓	6	Asus Transformer Pad TF300T (16GB)	380	81	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	8.9	1.4	16 or 32	Android 4.0			●	●
✓	7	Toshiba Excite 10 (16GB)	450	80	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	8.8	1.3	16, 32, or 64	Android 4.0			●	●
✓	8	Toshiba Excite 10LE (16GB)	530	80	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	8.1	1.1	16 or 32	Android 4.0			●	●
✓	9	Apple iPad 2 (16GB)	400	80	9.7	●	●	●	○	●	11.6	1.3	16, 32, or 64	iOS 5.0			●	
✓	10	Sony Tablet S (16GB)	350	80	9.4	●	●	●	●	●	9.1	1.3	16 or 32	Android 4.0			●	●
✓	11	Acer Iconia Tab A510 (32GB)	450	79	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	10.0	1.5	32	Android 4.0			●	●
✓	12	Asus Eee Pad Transformer (16GB)	400	76	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	9.0	1.5	16	Android 4.0			●	●
✓	13	Motorola Xoom (32GB)	500	75	10.1	●	●	●	●	●	11.0	1.6	32	Android 3.1			●	●

### C 7- TO 8-INCH SCREEN, 3G/4G+WI-FI

✓	1	Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.7 (4G, 16GB)	700	80	7.7	●	●	●	●	●	8.3	0.8	16	Android 3.2	●	●	●	●
✓	2	Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.0 Plus (4G, 16GB)	500	75	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	6.2	0.8	16	Android 3.2	●	●	●	●
✓	3	Pantech Element (4G, 16GB)	450	75	8.0	●	●	●	●	●	10.2	1.0	16	Android 3.2			●	●
✓	4	T-Mobile SpringBoard (4G, 16GB)	430	73	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	6.1	0.9	16	Android 3.2	●	●	●	●
✓	5	Motorola Droid Xyboard 8.2 (4G, 16GB)	600	72	8.2	●	●	●	●	●	5.2	0.9	16 or 32	Android 3.2	●		●	●
✓	6	ZTE Optik (3G, 16GB)	350	72	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	6.6	0.9	16	Android 3.2	●	●	●	●
✓	7	Sony Tablet P (4G, 4GB)	550	71	7.0	●	●	●	○	○	6.3	0.8	4	Android 3.2			●	●

### D 7- TO 8-INCH SCREEN, WI-FI-ONLY

✓	1	Samsung Galaxy Tab 2 (7.0) (8GB)	250	77	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	8.3	0.8	8	Android 4.0			●	●
✓	2	Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.0 Plus (16GB)	350	74	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	6.5	0.8	16 or 32	Android 3.2			●	●
✓	3	Toshiba Thrive 7" (16GB)	380	71	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	5.0	0.8	16 or 32	Android 3.2			●	●
✓	4	BlackBerry PlayBook (16GB)	200	70	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	7.6	1.0	16, 32, or 64	RIM QNX 2.0			●	●
✓	5	Amazon Kindle Fire (8GB)	200	66	7.0	●	●	●	○	●	6.3	0.9	8	Android 2.3				
✓	6	Barnes & Noble Nook Tablet (16GB)	250	63	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	6.2	0.9	8 or 16	Android 2.3			●	



**B7** Toshiba

## Overview

A 7- to 8-inch model is usually lighter than a 10-inch, including Apple's iPad, and will more easily fit in a bag or overcoat, though you may find its display a bit small for some content. Wi-Fi models are best for most people. Consider a 3G- or 4G-capable model only if your need for wireless on the road justifies the higher up-front cost plus monthly charges. All models listed here have a user-facing webcam, built-in microphone and speaker, sound that's at least fair for music, headphone jack, Wi-Fi with 802.11n, and capacitive touch screen.

### BEST CHOICES IN IPADS

**B1** Apple \$500

**B9** Apple \$400

**B1** has an excellent display with 2048x1536 resolution and realistic, natural colors. The 5-megapixel camera, with higher resolution than most, takes very good photos. Battery life is quite long. It's a great magazine reader, and the app store offers unmatched selection. **B9** is the best deal available for the iPad, and although it's the prior-generation iPad 2, it's still an excellent tablet.

### BEST 10-INCH ANDROID TABLETS

**B3** Samsung \$400

**B6** Asus \$380

**B7** Toshiba \$450

**B8** Toshiba \$530

**B3** has the longest battery life, 12.4 hours. The other three in this group lasted more than 8 hours. All have memory-card readers and use Android 4, the latest version for tablets. **B3**, **B6**, and **B7** are newer, less-expensive versions of previous models that are also rated. **B3** is slightly thicker and heavier than its predecessor, **B5**, while **B6** is heavier than its predecessor, **B2**, and lacks its special screen coating that nearly eliminates fingerprints and makes for smoother swiping. **B7** is slightly thicker and heavier than the earlier **B8** and also lacks its special coating.

### BEST 7-INCH ANDROID TABLETS

**D1** Samsung \$250 **CR Best Buy**

**D5** Amazon \$200 **CR Best Buy**

**D1** is among the best choices for a smaller tablet. It's competitively priced and lightweight, with long battery life. **D5** is the lowest-cost Android tablet. Paired with an \$80 annual subscription to Amazon Prime, it offers easy access to content bought, stored, or streamed free from Amazon.

# Great for You Great for Us

**You receive income for life** through our Consumer Reports Gift Annuity program. With a charitable donation of \$10,000 or more to Consumer Reports, you will receive very favorable, fixed rate annuity payments for your lifetime(s) that are unaffected by economic downturns.

Sample age	Yearly Rate
<b>62</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>73</b>	<b>5.5</b>
<b>81</b>	<b>7.0</b>
<b>90</b>	<b>9.0</b>

Two Lives	Yearly Rate
<b>76 / 73</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
<b>83 / 80</b>	<b>6.0</b>

Ask us about additional rates and deferred annuities.

## Your charitable donation

is eligible for certain tax benefits and a portion of your annuity payments may be tax free. In addition, you will receive a lifetime subscription to Consumer Reports.

For more information, please return the no-obligation slip or call Ed Pitaro for a confidential personal benefits profile:

**914-378-2647**

This is not legal advice. Any prospective donor should seek the advice of a qualified estate and/or tax professional to determine the consequences of his/her gift.

**We receive funding** to help us test products and services and inform consumers with our unbiased reports. Your contribution helps us to maintain our no-advertising policies.



Because of his generous gift, Raey Webster receives lifetime income payments while supporting our mission.

### Tell me more about the Consumer Reports Charitable Gift Annuity<sup>SM</sup>

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

I am thinking of donating \_\_\_\_\_ to establish my Smart Consumer Gift Annuity

Mail to: Ed Pitaro • Consumer Reports • 101 Truman Avenue • Yonkers, NY • 10703 or e-mail to [epitaro@consumer.org](mailto:epitaro@consumer.org) or fax to: 914-378-2916

0812AFR

# Smart phones

**Cameras continue to generate** news in smart phones, and to help drive choice. Virtually all models now shoot high-definition video and have a second, front-facing camera that allows for easy self-portraits and video chat. Innovations include rapid-fire shooting on all the top-rated HTC models, which can also snap stills while taking videos.

## Overview

Choosing a smart phone means picking a carrier, too. So our Ratings group phones by carrier, in order of reader satisfaction. Prices are those for a two-year contract, including rebates.

### BEST CHOICES FOR VERIZON

- A1** Motorola Droid Razr Maxx \$200  
**A2** Motorola Droid Razr (32GB) \$250  
**A4** LG Spectrum \$200  
**A5** Motorola Droid 4 \$200  
**A8** LG Lucid \$80

**A1** has exceptionally long battery life, while the nearly identical **A2** has a relatively thin profile. **A4** has a 4.5-inch high-definition display with excellent quality. **A5** has a top-notch, slide-out keyboard with five rows of keys. **A4** and **A8** have a unique feature that lets you tap the side of the phone to move the cursor while typing or to navigate from one photo to another.

### BEST CHOICES FOR SPRINT

- B1** HTC Evo 4G LTE \$200  
**B2** Motorola Photon 4G \$100  
**B3** Samsung Galaxy S II Epic 4G Touch \$150  
**B4** LG Viper \$80

**B1** has a 4.7-inch, high-definition (720p) display. The eco-friendly **B4** is made from recyclable materials. Both models run on Sprint's 4G LTE network. **B1** and **B2** have a kickstand to prop up the phone so that you can view videos hands-free. **B2** is one of the few Sprint phones that can roam abroad, in countries with GSM networks. **B3** has an excellent 4.5-inch display that changes to a split view when the phone is tilted on its side while e-mail or messages are being displayed. **B2** and **B3** run on Sprint's older 4G network based on WiMax technology.

### BEST CHOICES FOR T-MOBILE

- C1** HTC One S \$200  
**C2** Samsung Galaxy S II \$230  
**C4** HTC Amaze 4G \$230

These phones all run on T-Mobile's high-speed 4G (HSPA+) network. The pocket-friendly **C1** is thin, light, and comfortable to hold. **C2** has an excellent 4.5-inch display with the



**A1** Motorola Droid Razr Maxx



**A5** Motorola Droid 4

**B1** HTC Evo 4G LTE

## Ratings

**Recommended models only** From 64 tested.

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Test results										Features				
		Similar models, in small type, are comparable to tested model. We also list models of some phones offered by other carriers.			Ease of use	Messaging	Web browsing	Display quality	Voice quality	Phoning	Battery life	Camera		Portability	Operating system	Display size (in.)	Camera (megapixels)	Broadband 4G data	Keyboard
													Image quality	Video quality				Virtual	Physical

### A VERIZON This carrier was among the more satisfying in almost all cities in our survey.

✓ 1	Motorola Droid Razr Maxx	\$200	78	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.3	8.0	•	•
✓ 2	Motorola Droid Razr (32GB) 16GB, \$200	250	75	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.3	8.0	•	•
✓ 3	Motorola Droid Bionic	100	74	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.3	8.0	•	•
✓ 4	LG Spectrum	200	73	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.5	8.0	•	•
✓ 5	Motorola Droid 4	200	73	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.0	8.0	•	•
✓ 6	Samsung Galaxy Nexus Also available on Sprint, \$150	200	72	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.7	5.0	•	•
✓ 7	Samsung Stratosphere	100	72	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.0	4.9	•	•
✓ 8	LG Lucid	80	70	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.0	4.9	•	•
✓ 9	Samsung Droid Charge	0	69	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.3	8.0	•	•
✓ 10	Apple iPhone 4S (16GB) 32GB, \$300; 64GB, \$400	200	67	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	i	3.5	8.0	•	•
✓ 11	Motorola Droid X2	50	65	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.3	8.0	•	•

### B SPRINT This carrier was among the more satisfying in almost all cities in which it was rated in our survey.

✓ 1	HTC Evo 4G LTE	200	74	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.7	8.0	•	•
✓ 2	Motorola Photon 4G	100	73	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.3	8.0	•	•
✓ 3	Samsung Galaxy S II Epic 4G Touch Also available from Credo Mobile, \$150	150	72	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.5	8.0	•	•
✓ 4	LG Viper	80	70	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.0	4.9	•	•
✓ 5	Samsung Epic 4G	100	68	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.0	4.9	•	•
✓ 6	Apple iPhone 4S (16GB) 32GB, \$300; 64GB, \$400	200	67	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	i	3.5	8.0	•	•

### C T-MOBILE This carrier was among the more satisfying in many of the cities in which it was rated in our survey.

✓ 1	HTC One S	200	77	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.3	8.0	•	•
✓ 2	Samsung Galaxy S II	230	75	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.5	8.0	•	•
✓ 3	Samsung Galaxy S Blaze 4G	100	74	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.0	4.9	•	•
✓ 4	HTC Amaze 4G	230	74	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	A	4.3	8.0	•	•



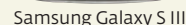


**C3** Samsung  
Galaxy S Blaze 4G

**D1** HTC One X

## First look

**Thin and talked-about** Cutting-edge features make the Samsung Galaxy S III one of the most anticipated phones of the year. Though still in testing at press time, this advanced Android model looked promising. It's available for \$200 for the 16GB version on AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, and Verizon. The Galaxy S III packs a huge (4.8-inch) high-definition (720p) display, a highly responsive touch screen, and an impressive array of sensors and software that recognize gestures and biometrics to make phone navigation more intuitive. Features include SmartStay, which keeps the screen from going to sleep when you're reading. You can share photos, videos, and other content wirelessly over Wi-Fi and NFC technology with other devices, though some work only among Galaxy S IIIs.



- ☒ CR Best Buy  
☒ Recommended
- Excellent  
 ◐ Very good  
 ○ Good  
 ◑ Fair  
 ● Poor

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Test results										Features					
					Ease of use	Messaging	Web browsing	Display quality	Voice quality	Phoning	Battery life	Camera		Portability	Operating system <sup>1</sup>	Display size (in.)	Camera (megapixels)	Broadband 4G data	Keyboard	Physical
												Image quality	Video quality							

**C T-MOBILE** continued

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	HTC Sensation 4G	\$150	<div><div>71</div></div>	<div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	<div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	A	4.3	8.0	<div><div>●</div><div>●</div></div>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	T-Mobile G2x	100	<div><div>70</div></div>	<div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>○</div></div>	<div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	A	4.0	8.0	<div><div>●</div><div>●</div></div>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	T-Mobile Sidekick 4G	0	<div><div>69</div></div>	<div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	<div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	A	3.5	3.1	<div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>●</div></div>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	T-Mobile myTouch 4G	0	<div><div>69</div></div>	<div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	<div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	A	3.8	5.1	<div><div>●</div><div>●</div></div>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	HTC myTouch 4G Slide	200	<div><div>66</div></div>	<div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	<div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	A	3.7	8.0	<div><div>●</div><div>●</div><div>●</div></div>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10	BlackBerry Bold 9900 4G Also available on AT&T, \$200	100	<div><div>66</div></div>	<div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	<div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	B	2.8	4.9	<div><div>●</div><div>●</div></div>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11	HTC Radar 4G	100	<div><div>66</div></div>	<div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>●</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	<div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div><div>○</div></div>	W	3.8	5.0	<div><div>●</div><div>●</div></div>

**D AT&T** This carrier scored the lowest in satisfaction in almost all cities in our survey.

[illegible]

<sup>1</sup> A=Android, B=BlackBerry, i = iOS, and W=Windows Phone. <sup>2</sup> Records only standard-definition video. <sup>3</sup> No front-facing camera.

same split-view mode as B3. **C4's** camera features include the ability to combine individual poses from a few photos to create the best group shot.

## BEST CHOICES FOR AT&T

- D1 HTC** One X \$200  
**D2 Samsung** Galaxy S II Skyrocket \$150  
**D3 Samsung** Galaxy Note \$250  
**D4 LG** Nitro HD \$0  
**D10 Nokia** Lumia 900 \$100  
**D13 Samsung** Rugby Smart \$100

**D1**, with a superb 4.7-inch, high-definition (720p) display, delivered top-notch performance in many key areas. **D2** has a high-quality 4.5-inch display. **D3's** 5.3-inch display, the largest we've seen, makes this phone a good alternative to an e-book reader or small tablet. Both of those Samsungs have the split-view feature found on B3. **D4** has a high-definition (720p) 4.5-inch display and other top-notch features. **D10** is a high-scoring Windows phone with a great 4.3-inch display. It's one of the few Windows phones with full-featured navigation. **D13** is the first smart phone we've seen with both a rugged design and 4G capability.

## IF YOU WANT AN IPHONE

- A10, B6, D9** Apple iPhone 4S (16GB) \$200

Available on Verizon and Sprint, the iPhone 4S offers a sharp screen and a voice-activated assistant, Siri, that responds to commands and questions. Its camera is among the best, with very good photos and video quality rivaling that of the better HD pocket camcorders. It doesn't have the signal-loss problem of the iPhone 4. Only the AT&T version, **D9**, has 4G. On Verizon and Sprint, the phone works on GSM networks abroad.

# Cameras

**Unless all you ever do** with photographs is text them, or upload them to Facebook, you still need a real camera. Even models that are barely larger than a phone offer optical zoom (some as high as 10x), along with a wider variety of controls than a phone. Advanced models let you shoot more types of subjects under more varied conditions, including very low light.

## ► Cameras get smaller yet more capable

**Slimmer superzooms.** More models have zooms as great as 20x in bodies that are remarkably thin for a superzoom. They often include very good stabilizers that avoid blurry shots by minimizing the effects of handshake.

### Greater choice of tough models.

A growing number of cameras are designed to withstand dropping, immersion in water, and other hazards. The recommended Nikon Coolpix AW100 and Panasonic Lumix DMC-TS4, whose manufacturers say they have such tough designs, had very good image quality and good overall performance.

### More innovative SLR-like models.

These models offer features and performance that match many full-sized SLRs, but they're lighter and more compact. Some even surpass SLRs in certain features, such as burst mode and video autofocus. And some include excellent, versatile viewfinders.



Sony NEX-7K



Panasonic Lumix DMC-TS4



Nikon Coolpix S8200

**More Wi-Fi connectivity.** Cameras can't rival the more-or-less continuous connectivity of smart phones, but more advanced cameras can automatically upload shots via Wi-Fi to sites such as Facebook and YouTube. Some full-sized camcorders can do so, too.



### SEE OUR GUIDE TO CAMERAS

Use your smart phone to download the RedLaser or ShopSavvy app and scan the code for video.



## A camera and a camcorder that steal the show



**The Nikon Coolpix S1200pj** subcompact camera, \$430, and the Sony HDR-PJ580V full-sized camcorder, \$800, are unusual road companions. Each has a built-in projector that beams photos or video onto any surface, so you can enjoy vacation slide shows and home-movie screenings even if you don't have a computer or TV.

The projectors on the devices are fairly straightforward to use. On the Nikon, you select the content, slide down the projector cover on the camera front, tilt the camera to the optimal height on a tiny projection stand, and press Play. On the Sony, you swing open



**BRIGHT LIGHT** Nikon's Coolpix S1200pj projects images up to 5 feet in size, measured diagonally.

the camcorder's touch-screen LCD, then use controls on the camcorder to navigate to the content you want and press a button to play.

You must adjust focus manually. The devices have clearly labeled, easy-to-use focus controls above the projector's lens. Overall we found that both offered decent projections if you don't place the device too far from the wall.

As with all projectors, the farther the device from the surface it's projecting on, the larger, but dimmer, the image. Nikon claims the S1200pj can project an acceptable image of up to 5 feet in size, measured diagonally, and Sony says that the HDR-PJ580V can

project viewable images of up to 8 feet or so. We found both claims to be true, although the images weren't very bright, so it's best to view images in a dark room.

### Two fine performers

The projection feature on these devices drains the battery after about 220 minutes (Nikon) and 120 minutes (Sony), according to the manufacturers. But it adds a dimension to what are already fine performers. The Nikon scores well in our camera Ratings, shooting very good 14-megapixel photos and good HD-resolution video at 720p (at 30 frames per second). And the Sony shoots excellent full HD-resolution video in 1080p at 60 frames per second and captures 20-megapixel photos that are excellent for a camcorder. (There are five Sony camcorders on the market that have a projector; the HDR-PJ580V is the only one we tested.)

Willing to forgo projection capability for a lower-priced camcorder? The Panasonic HC-V500, \$415, has a 50x optical zoom and very good video quality. The Canon Vixia R30, \$450, has a 32x optical zoom and very good video quality in low light and captures very good still photos. Both are CR Best Buys.

## Three ways to make smart-phone images better



**HOW TO CROP**  
Select the shot you want to crop from your saved photos. Then use the phone's menus to select Edit mode. Next use the built-in cropping tool to highlight the part of the image you want to keep.

**A decent smart-phone camera** can take photos with very good image quality—about as good as a subcompact camera's—when the subject is stationary, well-lit, and fairly close. But when shooting conditions are less than ideal, it probably needs a little help. Here are tips to get the best results:

**1 Use camera settings.** You might be surprised to find that the camera on a highly rated phone offers as many ways to customize and adjust your image-taking as do most subcompacts. Make sure you're shooting at the highest resolution and the lowest compression, especially if the camera has 5 or fewer megapixels. Few phone cameras allow you to manually adjust shutter speed or aperture, but using scene modes can accomplish many of the same tweaks. The Night scene mode should improve shooting in dim light—a challenge for the small sensors of phone cameras—and will allow you to keep ISO (light sensitivity) settings as low as possible, around 100 ISO, to minimize graininess on shots with ample light. Look for other features, too, such as a macro (close-up) setting, which might be buried in the setting menus.



**VERSATILE** Add-on lenses can give your phone close-up and wide-angle capability.

**2 Crop rather than zoom.** Smart-phone cameras have only a digital zoom (not optical) that enlarges pixels and thus reduces image detail as it zooms in. If your smart-phone camera has 8 or more megapixels, our informal tests on several phones suggest you're better off taking the shot without zoom and then using the onboard editing tools to crop the image, thus enlarging the area you want to focus on.

**3 Consider an add-on lens.** Another way to zoom in close, or to get a wide-angle or fish-eye shot, is to fit a third-party lens over the phone's tiny lens. We tested two brands compatible with the iPhone 4 and 4s: Photojojo (fish-eye, \$25; wide/macro and telephoto, \$20 each; or all three for about \$50) and Olloclip (\$70 for all three lenses). We also tested the Photojojo lenses with several Android phones.

The lenses produced the intended effect without compromising the phones' image quality. But the lenses covered the phones' strobes, so we couldn't use the flash.

All were fairly easy to attach. The Olloclip fits securely around the corner of the iPhone, essentially encasing it. With the Photojojo, you must attach a small ring, using a peel-and-stick backing, to the phone; the lens then magnetically attaches to the ring. The Photojojo lenses fit fine on the Android phones we tried them on, and the company says they should fit any phone that has a fairly flat area around the camera lens. The ring sometimes came off the phone when we removed the lens, but we could easily reattach it.

The lenses require some time to attach, so they won't let you capture a spontaneous shot. But they're worth considering if you often use your phone camera as your main camera and want it to approach the versatility of a point-and-shoot.

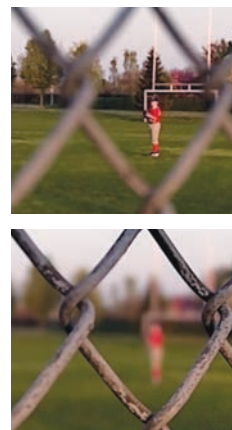


## ▶ The Lytro: Shoot now, focus later

**Every photographer knows** that you can be stuck with an out-of-focus subject if you mistakenly focus on the background or anything else. But with the arrival of the Lytro (16GB, \$500; 8GB, \$400), a new kind of digital camera with groundbreaking technology, that's no longer the case. After you shoot a photo with the Lytro, above, and transfer it into your computer, you can adjust it to bring the subject into sharp focus.

But the Lytro has major drawbacks. It's pricey and, as we went to press, its companion software was compatible only with a Mac computer. It also has an odd shape that some might find awkward to use, a tiny LCD, and no flash, video capture, or manual controls. And the native files it captures are in a proprietary format. You can export images to standard JPEG files, but they have a square shape and a resolution lower than that of images from a 2-megapixel camera.

**Bottom line.** Maybe someday all cameras will feature this breakthrough technology. But the pioneering Lytro is likely to appeal only to early adopters and enthusiasts. It's fun to use, but given its limitations, for most people its novelty will probably wear thin fairly quickly.



### FLEXIBLE FOCUS

These images were produced from a single Lytro shot. On top, we used software that comes with the Lytro to focus on just the ballplayer. Below, we used the software to focus on just the chain-link fence.



### SEE THE LYTRO IN ACTION

Use your smart phone to download the RedLaser or ShopSavvy app and scan the code for video.







C3 Nikon

## Overview

A basic camera offers optical zoom, which you won't find on a phone. Photo scores for the basic cameras in the Ratings can't be compared with those of the advanced cameras on page 45, which we hold to a higher standard.

### BEST VALUES IN A SMALL CAMERA

**A1** Nikon \$260

**A2** Canon \$260

**B2** Nikon \$300

**B3** Canon \$300

Most are almost as small and weigh about the same as a smart phone. **A1** has higher resolution and a larger LCD than most subcompacts, plus very good video quality and a touch screen. **A2** has a generous 8x zoom and very good LCD quality and is attractively priced. **B2** has very good image and flash quality, a lens with a wider maximum aperture (f/1.8) than other small cameras, and manual controls and focus. **B3** is very compact for a camera with a 12x zoom and has very good video and touch-screen LCD quality.

### IF A LONG ZOOM IS A PRIORITY

**C3** Nikon \$200 **CR Best Buy**

**C6** Panasonic \$290

**C3** is attractively priced and lightweight for a model with an 18x zoom, with very good flash photos and video quality. **C6** is svelte, at just 1.4 inches thick, and lightweight for a model with a 20x zoom. Its touch-screen display makes it very easy to use.

### BEST TOUGH CAMERAS

**A4** Nikon \$300

**B6** Panasonic \$320

Both are very good performers designed for travel and outdoor use, with a nontelephoto lens and built-in GPS. Nikon claims **A5** is waterproof to a depth of 33 feet and can withstand a drop of up to 5 feet. It's also designed to be easier to operate than most cameras when you wear gloves, as you might when skiing. Panasonic claims **B6** is waterproof to a depth of 39 feet and can withstand a drop of up to 6½ feet.

### IF YOU NEED 3D CAPABILITY

**A7** Panasonic \$400

This can capture 3D photos and video using two built-in lenses. It also has very good video quality and a touch-screen display.

# Ratings Basic cameras

Recommended models only From 65 tested.

● Excellent  
● Very good  
○ Good  
○ Fair  
● Poor

✓ CR Best Buy  
✓ Recommended

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Specifications					Test results				Features	
					Megapixels	Weight (oz.)	Optical zoom	Widest angle (mm)	Battery life (shots)	Image quality	Flash photos	Video quality	Ease of use	LCD quality	Touch screen

## A SUBCOMPACT For those who need a camera that fits in a purse or pocket.

✓	1	Nikon Coolpix S100	\$260	66	16	5	5x	28	150	●	○	○	○	○	• 3.4
✓	2	Canon PowerShot Elph 310 HS	260	65	12	5	8x	28	210	●	●	○	○	●	3.0
✓	3	Canon PowerShot S95	380	65	10	7	4x	28	200	●	●	●	○	●	3.0
✓	4	Nikon Coolpix AW100	300	62	16	7	5x	28	250	●	○	○	●	○	3.0
✓	5	Canon PowerShot Elph 110 HS	230	62	16	5	5x	24	170	●	○	●	○	●	3.0
✓	6	Canon PowerShot SD4000 IS Elph	230	62	10	6	4x	28	250	●	●	●	○	●	3.0
✓	7	Panasonic Lumix DMC-3D1	400	62	12	7	4x	25	200	●	○	●	○	○	• 3.5
✓	8	Nikon Coolpix S8000	250	61	14	6	10x	30	210	●	●	○	○	○	3.0
✓	9	Canon PowerShot S100	380	61	12	7	5x	24	200	●	○	●	○	●	3.0
✓	10	Canon PowerShot Elph 300 HS	180	61	12	5	5x	24	220	●	●	●	○	○	2.6
✓	11	Nikon Coolpix S1200pj	430	61	14	7	5x	28	220	●	○	○	○	○	3.0

## B COMPACT For those who want the basics at a low price or advanced features.

✓	1	Nikon Coolpix P300	330	68	12	7	4x	24	240	●	●	●	○	●	3.0
✓	2	Nikon Coolpix P310	300	64	16	7	4x	24	230	●	●	○	○	○	3.0
✓	3	Canon PowerShot Elph 510 HS	300	64	12	7	12x	28	170	●	○	●	○	●	• 3.2
✓	4	Nikon Coolpix S8200	280	63	16	8	14x	25	250	●	●	○	○	○	3.0
✓	5	Nikon Coolpix S8100	180	63	12	7	10x	30	210	●	○	●	○	○	3.0
✓	6	Panasonic Lumix DMC-TS4	320	62	12	7	5x	28	310	●	○	○	●	○	2.6
✓	7	Canon PowerShot SX130 IS	160	61	12	11	12x	28	130	●	●	●	○	○	3.0

## C SUPERZOOM For those who need an extremely versatile zoom lens.

✓	1	Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ47	300	69	12	18	24x	25	400	●	●	●	●	●	2.9
✓	2	Nikon Coolpix P100	420	68	10	18	26x	26	250	●	●	●	●	●	2.9
✓	3	Nikon Coolpix S9100	200	67	12	8	18x	25	270	●	●	●	○	○	3.0
✓	4	Nikon Coolpix L120	280	66	14	17	21x	25	330	●	●	○	○	○	3.0
✓	5	Fujifilm FinePix F550EXR	230	65	16	8	15x	24	300	●	●	○	○	○	3.0
✓	6	Panasonic Lumix DMC-ZS20	290	64	14	7	20x	24	260	●	●	○	○	○	• 3.0
✓	7	Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX9V	350	64	16	9	16x	24	300	●	●	○	○	○	3.0
✓	8	Canon PowerShot SX30 IS	440	63	14	23	35x	24	370	○	●	●	○	○	2.6
✓	9	Nikon Coolpix L110	220	63	12	18	15x	28	270	●	●	○	○	○	3.0
✓	10	Panasonic Lumix DMC-ZS15	225	63	12	7	16x	24	260	●	○	○	○	○	3.0
✓	11	Canon PowerShot SX40 HS	380	63	12	23	35x	24	380	●	○	●	○	○	2.6
✓	12	Olympus SZ-30MR	265	62	16	8	24x	25	200	●	●	○	○	○	3.0
✓	13	Panasonic Lumix DMC-ZS8	200	61	14	7	16x	24	340	●	○	○	○	○	3.0
✓	14	Nikon Coolpix P500	400	61	12	19	36x	23	220	●	●	○	○	○	3.0
✓	15	Panasonic Lumix DMC-ZS10	220	61	14	8	16x	24	260	●	○	○	○	○	• 3.0
✓	16	Leica V-Lux 30	750	61	14	8	16x	24	260	●	○	○	○	○	• 3.0



A2 Panasonic



B5 Nikon



C1 Canon



C12 Pentax

## Ratings Advanced cameras

Recommended models only From 182 tested.



Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Specifications			Test results							Features	
					Megapixels	Weight (oz.)	Test lens	Battery life (shots)	Image quality	Flash photos	Video quality	Ease of use	LCD quality	Viewfinder	Image stabilizer	Live view

### A POINT-AND-SHOOT For those who want a built-in lens but advanced features similar to those on an SLR.

✓	1	Canon PowerShot G12	\$ 450	66	10	15	28-140mm	370	●	●	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.8
✓	2	Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ150	450	65	12	20	25-600mm	410	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.9

### B SLR-LIKE For those who want a smaller, lighter camera with interchangeable lenses.

✓	1	Sony SLT-A55VL	690	73	16	27	18-55mm (1.5)	380	○	○	○	○	○	○	B	●	2.9
✓	2	Sony SLT-A33L	600	72	14	27	18-55mm (1.5)	340	○	○	○	○	○	○	B	●	2.9
✓	3	Panasonic Lumix DMC-G2K	700	72	12	22	14-42mm (2.0)	360	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.9
✓	4	Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH2	900	72	16	23	14-42mm (2.0)	330	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.9
✓	5	Nikon 1 V1	800	69	10	19	10-30mm (2.7)	400	○	NA	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.8
✓	6	Sony SLT-A65VK	1,000	68	24	31	18-55mm (1.5)	560	○	○	○	○	○	○	B	●	2.8
✓	7	Sony NEX-7K	1,100	67	24	20	18-55mm (1.5)	430	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.9
✓	8	Sony SLT-A77V	1,400	67	24	36	18-55mm (1.5)	530	○	○	○	○	○	○	B	●	2.8
✓	9	Panasonic Lumix DMC-G3K	650	67	16	20	14-42mm (2.0)	270	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.9
✓	10	Samsung NX200	900	66	20	19	18-55mm (1.5)	320	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.9
✓	11	Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF2K	380	65	12	18	14-42mm (2.0)	300	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	3.0

### C SLR For those who want advanced features and performance, with interchangeable lenses and through-the-lens viewfinder.

✓	1	Canon EOS 60D	1,050	74	18	36	18-55mm (1.6)	320	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	3.0
✓	2	Olympus E-5	1,600	73	12	49	14-54mm (2.0)	870	○	○	○	○	○	○	B	●	3.0
✓	3	Nikon D7000	1,100	72	16	44	18-105mm (1.5)	1,050	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.8
✓	4	Canon EOS Rebel T3i	750	72	18	29	18-55mm (1.6)	180	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	3.0
✓	5	Canon EOS 7D Digital	1,850	72	18	50	18-135mm (1.6)	220	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.8
✓	6	Sony DSLR-A580L	900	71	16	33	18-55mm (1.5)	560	○	○	○	○	○	○	B	●	2.9
✓	7	Canon EOS Rebel T3	500	70	12	26	18-55mm (1.6)	220	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.6
✓	8	Canon EOS Rebel T2i	650	70	18	28	18-55mm (1.6)	180	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	3.0
✓	9	Nikon D3100	550	68	14	29	18-55mm (1.5)	550	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.8
✓	10	Pentax K-5	1,350	67	16	36	18-55mm (1.5)	740	○	○	○	○	○	○	B	●	2.8
✓	11	Nikon D5100	700	67	16	31	18-55mm (1.5)	660	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.8
✓	12	Pentax K-r	650	67	12	30	18-55mm (1.5)	470	○	○	○	○	○	○	B	●	2.8
✓	13	Sony DSLR-A560L	650	67	14	33	18-55mm (1.5)	560	○	○	○	○	○	○	B	●	2.8
✓	14	Nikon D5000	650	64	12	33	18-55mm (1.5)	510	○	○	○	○	○	○	L	●	2.6

## Overview

Advanced point-and-shoots offer more sophisticated controls and, often, better performance than their basic counterparts. (Image-quality scores in the Ratings aren't comparable with those for basic cameras.) SLRs and SLR-likes, which are smaller and lighter, offer performance and features to rival professional cameras.

## ADVANCED FEATURES AND SMALL SIZE

### A2 Panasonic \$450 CR Best Buy

With a 24x zoom and very good image and video quality, this model offers a lot for the money.

## BEST SMALL SLR-LIKE CAMERAS

### B5 Nikon \$800

### B7 Sony \$1,100

Among the lightest in this class, **B5** has very good image and video quality. **B8** has extraordinarily high resolution and very good performance across the board.

## STANDOUT SLR PERFORMANCE

### C1 Canon \$1,050

### C3 Nikon \$1,100

**C1** is one of a few advanced models with excellent image quality for low light and flash. It has a swiveling LCD and excellent viewfinder. **C3** captures HD-resolution video (1080p) at up to 24 frames per second. It has stereo audio, two SD-card slots, auto-distortion control, and an excellent viewfinder.

## BEST VALUE FOR SLR FLEXIBILITY

### C4 Canon \$750

### C9 Nikon \$550 CR Best Buy

### C11 Nikon \$700

### C12 Pentax \$650 CR Best Buy

**C4** is excellent at minimizing camera shake and has a very good LCD and excellent viewfinder. **C9** offers very good HD (1080i) video quality and fast response, and excellent quality for low-light photos. **C11** has a very good LCD. **C12** takes excellent low-light photos.

If you've been researching cameras for a while, you might have noticed that some models we recommended late last year are no longer on our recommended list. That's because we frequently refine our scoring methods and those models' revised overall scores no longer met the threshold.

NEVER OVERPAY FOR A NEW CAR AGAIN!

# SAVE \$1,661 ON AVERAGE WITH THE COMPLETE CONSUMER REPORTS NEW CAR BUYING SYSTEM



YES, there's a simple **"system"** for getting the best possible price on a new car.

**W**e've identified 3 easy steps that will put negotiations in the car buyer's favor. Those who follow the Consumer Reports 3-step system save \$1,661 on average, and sometimes much more, depending on the price of the car.

## A 3-STEP PRICING SYSTEM, all in one customized report

There's a Consumer Reports New Car Price Report for nearly every new car make and model on the lot. And the New Car Price Report supplies you with key pricing information you can't find just anywhere.

### YOUR CONSUMER REPORTS New Car Price Report Contains:

- Detailed Pricing of All Factory-Installed Options
- Unpublished Dealer Incentives And Holdbacks
- Equipment cost and Recommendations
- Current Safety Ratings
- Negotiating Tips And Traps

Ask about  
our newest feature  
**"Build & Buy"**

#### STEP 1: Find out what the dealer paid

Request a *Consumer Reports* New Car Price Report and you'll have the dealer invoice price for **all factory-installed options and packages available** for the make and model you're purchasing.

#### STEP 2: Find out what the dealer receives in hidden rebates

Dealers receive all kinds of cash rebates and unadvertised incentives from car manufacturers. Your New Car Price Report exposes these hidden bonuses so you can lower your offer.

#### STEP 3: Find out your Consumer Reports Bottom Line Price

Here's the key to your deal. Your New Car Price Report goes beyond the invoice price to show you what the dealer actually paid for the exact car you're buying. We call it the "CR Bottom Line Price," and once you know it, you'll never overpay.

**When it's time to talk trade-in**, you should know what your trade-in is worth whether you sell it privately or to a dealership. You can get that information from us too and it costs just an additional \$12.

Call Now For Your \$14 Report. \$12 for each additional report ordered at the same time.

# 1-800-203-5454

For service in Canada go to: [www.ConsumerReports.org/canada27](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/canada27)

**Beat the secret charges and save a bundle.**

**ConsumerReports®**  
**New Car Price Service**



## Reports

Laptops 47

Gas grills 48

Tech support 48

Headphones 49

Laundry detergents 50

Washers and dryers 52

# Lab tests

Ratings, reviews, recommendations

## Faster laptops make a debut

**THE FIRST LAPTOPS** that use Intel's new third-generation Core i7 processors have done well in our latest tests.

All but one of the newly powered laptops are recommended models. (The one that didn't make the cut was simply too heavy at 9.2 pounds.)

The new entries include **A2 HP**, **A4 MSI**, **B1 Samsung**, and **B3 HP**. They have 2 gigabytes of video memory. Not only were they excellent performers, but they were also able to play demanding video games. **B3** is particularly well-suited for home entertainment because it has a built-in Blu-ray player and a large, excellent display. But you'll want to add better speakers. Although **B1** is a large 17-inch desktop replacement, it's just over an inch thick, which is thin for a computer that size.

In our tests, we found performance boosts of about 20 percent over earlier models with the same gigahertz rating for many tasks, including uploading photos and converting video files for TV viewing. Video quality for watching movies was also better.

You won't notice any difference while using programs such as Excel and Word because those are already as fast as they need to be. Chip maker AMD also recently introduced its line of processors with many features similar to those in the Intel lineup, but they weren't available at press time. In addition, Apple updated its MacBook lineup with third-generation Intel processors. Watch for our test results on laptops with the new processors in upcoming issues.

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can identify computers with the new Intel processors by looking for a 3 at the start of the four-digit number after Core i5 or i7. (New Core i3 processors will arrive later.) Models that start with a 2 use second-generation processors.



A2 HP



B1 Samsung

## Ratings

Recommended models only From 38 tested.

☒ CR Best Buy  
☒ Recommended  
 ● Excellent  
 ● Very good  
 ○ Good  
 ○ Fair  
 ● Poor

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Overall score	Display size (in.)	Memory (GB)	Storage (GB)	Ergonomics	Portability	Performance	Versatility	Display	Battery life (hr.)	Weight (lb.)	Blu-ray or DVD	Nonremovable battery
			0 100	P   F   G   V   E											

### A 15- TO 16-INCH

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Samsung NP700Z5B-S01UB	\$1,000	81	15.6	8	1,000	●	●	●	●	9¼	5.2	D	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	HP Pavilion dv6-7014nr	1,200	79	15.6	8	750	●	●	●	●	6¼	5.5	B	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Apple MacBook Pro 15-inch MD318LL/A	1,800	77	15.4	4	500	●	●	●	●	8½	5.6	D	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	MSI GE60 ONC-006US	1,150	71	15.6	6	750	●	○	●	●	3¾	5.8	D	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Acer Aspire TimelineX AS5830TG-6642	775	70	15.6	6	500	●	●	●	○	10¾	5.5	D	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	Asus U56E-BAL7	630	66	15.6	6	750	●	●	●	○	9	5.7	D	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	Dell 15R-2nd. Gen i5	550	65	15.6	6	640	●	●	●	○	5½	5.8	D	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	Dell XPS X15L-3286SLV	980	65	15.6	8	750	●	○	●	○	4¼	6.2	D	

### B 17- TO 18-INCH

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Samsung NP700Z7C-S01US	1,400	85	17.3	8	1,000	●	●	●	●	8¾	6.5	D	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Apple MacBook Pro 17-inch MC725LL/A	2,000	82	17.0	4	750	●	●	●	●	9½	6.4	D	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	HP Pavilion dv7-7012nr	1,300	82	17.3	8	750	●	●	●	●	9¼	7.4	B	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Apple MacBook Pro 17-inch MD311LL/A	2,500	81	17.0	4	750	●	●	●	●	9¼	6.5	D	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	HP Pavilion dv7-6C95dx	780	75	17.3	8	750	●	●	●	○	9¼	7.0	D	



A4 MSI



A7 Dell



B3 HP

## Latest gas grills

**Burned-out burners? Busted igniter? If your grill is a goner, here are three newly recommended models from our latest tests.**



**▲ Napoleon Terrace SE325PK, \$600**

This is our top-rated small grill, offering the best combination of high-heat, low-heat, and indirect cooking. It has two burners, coated-cast-iron grates, a long warranty on its burners, and fold-down shelves. But it doesn't have a side burner and it has a rotary igniter, which we've found to be less reliable.

**Bottom line.** It cooks well but is pricey for a small grill without some features often found on less expensive grills.

**▶ Char-Broil Tru-Infrared Professional 340 IR**  
463269011, \$300

This small grill cooked food evenly at high and low temperatures and was impressive at indirect cooking. It has two burners and uses infrared technology, which emits an intense, indirect heat to sear and cook foods. The Char-Broil has an electronic igniter for easier and more reliable starting, coated-cast-iron grates that deliver heat well, a long burner warranty, and fold-down shelves. But it lacks a side burner.

**Bottom line.** This grill is good for tight spaces and offers fine performance for the price. But like most small grills it has less room for food. And if you like to see flames when you cook, infrared technology might not be for you.



▶ **Kenmore 16142, \$350**

This medium-sized grill aced our high- and low-temperature cooking tests, producing nicely seared steaks and moist chicken and salmon. It was also fine at indirect cooking, which lets you slow-cook roasts, ribs, and whole fish or chicken by placing them next to the heat, not directly over it. The Kenmore has room for 16 to 30 burgers on its coated-cast-iron grates and has four main burners, a side burner, and an electronic igniter for easier and more reliable starting.

**Bottom line.** It's a well-priced, great performer that's big enough to fit most needs, but its burner warranty is for only five years.



## Apple leads the pack in tech support

**If you're counting on** getting helpful technical support from a computer manufacturer, you're likely to be disappointed.

A recent survey by the Consumer Reports National Research Center found that problems were solved for only 60 percent of users who had to contact tech support. The survey of 7,470 subscribers asked about their most recent experiences, including those with manufacturers' extended plans, which covered 47 percent of computers in the survey.

Apple solved Mac problems 73 percent of the time, according to survey respondents who used its support. But its reader score of 78 was eight points lower than last year's, so even Apple has slipped somewhat in overall user satisfaction with its support offerings. Owners of Windows-based computers consistently gave lower ratings for the phone and online support provided by manufacturers. Many computer makers' free technical support ends

after a year or less. One notable exception is, again, Apple, which offers unlimited free support at Apple Stores after the 90-day free phone support runs out.

Sales staff often pitch an extra-cost extended-service plan. Unless you really need extra handholding, that's an option you can skip. In the Ratings chart, reader score represents subscribers' overall satisfaction with their most recent experiences with tech support between January 2011 and January 2012. A score of 100 would mean all respondents were completely satisfied; 80, that respondents were very satisfied, on average; 60, fairly well satisfied; and 40, somewhat dissatisfied. Differences of fewer than 6 points are not meaningful. Phone support and online support were rated from very poor to excellent. For the percentage whose problem was solved, differences of fewer than 9 points are not meaningful.

## Ratings

In order of reader score.

Better  $\longleftrightarrow$  Worse

Manufacturer	Reader score	Survey results		
	0100	Phone support	Online support	Problem solved
Apple	78			73%
Dell	59			61
Lenovo	59			53
HP/Compaq	56			51
Asus	55			45
Toshiba	55			45
Acer/Gateway/ eMachines	54			42

Based on responses from 7,470 owners of 8,652 desktop, laptop, and netbook computers who contacted a manufacturer's tech-support service. Respondents might not reflect the general U.S. population.



A1 Klipsch



B1 Grado

# Upgrade your headphones

WITH TABLETS, ULTRABOOKS, and even smart-phone screens providing a veritable feast for your eyes, it might be time to show your ears some love, too, with a new set of headphones.

Our Ratings of recommended headphones show that you can get very good or excellent sound for \$100 or less—much less in a few cases.

Earbud-style earphones, such as the distinctive white ones from Apple, usually sit just outside the ear canal. The two earbuds we recommend, the **A5 Bose** and **A6 Phiaton**, have an unusual design that extends slightly into the ear canal. Both were judged to have very good sound. **A6** is a CR Best Buy.

In-ear models, which are inserted into the ear canal like an earplug, are designed provide a seal that can reduce extraneous sounds. Most come with ear tips of different sizes to help ensure a comfortable fit. **A4 JVC**, **A7** and **A8 Sennheiser**, and **A9 Skullcandy** are CR Best Buys. Some double as headsets for your cell phone: **A1 Klipsch**, **A2 Monster**, **A3 Nikon**, **A10 Sony**, and **A11 Velodyne** have built-in microphones and inline controls that let you answer and disconnect calls.

Home/studio-style models are larger and bulkier than in-ear models, but many fold up. **B1 Grado** is the only model in this group with excellent sound. That model and **B2 Grado** are CR Best Buys.

You might find that one type of headphone is more comfortable for you, particularly if worn for any length of time, so we recommend trying different styles before you make a purchase.

## Ratings

Recommended models \$100 or less From 64 tested.

- Excellent
  - Very good
  - Good
  - Fair
  - Poor
- ☒ CR Best Buy  
☒ Recommended

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Test results		Features			
					Sound quality	Sensitivity	Type	Weight (oz.)	Cord length (in.)	Phone controls

### A PORTABLE

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Klipsch Image S4i	\$100	76	●	high	ear insert	0.4	50	•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Monster Beats by Dr. Dre Diddybeats	90	76	●	high	ear insert	0.8	47	•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Nixon MicroBlaster	100	76	●	medium-high	ear insert	0.4	50	•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	JVC HA-FX300	60	71	●	medium	ear insert	0.5	41	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Bose iE2	90	66	●	medium-high	earbud	0.6	44	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	Phiaton PS 210	80	66	●	medium-high	earbud	0.5	43	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	Sennheiser CX 215	40	66	●	high	ear insert	0.4	49	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	Sennheiser CX 300 II	60	66	●	high	ear insert	0.4	47	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	Skullcandy Full Metal Jacket	60	66	●	medium-high	ear insert	0.6	56	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10	Sony DR-EX300IP	90	66	●	high	ear insert	0.6	47	•
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11	Velodyne vPulse	90	65	●	high	ear insert	0.7	44	•

### B HOME/STUDIO STYLE

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Grado SR80i	100	86	●	medium	on-ear with headband	7.7	81	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Grado SR60i	80	76	●	medium	on-ear with headband	7.7	81	



A7 Sennheiser

A4 JVC

A6 Phiaton



# Laundry detergents

## 15 top picks swamp a sea of competitors

**WHEN IT COMES** to laundry, Tide rules. It's one of three top picks for conventional detergents and accounts for half of those for high-efficiency washers. But our tests found lots of other, subpar performers. Here are the details:

**Tide hits a new high.** Tide's top-scoring Ultra Plus Bleach, 23 cents per load, vanquished grass, blood, ring around the collar, and other tough stains. And its Plus Bleach Alternative, 18 cents per load, joins our top picks for conventional washers.

**Dual-use detergents grow.** More HE detergents can be used in a conventional washer. But only a handful made our winners' list. And most wind up costing more than Target's conventional-only Up & Up Ultra Concentrated, a CR Best Buy at just 10 cents per load.

**Few packs make the grade.** Single-use packs make proper dosage easier for normal loads. But only Tide Pods cleaned impressively in our tests. And because packs dissolve quickly in water, you must handle them with dry hands and keep the bag sealed. Also, packs may be especially harmful if ingested or rubbed into eyes; poison control centers received more than 700 calls from February to June involving children ages 5 or younger. Tide will be offering a safer double latch for its plastic containers with lids. We suggest keeping detergents out of the reach of children.

**Being green still isn't easy.** GreenShield's Organic Elite Care and Whole Foods' 365 Organic Everyday Value are among the first to meet the Department of Agriculture's organic standard, which requires at least 95 percent organic ingredients for its "Organic" seal. But both products proved to be only slightly better than plain water at tackling stains, as did Martha Stewart's Clean 2X, which was as dismal this time as in prior tests.

A better bet: Seventh Generation Natural Superconcentrated, which did well at cleaning and is said to be biodegradable.



A2 Up &amp; Up



B1 Tide

## Ratings

**All tested products** In performance order, within types.

Rec.	Rank	Product	Type	Dual-use	Price per load	Overall score	Test results			
						0 100 P   F   G   V   E	Cleaning	Grass	Blood	Collar ring

### A CONVENTIONAL These higher-sudsing detergents are designed for conventional machines only.

✓	1	Wisk Deep Clean [1]	liquid		17¢	63	●	●	●	●
✓	2	Up & Up Ultra Concentrated (Target)	powder		10	61	●	●	●	●
✓	3	Tide Plus Bleach Alternative [1]	liquid		18	61	●	●	●	●
	4	Tide for Cold Water [2]	liquid		18	58	○	●	●	●
	5	Tide Ultra Free & Gentle [3]	powder		28	58	○	●	●	●
	6	Tide TotalCare [1]	liquid		30	57	○	●	●	●
	7	Gain With Bleach Alternative [1]	liquid		16	55	○	●	●	●
	8	Gain Plus a Touch of Softness Concentrated [1]	powder		15	52	○	●	●	●
	9	All Oxi Active Concentrated [1]	powder		14	51	○	●	●	●
	10	Tide Plus a Touch of Downy [1]	powder		18	50	○	●	●	●
	11	Arm & Hammer Power Gel Plus OxiClean Stainfighter [1]	gel		13	48	○	●	●	●
	12	Cheer Stay Colorful for Darks [1]	liquid		16	48	○	●	●	●
	13	Cheer Stay Colorful Concentrated [1]	powder		15	47	○	●	●	●
	14	Arm & Hammer Plus Oxi Clean Stain Fighter [1]	liquid		11	46	○	●	●	●
	15	Arm & Hammer 2X Concentrate [1]	liquid		8	40	○	●	●	●
	16	Sun Burst 2x Double Concentrated [1]	liquid		5	39	○	●	●	●
	17	Arm & Hammer 2X Ultra for Sensitive Skin [1]	liquid		8	38	○	●	●	●
	18	Xtra Lasting ScentSations [1]	liquid		5	37	○	●	●	●
	19	Trend Ultra Concentrate [1]	liquid		6	35	○	●	●	●

### B HIGH-EFFICIENCY These include products that also work in conventional machines.

✓	1	Tide Ultra Plus Bleach [3]	powder		23¢	82	●	●	●	●
✓	2	Tide Ultra HE [1]	powder		16	74	●	●	●	●
✓	3	Tide HE Plus Bleach Alternative [1]	liquid		18	73	●	●	●	●
✓	4	Tide Pods [3]	Pods/liquid	●	22	72	●	●	●	●
✓	5	Wisk Deep Clean HE [1]	liquid		17	69	●	●	●	●
✓	6	Tide Plus Febreze HE [1]	liquid		18	68	●	●	●	●
✓	7	All With Oxi Active HE [1]	liquid	●	16	67	●	●	●	●
✓	8	Tide HE [1]	liquid		18	66	●	●	●	●
✓	9	Seventh Generation Natural Superconcentrated [1]	powder	●	26	65	●	●	●	●
✓	10	Up & Up HE Fresh Breeze (Target) [1]	liquid	●	11	64	●	●	●	●
✓	11	Kirkland Signature Ultra HE [1]	liquid	●	16	62	●	●	●	●
✓	12	Sears Ultra Plus Concentrated 9879 [3]	powder	●	13	61	●	●	●	●
	13	Legacy of Clean SA8 plus Bioquest HE [1]	powder	●	26	60	○	●	●	●
	14	All Mighty Pacs 4X Concentrated [3]	Pods/liquid	●	18	59	○	●	●	●
	15	Era 2X Ultra HE [1]	liquid	●	10	59	○	●	●	●
	16	Seventh Generation 2X Concentrated Natural Liquid Free & Clear HE [1]	liquid	●	20	57	○	●	●	●



**B4** Tide



**B9** Seventh Generation

**B10**  
Up & Up

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

	Product	Type	Dual-use	Price per load	Overall score	Test results			
Rec.	Rank					Cleaning	Grass	Blood	Collar ring
					0   100				
					P   F   G   V   G   E				

## B HIGH-EFFICIENCY continued

17	Great Value Original Clean (Walmart) [3]	liquid	•	13¢	57	○	•	•	
18	Arm & Hammer Crystal Burst Plus OxiClean	pod/powder	•	15	56	○	•	•	
19	Gain Ultra Original HE Concentrated [1]	powder	•	13	56	○	•	•	
20	All Free Clear Oxi Active [3]	liquid	•	13	54	○	•	•	
21	Fuller Brush Plus Concentrated	liquid	•	20	54	○	•	•	
22	Member's Mark Fresh Clean HE (Sam's Club) [3]	liquid	•	9	53	○	•	•	
23	Purex Complete with Zout [1]	liquid	•	11	52	○	•	•	
24	Purex Triple Action UltraPacks	pod/powder	•	15	52	○	•	•	
25	Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day HE [1]	liquid	•	20	51	○	•	•	
26	Ecover Laundry Wash HE [1]	liquid	•	35	50	○	•	•	
27	Arm & Hammer Toss 'N Done Power Paks	pod/powder	•	13	50	○	•	•	
28	Legacy of Clean SA8 Triple Liquid HE [1]	liquid	•	33	49	○	•	•	
29	Ajax Toss-Ins 4X concentrated Pods	pod/powder	•	15	47	○	•	•	
30	Seventh Generation Natural 4X Concentrated Free & Clear	liquid	•	26	46	○	•	•	
31	Nice 2X Ultra (Walgreens)	liquid	•	16	46	○	•	•	
32	Purex Complete 3-in-1 Laundry Sheets [1]	sheets	•	20	45	○	•	•	
33	Method Ultra Concentrated	liquid	•	24	45	○	•	•	
34	All 3X Ultra Small & Mighty HE [1]	liquid	•	13	45	○	•	•	
35	Woolite Complete [1]	liquid	•	26	44	○	•	•	
36	Vaska 2x Concentrated Herbatergent HE [1]	liquid	•	22	43	○	•	•	
37	Purex Triple Action	liquid	•	7	42	○	•	•	
38	Oxydol 2X Concentrated Fresh 'N Clean HE [1]	liquid	•	8	41	○	•	•	
39	Vaska 4X Concentrated HE	liquid	•	29	39	○	•	•	
40	Dropps 6x Concentrated [1]	pod/powder	•	28	37	○	•	•	
41	Ajax New Ultra Stain Fighter & Color Booster	liquid	•	6	36	○	•	•	
42	Greenworks Natural	liquid	•	11	33	○	•	•	
43	Biokleen Cold-Water 3X Concentrated HE [2]	liquid	•	8	32	○	•	•	
44	GreenShield Organic Elite Care 3X Concentrated	liquid	•	22	30	○	•	•	
45	Ecos 2X Ultra Magnolia & Lily HE [1]	liquid	•	9	29	○	•	•	
46	365 Organic Everyday Value 3X Concentrated Organic (Whole Foods)	liquid	•	9	28	○	•	•	
47	Martha Stewart Clean 2X	liquid	•	23	25	○	•	•	

[1] Has not been tested in cool water. [2] Tested in cold water (60° F), not cool water. [3] Did well in new cool-water cleaning (75° F) vs. our standard warm-water wash (90° F).

## Guide to the Ratings

**Overall score** is performance in warm water (90° F). **Cleaning** reflects ability to remove blood, mud, chocolate ice cream, grass, red wine, ring around the collar, and tea from heavily soiled cotton swatches. Displayed scores are rounded; products are listed by precise overall score. **Price per load** is based on recommended amount for a regular load and largest available package size.

## Overview

Top-scoring detergents did best at removing a variety of tough stains, especially grass, blood, and ring around the collar, in our warm-water tests. Those that also did well in cool water are footnoted. Among those picks, we focus below on products that offer special strengths, value, or both.

✓ **CR Best Buy** These blend top cleaning and value. All are recommended.

✓ **Recommended** These top-scoring detergents perform well. Models below stand out for the reasons noted.

### FOR CONVENTIONAL WASHERS

**A1** Wisk 17¢ per load

**A2** Up & Up 10¢ **CR Best Buy**

**B4** Tide 22¢

**A1** was the top-cleaning conventional detergent in our tests. **A2** was the best value and did better against blood. Target shoppers should also consider the dual-use **B10** liquid detergent. Paying more for the dual-use **B4** buys the convenience of pods.

### FOR HIGH-EFFICIENCY WASHERS

**B1** Tide 23¢ per load

**B2** Tide 16¢ **CR Best Buy**

**B4** Tide 22¢

**B9** Seventh Generation 26¢

**B10** Up & Up 11¢

**B1** cleaned the best in our tests and, like the pack-style **B4**, did well in cool water. **B2** and **B10** are top values; choose the Tide if you prefer a powder and need to clean away blood stains. **B9** is a green product that its maker claims is biodegradable.

## Four ways to save on detergent

▶ **Choose the right one.** You can use a conventional or dual-use detergent in a regular top-loading washer. But using a conventional detergent in a high-efficiency machine could compromise cleaning if it produces too many suds.

▶ **Check the dose before using.** Many dual-use detergents use the same dose for high-efficiency and conventional washers. Fuller Brush Plus Concentrated calls for twice the amount in traditional machines, boosting its cost per load to 40 cents.

▶ **Spend at least 10 cents per load.** None of the detergents that cost less than that scored better than mediocre.

▶ **Don't overdo it.** Using too much detergent costs you more per load. Overdosing could also waste energy and water if it leads to added rinse cycles in your washer. Read the instructions carefully and measure the proper amount of detergent for your load size.



**WATER WORKS** Front-loaders are stingy with water and energy without sacrificing cleaning.

# Washers & dryers

Costs are up, but you don't have to get soaked

**G**OOD CLEANING, high efficiency, and large capacities are common features of the newest washers, but so are sky-high prices and long cycles. Our tests of more than 175 washers and 169 dryers found that it's getting harder and harder to find a good buy under \$1,000. That's also true for dryers, though their performance really hasn't changed.

The rising cost of raw materials partly explains the price hikes. Manufacturers cut prices for the last year or so to spur sales, but the tactic didn't work. So now they're raising them.

The newly tested LG WT4801C[W] is a relative bargain at \$700. This high-efficiency (HE) large-capacity model is one of the few top-loading washers that aced our cleaning test. The Kenmore 4027[2] front-loader delivered superb performance, and at \$900 it costs hundreds less than most other top-rated models, though

availability is somewhat limited. We also found some washers that offer fine cleaning and efficiency for the same amount or less but aren't as quiet or gentle.

Despite higher prices for dryers, the most important feature, a moisture sensor, has been available on all but the least-expensive models for the last 10 years. Moisture sensors do a better job of shutting off the dryer when clothes are dry than do models with a thermostat,

preventing overdrying. Sensor-based dryers are also easier on fabrics because they don't subject them to unnecessary heat, and they use less energy.

Here's what else our tests revealed:

**Speedy cycles.** Kenmore claims that its Accela-Wash option shaves 35 percent off the normal cycle time for an 8-pound load. It did deliver almost the same excellent cleaning performance without sacrificing gentleness when we tested the feature on Kenmore's Elite 4147[2] front-loader, \$1,100. But using the option saved only 15 minutes on the normal cycle, which made it about 20 percent faster. Our top-rated front-loader from LG has a similar TurboWash feature that the company says saves 20 minutes on larger loads. We expect it to perform similarly to Kenmore's Accela-Wash, since LG makes both.

**Daewoo's shaky debut.** Better known for its cars, South Korea's Daewoo has introduced a line of washers and dryers in the U.S. The two front-loaders we tested delivered excellent cleaning but vibrated much more than most front-loaders, keeping them off our recommended list.

## How to choose

Select your washer first, then get the least-expensive dryer with a moisture sensor. Remember, if your current dryer works and has a moisture sensor, there's no need to kick it to the curb.

**Consider location.** Look for machines that score Very Good or better for noise and vibration if your laundry room is near bedrooms. Also pick models that let you silence end-of-cycle signals.

**Top- or front-loader?** Top-loaders with center-post agitators typically cost less and wash the fastest, but performance is unimpressive. HE washers hold more laundry, use less water to wash, and extract more water. That cuts drying time, saving energy and money. Front-loaders generally use the least water and spin the fastest, resulting in the most savings.

## Let your washer do the talking

LG's SmartDiagnosis might spare you the wait for a repairman. Simply turn your washer on, phone the call center, put your phone close to the power button, and the washer transmits data to the center. "SmartDiagnosis checks for 78 different issues," says John Taylor, an LG spokesman. "In case of mechanical issues, the technician will know the part to bring,

eliminating the need for multiple visits." SmartDiagnosis is on the top-rated LG top-loader and front-loader. Some Kenmore machines, made by LG, have a similar feature, but it's called Kenmore Connect. It's on front-loaders A3, A9, A11, A12, and A16.

If you have used this diagnostic feature, let us know how well it worked, at [ConsumerReports.org/tips](http://ConsumerReports.org/tips).





# Ratings Washers

Recommended models only From 175 tested.

- CR Best Buy
- Recommended
- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model <small>Similar models, in small type, are comparable to tested model.</small>	Price	Overall score	Test results						
					Washing	Energy efficiency	Water efficiency	Capacity	Gentleness	Noise	Vibration

## A FRONT-LOADERS

✓	1	LG WM3470H[W]A*	\$1,100	88	●	●	●	●	●	●	85
✓	2	Whirlpool Duet WFW94HEX[W] WFW97HEX[ ] WFW95HEX[ ]	1,100	87	●	●	●	●	●	●	75
✓	3	Kenmore Elite 4147[2]	1,100	87	●	●	●	●	●	●	85
✓	4	Samsung WF501AN[W]*	1,100	86	●	●	●	●	●	●	75
✓	5	Samsung WF511AB[W]*	1,400	86	●	●	●	●	●	●	80
✓	6	LG WM2650H[W]A*	900	85	●	●	●	●	●	●	90
✓	7	Samsung WF461AB[W] (Lowe's) WF431AB[ ]*	1,300	85	●	●	●	●	●	●	90
✓	8	LG WM2250C[W]*	720	84	●	●	●	●	●	●	95
✓	9	Kenmore Elite 4172[2]	1,500	84	●	●	●	●	●	●	100
✓	10	Maytag Maxima MHW6000X[W] MHW7000X[ ]	1,100	84	●	●	●	●	●	●	75
✓	11	Kenmore 4027[2]	900	84	●	●	●	●	●	●	80
✓	12	Kenmore Elite 4051[2] 4102[ ]	1,020	83	●	●	●	●	●	●	110
✓	13	Maytag Maxima MHW9000Y[W]	1,400	83	●	●	●	●	●	●	75
✓	14	Samsung WF520AB[P]	1,400	83	●	●	●	●	●	●	85
✓	15	Kenmore Elite 4413[1] *	1,900	82	●	●	●	●	●	●	65
✓	16	Kenmore Elite 4154[2] 4153[ ]	1,300	82	●	●	●	●	●	●	90
✓	17	Samsung WF331AN[W]	1,000	82	●	●	●	●	●	●	85

## B TOP-LOADERS All are high-efficiency models.

✓	1	LG WT4801C[W]	700	80	●	●	●	●	●	●	65
✓	2	Samsung WA5451AN[W]	950	79	●	●	●	●	●	●	65
✓	3	Maytag Bravos XL MVWB750Y[W]	850	79	●	●	●	●	●	●	65
✓	4	LG WT5170H[W]	1,100	78	●	●	●	●	●	●	70
✓	5	Maytag Bravos XL MVWB950Y[W]	1,000	76	●	●	●	●	●	●	70
✓	6	Whirlpool Vantage WTW7990X[G]	1,400	75	●	●	●	●	●	●	80
✓	7	Kenmore 2800[2] 2600[ ]	800	74	●	●	●	●	●	●	45
✓	8	Whirlpool Cabrio WTW5700X[W] WTW5600X[ ] WTW5640X[ ] (Lowe's)	800	74	●	●	●	●	●	●	45
✓	9	Maytag Bravos MVWB300W[Q]	800	73	●	●	●	●	●	●	50
✓	10	Maytag Bravos MVWB750W[Q] MVWB450W[ ], MVWB850W[ ]	940	71	●	●	●	●	●	●	50

\*Meets Energy Star Most Efficient Program criteria; models must be 50 percent more energy efficient than Energy Star models.

## Overview

These large-capacity washers can hold 17 to 22 pounds of laundry and they deliver impressive cleaning, and water and energy efficiency. The dryers offer fine performance and big capacities, and have moisture sensors.

- CR Best Buy These offer the best combination of performance and price. All are recommended.
- Recommended All are top-performing models.

## FINE FRONT-LOADERS

- A3 Kenmore \$1,100
- A6 LG \$900 CR Best Buy
- A7 Samsung \$1,300
- A8 LG \$720 CR Best Buy
- A11 Kenmore \$900 CR Best Buy

All of these combine outstanding cleaning and large capacity without sacrificing either energy or water efficiency. While the top-rated models cleaned as well, **A3**, **A6**, and **A11** were especially gentle and also have a feature that lets you use your phone to help diagnose problems. But **A6** and **A11** are noisier, a consideration if the washer is near bedrooms or living spaces. **A7** has a NightWash cycle that lets you wash two to three items and then spins them dry overnight. **A8** is the least expensive but is relatively noisy and has the longest wash time in this group.

## BEST TOP-LOADERS

- B1 LG \$700 CR Best Buy
- B3 Maytag \$850 CR Best Buy

These high-efficiency top-loaders get your clothes clean in much less time than front-loaders. **B1** is the only top-loader that aced our cleaning test, and it's the quieter of the two, though it's not as easy on your clothes. It also has a phone-in diagnostic tool. **B3** is gentler on wash and slightly more energy-efficient.

## ALSO WORTH CONSIDERING

These low-priced, large-capacity washers were very good at cleaning and almost as efficient as our picks above. But they're noisier, keeping them off our winners' list. The Amana and the HE top-loaders are also mediocre in gentleness. Be aware that the availability of the GE is limited.

- Maytag 5000 Series MHWE450W[W] \$820 (front-loader)
- Amana NFW7300W[W] \$650 (front-loader)
- Whirlpool Cabrio WTW5500X[W] \$550 (HE top-loader)
- GE Profile WPRE8150K[WT] \$650 (HE top-loader)

## Overview

### FOR FINE DRYING

**1 Samsung** \$900

**3 LG** \$1,000

**9 LG** \$800 **CR Best Buy**

All are quiet enough to be placed near living areas. They have an interior light and end-of-cycle signal, which can be turned off. **1** and **3** offer larger capacities, a steam option, and a drum rack for drying items without tumbling. **9** performed similarly for less.

### ALSO WORTH CONSIDERING

These low-priced dryers didn't score as well as our recommended models but are solid choices. The Maytag 500 edged out the Maytag 200 in drying and capacity; the Maytag 200 is especially quiet.

**Maytag** MEDE200X[W] \$600

Gas: MGDE200X[W] \$680

**Maytag** MEDX500X[W] \$550

Gas: MGD500X[W] \$620

## Guide to the Ratings

**Overall score** for washers is based mainly on performance, capacity, and efficiency. **Overall score** for dryers is based mainly on drying, capacity, convenience, and noise. **Washing performance** is measured for multiple load sizes. **Drying performance** is measured for multiple sizes and fabrics. **Energy efficiency** includes total power use and amount of water extracted by the washer in final spin. **Water efficiency** is based on total water used for multiple loads. **Noise** reflects panelists' judgments. **Vibration** reflects use on a wood-framed floor. **Cycle time** is rounded to nearest 5 minutes. **Price** for washers and electric dryers is approximate retail. Add \$50 to \$150 for gas dryer.



## Ratings Dryers

**Recommended models only** From 169 tested.

☒ CR Best Buy  
☒ Recommended

● Excellent  
● Very good  
○ Good  
○ Fair  
● Poor

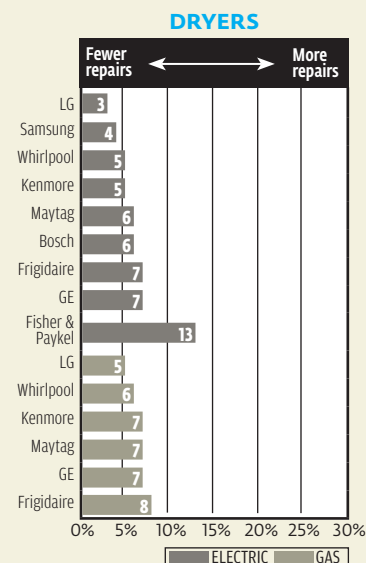
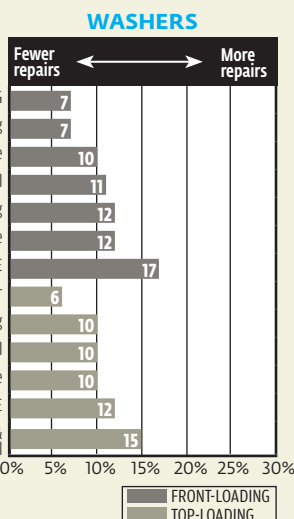
Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model <small>Similar models, in small type, are comparable to tested model. All models have a moisture sensor.</small>	Price	Overall score	Test results				Features			
					Drying	Capacity	Convenience	Noise	Custom programming	Steam option	Stainless-steel drum	Drying rack
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	<b>Samsung</b> DV5451AE[W] Gas: DV5451AG[W]	\$ 900	78	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	<b>LG</b> DLEX3885[W] DLEX3875 []* Gas: DLGX3886 [ ], DLGX3876 [ ]	1,400	78	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	<b>LG</b> DLEX5101[W] DLE5001 [ ] Gas: DLGX5002 [ ], DLE5002 [ ]	1,000	77	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	<b>LG</b> DLEX3360[W] Gas: DLGX3361 [ ]	900	77	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	<b>Samsung</b> DV419AE[W] Gas: DV419AG [ ]	1,000	77	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	<b>LG</b> DLEX2550[W] Gas: DLGX2551[W]	1,100	77	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	<b>Kenmore</b> 6800[2] Gas: 7800 [ ]	700	77	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	<b>Samsung</b> DV520AE[P] Gas: DV520AG [ ]	1,400	77	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	<b>LG</b> DLE2240[W] Gas: DLG2241 [ ]	800	76	●	○	○	○	●	●	●	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10	<b>Kenmore</b> 6927[2] Gas: 7927 [ ]	920	76	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●

\*Has a porcelain top.

## Most and least reliable

Among washers, LG and Samsung were the most reliable front-loader brands, GE the most repair-prone. Roper was the most reliable top-loader brand. Fisher & Paykel was the most repair-prone top-loader brand, and the most repair-prone brand of electric dryers. That's what we found when we asked readers about more than 163,000 clothes washers and dryers bought between 2007 and 2011. The graph shows the percentage of models for each brand that were repaired or had a serious problem. Differences of fewer than 3 points aren't meaningful, and we've adjusted data to eliminate differences linked solely to use and age. Models within a brand may vary, and changes in design or manufacture may affect future reliability. Still, choosing a brand with a good repair history can improve your odds of getting a reliable model.

Source: Annual Product Reliability Survey, Consumer Reports National Research Center.



# Cars

Road tests, auto products, hot topics

## Reports

Fuel-economy myths 55

Sport sedans 56

Chevrolet Malibu Eco 58

Scion iQ microcar 59

**ENERGY-EFFICIENT** The right rubber can improve your car's gas mileage.

## Myths at the gas pump

**LIKE ALL DRIVERS**, you want to save gas and do what's right for your car. But along with the tried-and-true advice, there are some well-intentioned—if off-the-mark—tips that can lead you astray. Here are six common myths about fuel use and gas mileage, and the real stories behind them:



### Using premium gas.

When it comes to regular, midgrade, and premium gasoline, oil companies have worked overtime to drill the “good, better, best” concept into our collective driver psyche. But which is really best depends on the car you drive. Premium gas has a higher octane rating, usually 91 or above, and is more resistant to preignition, a condition in which fuel burns uncontrollably in the engine. Higher-performing engines are the most susceptible to that because they tend to run hotter, which is why premium is often recommended for sports and luxury vehicles. But the vast majority of cars are designed to run fine on regular; for those vehicles, premium won't improve performance or fuel economy but will cost you about 20 cents more per gallon. Midgrade is a mix of regular and premium gas.

**Using premium if “recommended.”** Premium helps maximize power in engines that are designed to use it. But many can

also run fine on less expensive regular gas by automatically making adjustments to the engine timing. You might not get full power when, say, accelerating or climbing hills, but most drivers will probably never notice the difference.

Our advice: If the owner's manual says that premium gas is “recommended” or uses similar wording, you can probably use regular. If it says premium is required, play it safe with the right octane. If in doubt, ask your mechanic.



### Letting a car warm up before driving.

That was true back in the days of carburetors and chokes, but it isn't the case with modern fuel-injected, electronically controlled drivetrains. Engines are most efficient when they're at regular operating temperature, and the fastest way to reach that point is to drive right after starting the car.

### Choosing tires by rolling resistance.

A lot of attention is being paid to a tire's rolling resistance, which is how much energy it takes to roll along. The lower the rolling resistance, the better your fuel economy will be, by about 1 to 2 mpg. But we've found that low rolling resistance can come at the expense of wet-braking performance and tread life—a poor trade-off. It's better to look first for a tire that

provides good all-around performance in important safety areas such as braking, handling, and hydroplaning resistance. Then use rolling resistance as a tiebreaker. In our testing, we've found two all-season passenger-car tires that deliver excellent performance and low rolling resistance: the Continental ProContact EcoPlus+ and Michelin Energy Saver A/S.



### Filling up when the air is cool.

A common tip is to buy gasoline in the morning, when the air is cool, rather than in the heat of the day. The theory is that the cooler gasoline will be denser, so you will get more for your money. But most stations store the gasoline underground. So its temperature changes very little, if at all, during a 24-hour stretch. Any extra gas you get will be negligible.



### Avoiding no-name gas stations.

Independent stations usually buy their fuel from larger, name-brand oil companies, so it's not much different from what you'd get for a higher price down the road. One difference is that it's sometimes formulated without additives designed to clean the engine, but your car should run fine on that gas.



## COMPACT SPORTS SEDANS

# BMW 328i vs. Mercedes-Benz C250

## A sporty, fuel-efficient 3 Series has the edge in a classic showdown

**T**he BMW 3 Series and Mercedes-Benz C-Class sport sedans make up one of the auto world's great rivalries.

And the results of this latest face-off couldn't be closer. Redesigned for 2012, the BMW 328i beat out the updated Mercedes C250 by only one point in our road-test scores: 86 vs. 85. Both are improved over the previous models we tested, but they still score below the Infiniti G37 in this category.

The 328i is quicker, handles better, and is more fun to drive than the Mercedes. And we recorded an impressive 28 mpg overall, easily the best fuel economy in the class. But the C250 is quieter and provides a more refined powertrain and simpler controls. Prices are \$43,195 for the 328i and \$40,705 for the C250. Since we don't yet have reliability data on this

redesigned BMW or the Mercedes' new engine, we can't recommend either car.

### Performance vs. refinement

The 328i's 240-hp, 2.0-liter four-cylinder turbocharged engine and seamless eight-speed automatic transmission deliver impressive acceleration, but the engine emits a diesel-like clatter, especially at idle and low speeds. And the electronic shifter isn't intuitive. A new stop/start system, similar to that used in hybrids, cuts off the engine when the car comes to a stop and automatically restarts it when the driver lifts his foot off the brake pedal. This saves about 1 mpg in city driving, but the car shuddered each time the engine restarted. The system can be easily disengaged.

The C250's 201-hp, 1.8-liter four-cylinder turbocharged engine, which is new for 2012, is mated to a slick seven-speed automatic. It's not as powerful as the 328i's and managed only 24 mpg, but it's the smoothest and most refined four-cylinder we've ever tested. Both cars require premium fuel.

Each car provides taut, agile handling, with little body lean and high cornering limits. Steering is well weighted and responsive in both, but the BMW's is less communicative than in the previous model. Both were impressive on

our track, but the BMW really shines.

Expect a composed, quiet ride in either car, with the C250's cabin especially hushed. Both cars have a commendably absorbent ride that is rock steady on the highway.

### Posh surroundings

As you would expect at this price, the cars have high-quality, well-equipped cabins. Our 328i's seats are plush leather, while the C250 uses a respectable imitation. The seats in both are firmly padded and supportive, with multiple power adjustments.

While the Mercedes has a slight edge in front-seat comfort, its rear seat is tight for adults. Two can fit comfortably in the 328i's improved rear.

Controls are complicated in both cars, but notably worse in the 328i. It has handy hard keys for some radio and climate functions, but you still have to use a multifunction controller to call up menus for many audio controls, which can be distracting. The C250 also has hard keys for some functions, but you have to pick through onscreen menus for some audio and navigation features.

The trunks are moderately sized, and folding the optional split rear seatbacks makes more cargo space.

### How they compare

Rec.	COMPACT SPORTS SEDANS	0 100						
		P	I	F	G	I	V	E
✓	Infiniti G37 Journey	95						
	BMW 328i Luxury	86						
✓	Infiniti G25 Journey	86						
	Mercedes-Benz C250 Luxury	85						
✓	Audi A4 Premium Quattro	76						



# BMW 328i

ROAD-TEST  
SCORE  
**86**



## Tested vehicle

<b>HIGHS</b>	Fuel economy, handling, ride, acceleration, transmission, fit and finish
<b>LOWS</b>	Engine clatter, controls, abrupt start/stop system
<b>TRIM LINE</b>	Luxury
<b>DRIVETRAIN</b>	240-hp, 2.0-liter four-cylinder turbocharged engine; eight-speed automatic transmission; rear-wheel drive
<b>MAJOR OPTIONS</b>	Walnut trim, 18-inch wheels, heated steering wheel and seats, folding rear seat, moonroof, power front seats with lumbar, satellite radio
<b>TESTED PRICE</b>	\$43,195

## More test findings

<b>BRAKING</b>	Very good, with short stops and linear pedal feel.
<b>HEADLIGHTS</b>	Low beams project only a very short distance. High beams provide very good forward visibility and intensity.
<b>ACCESS</b>	Fairly easy overall.
<b>VISIBILITY</b>	Thin pillars and good glass area. A rear-view camera is optional.
<b>CABIN STORAGE</b>	Modest, with small storage compartments.
<b>HEAD RESTRAINTS</b>	The rear center restraint must be flipped up to properly protect an adult.
<b>CHILD SEATS</b>	Some rear-facing child seats can be difficult to secure in the outboard rear seats using safety belts. The LATCH system provides a secure fit, but the anchors can be difficult to access.



**ROOMIER REAR**  
The 328i's backseat now fits two adults comfortably.



**TOP FUEL**  
The turbo-charged 2.0-liter engine gets a class-leading 28 mpg overall.



ROAD-TEST  
SCORE  
**85**

# Mercedes-Benz C250



## Tested vehicle

<b>HIGHS</b>	Ride, handling, transmission, front-seat comfort, fit and finish
<b>LOWS</b>	Rear-seat space, some controls
<b>TRIM LINE</b>	Luxury
<b>DRIVETRAIN</b>	201-hp, 1.8-liter four-cylinder turbocharged engine; seven-speed automatic transmission; rear-wheel drive
<b>MAJOR OPTIONS</b>	Panoramic sunroof, power driver's seat, folding rear seat, heated seats, navigation system, 17-inch alloy wheels, walnut trim
<b>TESTED PRICE</b>	\$40,705

## More test findings

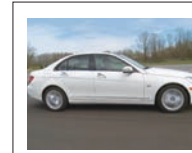
<b>BRAKING</b>	Very good on both wet and dry pavement.
<b>HEADLIGHTS</b>	Low beams don't reach far and have a sharp upper cutoff.
<b>ACCESS</b>	Easy up front; a little more difficult to the rear.
<b>VISIBILITY</b>	Thin pillars and good glass area. A rear-view camera is optional.
<b>CABIN STORAGE</b>	Modest, with several small bins and nooks.
<b>HEAD RESTRAINTS</b>	The center rear restraint must be raised to protect an adult.
<b>CHILD SEATS</b>	It may be tough to secure a rear-facing child seat in the center rear. The LATCH system provides a secure installation, but the anchors are difficult to access.



**GREENHOUSE EFFECT**  
A dual-panel sunroof brightens up the cabin.



**FAB FOUR**  
The C250's turbocharged four-cylinder is wonderfully smooth.





# Chevrolet Malibu Eco

ROAD-TEST  
SCORE  
**76**

The Chevrolet Malibu has been redesigned for 2013, and the first version out of the gate is the Eco, which uses a mild hybrid system to improve fuel economy and acceleration. The Eco achieved 29 mpg overall, beating all conventional (non-hybrid or diesel) family sedans in our tests. But for about the same price, you could buy a Toyota Camry Hybrid, which gets 38 mpg and is much better all around.

Highlights of the Malibu Eco include a comfortable ride, a quiet cabin, and straightforward controls. But it has uninspiring handling, low cornering limits, and a tight rear seat for this category. Although it scored well enough, the Malibu is not recommended because it's too new for us to have reliability data.

## Mild electric boost

The Eco's 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine is augmented by an electric motor that draws power from a lithium-ion battery. Unlike cars with full-hybrid systems, the Malibu can't be driven on electric power alone.

## How they compare

Rec.	SIMILAR MID-SIZED SEDANS	0	100
		P	F   G   V   G   E
✓	Toyota Camry Hybrid XLE	93	
✓	Ford Fusion Hybrid	84	
	Volkswagen Passat TDI SE	80	
	Chevrolet Malibu Eco	76	
	Hyundai Sonata Hybrid	69	

A smooth start-stop system shuts off the engine at stops to conserve fuel and automatically restarts it when you lift your foot off the brake. Despite the hybrid system's electric boost, the Malibu Eco can feel sluggish, especially on hills. But the six-speed automatic transmission shifts quickly and smoothly.

Coming later are two conventional engines: a 2.5-liter four-cylinder and a 2.0-liter turbocharged four-cylinder.

The Malibu is no sports sedan. Though a plush ride smothers bumps with very muted motions, the body is quick to lean in corners and feedback from the low-effort steering is somewhat vague. Persistent understeer sapped drivers' confidence in our avoidance maneuver, where the car reached only a moderate speed.

## A narrow fit

Its interior is nicely finished with thickly padded and deeply grained dashboard and door tops, chrome accents, and decorative stitching. Seat travel and steering-wheel adjustments are generous. But the cockpit is a bit narrow, with the rocker panel pushing into the foot rest and a wide center console crowding the driver.

Rear visibility is limited by a high rear decklid and wide rear roof pillars, although a large rear-view camera display helps. Beefy front pillars block some of the view as well.

The flat front seats feel squishy, and their support fades over long trips. Some drivers wished the cushions were longer, and the scratchy fabric in our car can be



**TIGHT SITUATION** With skimpy leg and knee room, the rear seat is cramped compared with those in other family sedans.

uncomfortable if you're wearing shorts. In the rear, leg and knee room are tight.

Controls are refreshingly straightforward and simple, with large, well-labeled buttons and knobs. The MyLink system lets you control music players with voice commands.

The hybrid battery takes up some trunk space, but three suitcases will still fit. And although the rear seats fold down, they only create a small opening.

## Tested vehicle

<b>HIGHS</b>	Fuel economy, transmission, ride, quietness, controls
<b>LOWS</b>	Rear seat, mediocre handling
<b>TRIM LINE</b>	Eco
<b>DRIVETRAIN</b>	182-hp, 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine with hybrid electric assist; six-speed automatic transmission; front-wheel drive
<b>MAJOR OPTIONS</b>	Power driver's seat, rear camera, remote start
<b>TESTED PRICE</b>	\$28,285

## More test findings

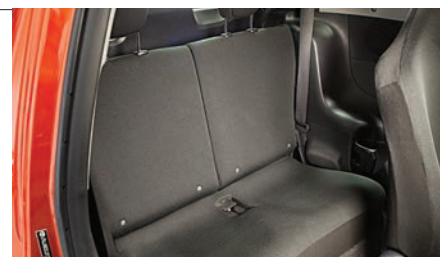
<b>BRAKING</b>	Good pedal feel, which is unusual for hybrid cars.
<b>HEADLIGHTS</b>	Good overall performance.
<b>ACCESS</b>	Easy to the front, but the tight rear-seat space impedes access there.
<b>VISIBILITY</b>	Wide roof pillars and a high decklid impede visibility, but a rear-view camera helps.
<b>CABIN STORAGE</b>	Moderate. A cubby is hidden behind the radio screen.
<b>HEAD RESTRAINTS</b>	There's no head restraint in the center-rear position.
<b>CHILD SEATS</b>	Should be secure. Five LATCH anchors allow installation in any rear position, but they're hard to access.



Scan for video.







**SQUEEZE** Two people can fit in the rear only if the front seats are moved far forward.



**FAMILIAR FEEL** The CVT mimics the shift points of a conventional automatic transmission.

# Scion iQ

ROAD-TEST  
SCORE  
**29**

At only 10 feet long, the new iQ is slightly bigger than the tiny Smart ForTwo. And like the Smart, this hatchback is one of the lowest-scoring cars we've tested in recent years. Its stubby body gives it an amazingly tight turning circle and makes it easy to park. And its 34 mpg overall helps out at the pump. But there are few other high points to mention.

This car is slow, uncomfortable, and noisy. Its numb, overly quick steering takes any fun out of driving. Unlike the Smart, a token rear seat adds some flexibility, but it is very small and uncomfortable. The iQ is too new for us to have reliability data, and it scored too low to be recommended. The roomier Honda Fit and Scion xD are nicer cars that cost about the same, provide comparable fuel economy, and are also easy to zip around in.

## Downsize your expectations

The iQ is powered by a hard-working 94-hp, 1.3-liter four-cylinder engine. It's fed by a tiny 8.5-gallon fuel tank that provides a cruising distance of only about 300 miles. A continuously variable transmission operates smoothly but makes the engine howl. The gas mileage is excellent, but we expected even more from a car of this size.

A buckboard patter dominates the iQ's stiff, choppy ride, and a very noisy cabin can make long trips fatiguing. The car's small size gives you lots of room in a typical traffic lane, but a short wheelbase and quick,

numb steering make the iQ feel nervous on the road. When pushed to its handling limits at our test track, it proved secure and predictable, and it achieved a commendable speed while navigating through our avoidance maneuver.

## Space constraints

Its interior styling tries to look smart, with funky, contrasting textures. But the styling can't disguise the cheap-looking plastics, thin carpeting, and a headliner that resembles fuzzy cardboard.

Drivers will find it hard to get comfortably situated because the foot rest and pedals are too close, and the steering wheel—which tilts but doesn't telescope—is too far away. Head and knee room are generous, but left-foot room is tight.

The two-person rear seat is extremely cramped, with virtually no leg room. And putting an infant's rear-facing seat back there can be a bit of a chore.

The tachometer is tiny, and the steering wheel blocks other instruments' small digital readouts. The high-mounted audio system looks like an aftermarket add-on and is frustrating to use. It has a small display and tiny buttons, and it lacks a dedicated tuning knob. The big climate-control knobs turn stiffly and are a far reach for the driver.

With the rear seats in the upright position, cargo storage is almost nonexistent; folding them down helps a bit. In lieu of a spare tire, the Scion provides only a tire-puncture repair kit.

## Tested vehicle

<b>HIGHS</b>	Fuel economy, turning circle, front access, transmission, rear seat adds flexibility
<b>LOWS</b>	Ride, noise, acceleration, steering, driving position, fit and finish, radio controls, blind spots, tiny rear seat
<b>TRIM LINE</b>	—
<b>DRIVETRAIN</b>	94-hp, 1.3-liter four-cylinder engine; continuously variable transmission; front-wheel drive
<b>MAJOR OPTIONS</b>	None
<b>TESTED PRICE</b>	\$16,205

## More test findings

<b>BRAKING</b>	Very good overall.
<b>HEADLIGHTS</b>	Low beams illuminate a good distance but aren't very bright. High beams shine brighter and farther.
<b>ACCESS</b>	Giant doors make it easy in front; rear access is harder.
<b>CABIN STORAGE</b>	Sparse.
<b>VISIBILITY</b>	Head restraints block the rear view, and over-the-shoulder vision is limited.
<b>HEAD RESTRAINTS</b>	Head restraints are not adjustable but are tall enough to protect an adult.
<b>CHILD SEATS</b>	It's hard to fit rear-facing seats in the tight rear seat. LATCH anchors are hard to access but provide a more secure installation than belts do.



Scan for video.

# Compare



VERSION	BMW 328i	Mercedes-Benz C250	Chevrolet Malibu	Scion iQ
<b>TRIM LINE</b>	—	—	Eco	—
<b>PRICE: BASE/TESTED</b> <sup>①</sup>	\$34,900/\$43,195	\$34,800/\$40,705	\$25,235/\$28,285	\$15,265/\$16,205
<b>DRIVETRAIN</b>				
Engine	2.0-liter 4-cyl. (240 hp) turbo	1.8-liter 4-cyl. (201 hp) turbo	2.4-liter 4-cyl. (182 hp)	1.3-liter 4-cyl. (94 hp)
Transmission	8-speed automatic	7-speed automatic	6-speed automatic	CVT
Drive wheels	Rear	Rear	Front	Front
<b>TIRES TESTED</b>	Pirelli Cinturato P7 All Season, 225/45R18 91V	Michelin Pilot HX MXM4, 225/45R17 91H	Goodyear Assurance, P225/55R17 95H	Goodyear Assurance, 175/60R16 82H
<b>Model &amp; size</b>				
<b>RATINGS</b>				
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>				
Acceleration	●	●	●	○
0 to 60 mph, sec.	6.3	7.6	8.6	10.6
45 to 65 mph, sec.	4.0	4.6	5.5	6.5
Quarter-mile, sec.	14.9	15.9	16.8	18.2
Transmission	●	●	●	●
Routine handling	●	●	○	○
Emergency handling	●	●	○	○
Avoid. maneuver, speed, mph	54.5	51.5	50.0	53.5
Braking	●	●	●	●
From 60 mph, dry/wet, ft.	132/141	131/141	132/145	139/144
Headlights	●	●	○	○
<b>COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE</b>				
Ride	●	●	●	●
Noise	●	●	●	●
Driving position	●	●	●	●
Front-seat comfort	●	●	●	○
Rear-seat comfort	○	○	○	●
Access	●	●	●	●
Controls and displays	○	○	●	○
Interior fit and finish	●	●	●	●
Trunk	●	●	○	●
<b>PREDICTED RELIABILITY</b>	New	New	New	New
<b>FUEL</b>				
Overall mpg	28	24	29	34
City/highway mpg	19/39	17/34	20/41	27/40
Type	premium	premium	regular	regular
Capacity, gal./cruising range, mi.	15.8/440	15.6/380	15.8/465	8.5/290
Annual cost, 12,000 miles	\$1,730 @ \$4.00/gal.	\$1,960 @ \$4.00/gal.	\$1,465 @ \$3.60/gal.	\$1,260 @ \$3.60/gal.
<b>SAFETY</b>				
<b>CRASH TESTS</b>				
IIHS frontal offset	Good	Good	Good	NA
IIHS side	Good	Good	Good	NA
IIHS rear	Good	Good	Good	NA
IIHS roof strength	Good	Good	Good	NA
NHTSA front, driver/pass.	●/●	NA/NA	●/●	●/○
NHTSA side, driver/rear	●/●	NA/NA	●/●	●/○
NHTSA rollover 2WD/4WD	●/NA	●/●	●/NA	●/NA
<b>AIR BAGS</b>				
Side, front/rear	std./no	std./opt.	std./no	std./no
Head protection	standard	std. w/rollover	standard	standard
<b>SPECIFICATIONS</b>				
<b>DIMENSIONS AND WEIGHT</b>				
Length/width/height, in.	183/71/56	181/70/57	191/73/58	120/66/59
Wheelbase, in.	111	109	108	79
Turning circle, ft.	38	37	37	28
Ground clearance, in.	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0
Curb weight, lb. (% front/rear)	3,485 (49/51)	3,410 (51/49)	3,605 (59/41)	2,140 (61/39)
Maximum load, lb.	905	835	905	660
Luggage, suitcases + duffels	2+1	2+1	3+0	1+1 (with rear seats folded)
Towing capacity, lb.	NR	NR	NR	NR
<b>INTERIOR ROOM</b>				
Front shoulder room, in.	54.5	54.0	57.0	52.5
Front leg room, in.	42.0	42.0	42.5	40.5
Front head room, in. <sup>②</sup>	4.0	2.5	3.5	3.0
Rear shoulder room, in.	54.0	53.5	55.0	49.0
Rear leg room, in.	28.5	26.0	27.0	16.0
Rear head room, in. <sup>②</sup>	2.5	2.0	3.0	0.0

<sup>①</sup> Based on sticker price at time of purchase. <sup>②</sup> Above a person 5'9" tall.

## Subscriptions

Visit us online at:

[www.ConsumerReports.org/magazine](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/magazine)

Use the website to:

- Renew your current subscription
- Pay for your subscription
- Give a gift subscription
- Change your address
- Report a missing, duplicate, or damaged issue
- Cancel your subscription

You can also contact us about your subscription by phone at 800-666-5261.

Or write to us at:

Consumer Reports, P.O. Box 2109, Harlan, IA 51593-0298

Attach or copy address label from front cover.

Allow four to six weeks for processing.

### Save time, paper, and postage

Provide us your e-mail address at [www.ConsumerReports.org/magazine2](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/magazine2). We'll update you about Consumer Reports products and services.

**Price** In U.S., \$5.99 per issue, special issues \$6.99. In Canada, \$6.99 CAN per issue, special issues \$7.99 CAN (Goods and Services Tax included, GST #127047702). All other countries add \$10 per year to the U.S. price for shipping and handling.

**Back issues** Single copies of preceding issues, \$7.95 each; Buying Guide, \$14.49 (includes shipping and handling) each. Please send payment and issue to Consumer Reports, Attn.: Customer Relations Dept., 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057. Digital editions are available on Nook Color and Zinio Digital Newsstand. An iPad edition is available at the Apple Store.

**Permissions** Reproduction of CONSUMER REPORTS in whole or in part is forbidden without prior written permission (and is never permitted for advertising purposes). Address requests to CR Permissions Dept., 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057.

**Mailing lists** We exchange or rent our customer postal mailing list so that it can be provided to other publications, companies, and nonprofit organizations. If you wish to have your name deleted from our list, please send your address label with a request for deletion from outside use to Consumer Reports, P.O. Box 2127, Harlan, IA 51593-0316. We do not exchange or rent customers' e-mail addresses. You can review our complete privacy policy regarding Consumer Reports information products, services, and programs at [www.ConsumerReports.org/privacy](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/privacy). If you participate in our advocacy activities, please see our Consumers Union Advocacy Privacy Policy at [www.ConsumersUnion.org/about/privacy.htm](http://www.ConsumersUnion.org/about/privacy.htm) regarding how your information is used and shared with our affiliate, the Consumers Union Action Fund.



**Consumer Reports** (ISSN 0010-7174) is published monthly, except twice in December, by Consumers Union of U.S., Inc., 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057. Periodicals postage paid at Yonkers, NY, and at other mailing offices; Canadian postage, at Mississauga, Ontario (Canadian publications registration number 2665247, agreement number 40015148). Title **Consumer Reports** is a federally registered trademark in the U.S. Patent Office.

Contents of this issue copyright © 2012 by Consumers Union of U.S., Inc. All rights reserved under international and Pan-American copyright conventions.

**Violations of CR's No Commercial Use policy** Our Ratings and reports may not be used in advertising. No other commercial use, including any use on the Internet, is permitted without our express written permission. Report any apparent violation at [ConsumerReports.org/NoCommercialUse](http://ConsumerReports.org/NoCommercialUse) or by mail to Consumer Reports, External Relations, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057.

**Voting** Paid subscribers may become voting members of CR by written request, by sending in a nomination for the board of directors, or by voting in the annual election of CR's directors; ballots are sent to paid subscribers.

**Contributions** are tax deductible in accordance with the law as Consumer Reports is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Persons who contribute \$10 to \$99 become Friends Circle Members. Contributors of \$100 to \$999 become Leadership Circle Members, and those who contribute \$1,000 or more become President's Circle Members. Donations of commonly traded securities or real estate will be accepted and immediately converted to cash. For information or to make a donation, please write to CR Foundation, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057 or e-mail [epitaro@consumer.org](mailto:epitaro@consumer.org).

**Planned giving** Bequests (please remember CR in your will) and Charitable Gift Annuities can help support CR's programs. For information, write to CR Fundraising, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703-1057.

**Consumer Reports' staff** operates under contract between Consumer Reports and The Newspaper Guild of New York, Local 31003, The Newspaper Guild, AFL-CIO.

**POSTMASTER** Send address changes to Consumer Reports, P.O. Box 2109, Harlan, IA 51593-0298. If the post office alerts us that your magazines are undeliverable, we have no further obligation to fulfill your magazines unless we have a corrected address within two years.

**CANADA POST** If copies are undeliverable, return to Consumer Reports, P.O. Box 1051, STN MAIN, Fort Erie ON L2A 6C7.



Consumer Reports is a member of Consumers International, a federation of more than 220 consumer organizations from more than 115 countries working to protect and empower consumers throughout the world. For information, go to [www.consumersinternational.org](http://www.consumersinternational.org).

### Please remember CR in your will

For information on how to leave a bequest and become a Legacy Leader, please contact: Ed Pitaro at 914-378-2647 or [epitaro@consumer.org](mailto:epitaro@consumer.org).

# BUYING? SELLING? TRADING IN?

Pinpoint the  
Real Value  
of that  
Used Car  
and Save with



## ConsumerReports® Used Car Price Service

### Get Base Pricing... Options Costs... and Reliability Details on most used cars for the last 10 model years

How much is that used car really worth? Don't guess. Let the experts at Consumer Reports pinpoint the real market value price. Simply tell us the year, make, model, and trim line of the vehicle you want to buy, sell, or trade in (e.g., 2006 Acura TL). Each report contains:

- ☒ **Calculations and Prices** — Discover the "Real Value" price including how to demystify the costs of additional equipment and options.
- ☒ **Vehicle Overview** — Find out how the car performed in real-world Consumer Reports road tests.
- ☒ **Reliability Verdict** — Are you about to make a big mistake and buy a clunker? Find out here before it's too late.
- ☒ **Plus Successful Negotiating Strategies** — Whether you're buying or selling privately, or negotiating a dealer trade-in.

Each report cost only \$12. We'll deliver your report to you by fax, mail or online.

**Call today and get the right car at the right price!**

# 1-800-258-0249

**Or go to: [www.ConsumerReports.org/RealValue](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/RealValue)**

SERVICE NOT AVAILABLE IN CANADA

UCPS0812



**This page lists all full reports** and selected shorter reports. **Bold** type indicates Ratings reports or brand-name discussions; *italic* type, corrections, follow-ups, or updates. A search of the most recent Ratings of products is

<b>A</b>		
Acne treatments	Jan 12, 9	
Advertisements, television	Sep 11, 13	
Air conditioners	<b>Jul 12, 53</b>	
reliability	May 12, 43	
Air purifiers	<b>Jun 12, 36</b>	
Air-quality hazards	<b>Jun 12, 34</b>	
Air travel, saving money on	Feb 12, 7	
American-made products	Mar 12, 8	
Appliances		
fire risks	<b>Mar 12, 22</b>	
shopping for	<b>Jul 12, 28</b>	
Apps, refunds on	May 12, 11	
Arsenic, in juice and water	Jan 12, 22; May 12, 14	
<b>AUTOMOBILE RATINGS:</b>		
Acura TL	<b>Nov 11, 64</b>	
Audi A6	<b>Jan 12, 52</b>	
BMW 328i	<b>Aug 12, 56</b>	
BMW X3	<b>Mar 12, 56</b>	
BMW X5	<b>Jun 12, 50</b>	
Chevrolet Cruze Eco	<b>Jul 12, 56</b>	
Chevrolet Malibu Eco	<b>Aug 12, 56</b>	
Chevrolet Sonic	<b>May 12, 50</b>	
Chevrolet Volt	<b>Oct 11, 52g; Dec 11, 5</b>	
Chrysler 300	<b>Nov 11, 64</b>	
Fiat 500	<b>Oct 11, 52</b>	
Ford F-150	<b>Sep 11, 52</b>	
Ford Focus	<b>Sep 11, 52</b>	
Ford Focus SFE	<b>Jul 12, 56</b>	
Honda Civic	<b>Sep 11, 52</b>	
Honda Civic HF	<b>Jul 12, 56</b>	
Honda Civic Hybrid	<b>Oct 11, 52</b>	
Honda Civic Si	<b>Feb 12, 54</b>	
Honda CR-V	<b>Jun 12, 50</b>	
Hyundai Accent	<b>May 12, 50</b>	
Hyundai Genesis	<b>Nov 11, 64</b>	
Hyundai Sonata Hybrid	<b>Nov 11, 64</b>	
Hyundai Veloster	<b>Jul 12, 56</b>	
Infiniti M35h	<b>Jan 12, 52</b>	
Jeep Wrangler	<b>Mar 12, 56</b>	
Kia Forte 5-Door	<b>Sep 11, 52</b>	
Kia Rio	<b>May 12, 50</b>	
Kia Soul	<b>Jun 12, 50</b>	
Lexus CT 200h	<b>Oct 11, 52</b>	
Mazda5	<b>Dec 11, 68</b>	
Mazda CX-5	<b>Jun 12, 50</b>	
Mazda3 i	<b>May 12, 50</b>	
Mercedes-Benz C250	<b>Aug 12, 56</b>	
Mercedes-Benz E350 BlueTec	<b>Jan 12, 52</b>	
Mercedes-Benz ML350	<b>Jun 12, 50</b>	
Mini Cooper Countryman	<b>Jan 12, 52</b>	
Nissan Leaf	<b>Nov 11, 64</b>	
Nissan Quest	<b>Dec 11, 68</b>	
Nissan Versa	<b>May 12, 50</b>	
Range Rover Evoque	<b>Mar 12, 56</b>	
Saab 9-5	<b>Jan 12, 52</b>	
Scion iQ	<b>Aug 12, 56</b>	
Subaru Impreza	<b>May 12, 50; Jun 12, 50</b>	
Toyota Avalon	<b>Nov 11, 64</b>	
Toyota Camry	<b>Feb 12, 54</b>	
Toyota Prius C	<b>Jul 12, 56</b>	
Toyota Prius V	<b>Mar 12, 54</b>	
Volkswagen Beetle	<b>Jul 12, 56</b>	
Volkswagen Jetta GLI	<b>Feb 12, 54</b>	
Volkswagen Jetta TDI	<b>Oct 11, 52</b>	
Volkswagen Passat	<b>Feb 12, 54</b>	
Volkswagen Tiguan	<b>Mar 12, 56</b>	
<b>AUTOMOBILES AND AUTOMOTIVE EQUIPMENT:</b>		
batteries	<b>Nov 11, 61</b>	
best & worst for 2012	Apr 12, 10	
cost control	Feb 12, 49	
electronics, onboard	Oct 11, 47	
fuel-economy standards	Nov 11, 6	
GPS units, with traffic information	Jan 12, 49	
headlight cleaning kits	Feb 12, 53	
hybrid electric, Chevrolet Volt, fires	Feb 12, 13	
manufacturers	<b>Apr 12, 14</b>	
mileage and utility	Sep 11, 51	
myths	Aug 12, 55	
owner satisfaction	Jan 12, 50	
profiles, 2012	<b>Apr 12, 40</b>	
Ratings, 2012	<b>Apr 12, 27</b>	
reliability	<b>Dec 11, 62; Apr 12, 86</b>	
repair shops, costs	Jul 12, 55	
safety ratings	<b>Apr 12, 72</b>	
test notes 2012	Apr 12, 5	
tire gauges	<b>May 12, 49</b>	
tires	<b>Nov 11, 57; Apr 12, 24</b>	
recalls, Continental Contirac TR	Mar 12, 14	
ultra-high performance	<b>Oct 11, 34</b>	
top picks for 2012	<b>Apr 12, 6</b>	
traction-improving features	Dec 11, 61	
trade-ins, "MSRP"	Sep 11, 8	
used cars	Apr 12, 78	
values, best	<b>Feb 12, 50</b>	
vehicle communication systems	Apr 12, 20	
waxes	<b>Nov 11, 55</b>	

<b>B</b>		
Baby products, risky	May 12, 14	
Bad habits	Feb 12, 42	
Bagels	May 12, 8	
Bakeware, glass, safety	Oct 11, 40	
Bank accounts		
closing	Aug 12, 6	
reopened	Aug 12, 11	
Banks	Feb 12, 16	
Batteries	May 12, 43	
Batteries, AA	<b>Dec 11, 7</b>	
Beers	<b>Feb 12, 10</b>	
Bisphenol A, ban	Jan 12, 6	
Blenders, immersion	<b>Sep 11, 38</b>	
Blood glucose monitors	<b>Nov 11, 52</b>	
Blood pressure monitors	<b>Oct 11, 38; Jun 12, 41</b>	
Blu-ray players	Dec 11, 54	
Breakfast habits	Nov 11, 10	
Brokerages	<b>Feb 12, 20; Mar 12, 5</b>	
Building codes, efficient	Aug 12, 6	
Butter substitutes	Mar 12, 8	
Buyback programs	Sep 11, 10	
<b>C</b>		
Caffeine	Oct 11, 8	
Camcorders	<b>Dec 11, 47</b>	
Cameras, digital	<b>Dec 11, 47; Aug 12, 42</b>	
Carpet stain removers, Bissell Stompin' Go	May 12, 10	
Celebrity brands	Oct 11, 16	
Certificates of deposit (CDs)	Oct 11, 8	
Charcoal, Match Light	May 12, 10	
Chocolates	<b>Feb 12, 8; May 12, 5</b>	
Cigarettes, electronic	May 12, 11	
Cleaners, Mistolin, bottle safety	Oct 11, 14	
Clothes dryers	<b>Aug 12, 52</b>	
Cloud computing	Oct 11, 11	
Coffee	<b>Sep 11, 40</b>	
Coffeemakers	<b>Dec 11, 57</b>	
Hamilton Beach Voice		
Activated Coffeemaker	March 11, 43	
pod	<b>Nov 11, 53</b>	
Colas, Pepsi Next	Aug 12, 9	
Computers	<b>Dec 11, 40</b>	
desktop	<b>Oct 11, 33</b>	
keyboards, iPad	May 12, 42	
laptop	<b>Mar 12, 43; Aug 12, 47</b>	
monitors	<b>Jun 12, 43</b>	
netbooks	<b>Sep 11, 37</b>	
printers	<b>Dec 11, 52</b>	
software, security	<b>Jun 12, 32</b>	
tablet	<b>Sep 11, 43; Dec 11, 26; Jan 12, 41; Feb 12, 43; Jun 12, 39; Aug 12, 38</b>	
technical support	<b>Aug 12, 48</b>	
Consumer advocacy groups		
Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety	Feb 12, 6	
Economic Fairness Oregon	Jan 12, 6	
Virginia Citizens Consumer Council	May 12, 6	
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau	Jul 12, 6	
Website	Nov 11, 6; Jun 12, 6	
Consumer Product Safety		
Commission Web database	Mar 12, 6	
Consumer Reports		
changes at	Jan 12, 6	
no-commercial-use policy	Nov 11, 6	
reader gadget wishlist	Dec 11, 56	
Consumers Union		
Consumer Product Safety		
Commission award for	Feb 12, 6	
Excellence in Consumer		
Advocacy Award	Dec 11, 6; Mar 12, 6; May 12, 6	
Safe Patient Project	May 12, 6	
Cookie sheets, ceramic	Dec 11, 9	
Cookies, chocolate chip	<b>Dec 11, 8</b>	
Cooktops	<b>Jul 12, 38</b>	
Cookware	<b>Jun 12, 40</b>	
Countertops	<b>Jul 12, 34</b>	
Crash-test dummies, female	Jun 12, 6	
Credit cards		
new, deals on	Dec 11, 15	
Credit ratings		
lesser known	Oct 11, 6	
online checking	Feb 12, 6	
Credit reports, free, problems	Jul 12, 9	
Cuts	Oct 11, 12	
Cyber security, Federal website	Jul 12, 6	
<b>D</b>		
Data mining	Oct 11, 6	
Debit cards		
fees	Jan 12, 6	
prepaid	May 12, 8	
Deficit reduction bill	Dec 11, 6	
Dehumidifiers	<b>Jun 12, 38</b>	
Dental care	Feb 12, 36	
Dessert bars, frozen	<b>Jul 12, 8</b>	
Dietary supplements, celebrity-endorsed	Mar 12, 12	
Diseases, antibiotic-resistant	Aug 12, 6	
Dish detergents	<b>Oct 11, 8; Jul 12, 10</b>	
Dishwashers	<b>Jan 12, 45; Jul 12, 48</b>	

available on our website, at [ConsumerReports.org](http://ConsumerReports.org). Note that because reports posted on our site are periodically updated, publication dates on the Web index may not reflect when a given report appeared in the magazine.

Doctors

as businesspeople

corporate gifts to

haggling with

Drills & drivers, cordless

Drivers, young, safety

Driving while distracted

Drugs

generic

retail prices

side effects

E-book readers

Echinacea, ragweed allergies and

Electronics, portable

Electronics stores

Emergency alerts, cellular

Energy alternatives

Energy conservation

Exercise equipment

Fitness Anywhere TRX

Exercise handles, Perfect Fitness lawsuit

Eyeglass care

Fish, mislabeled

Fish-oil pills

Flooring

Food processors & choppers

401(k) plan fees

French fries, Burger King

Furniture-moving equipment, EZMoves

Fushigi Magic Gravity Ball

Gadgets, getting the most out of

Garlic

Gifts

Grills, gas

Grocery stores, online

Hamburgers, Wendy's Dave's

Hot N' Juicy Cheeseburger

Headphones

Health care

prices

unnecessary

Health insurance

disclosure rules

junk

medical loss ratio

rate increases

retirement security

Health questions

Health tips

Heart health and treatment

Heartburn

Helmets, bicycle

Home-theater systems

Home warranties

Hospital safety

Hotels

Human papillomavirus (HPV)

Implants, medical, dangerous

Innovations, most useful

Insurance, unnecessary

Internet safety

Kitchen gadgets

Kitchen remodeling

Knives, kitchen

Laundry detergents

bottle sizes

Lawn care

Lawn mowers & tractors

Lead, children's toy regulations

Lemonades

Lightbulbs

compact fluorescent (CFLs)

LED

Lighters, toy-like, safety ban

Lotions, moisturizing

Mattresses

Meals, frozen

Meat, recalls

Medicine

alternative

overused

Memory improvement

Microwave ovens, over-the-range

Migraine drugs

Mortgages

documents

refinancing

Movie-theater food

Online privacy, kids'

Overdraft fees

Packaging, Sun Chips

Paints & stains

exterior

interior

Passwords

Pasta sauces

Payment types, alternative

mobile payments, security

Pedometers

Pension-plan security

Pet finders, GPS-based

Pickles

Power inverters

Probiotics

Prostate cancer, PSA testing

Ranges

Viking VGSC304BSS

Refrigerators

inaccurate energy-efficiency claims

Repair plans, home

Restaurant chains

Retirement mistakes

Rice, instant

Safety concerns

Sandwiches, breakfast

Scams

caller ID spoofing

computer virus

Sealers, FlexSeal

Shoes, toning, Reebok false advertising suit

Shopping annoyances

Shredders, paper

Sinks, kitchen

Sleep and sleep aids

Social Security benefit timing

Stirrers, automatic

Stock market drops

Stores

outlet

sports

supermarkets

Strollers, recalls, Britax B-Nimble

Student loans, repaying

Sunscreens

Table saws, safer

Telecommunications services

Telephone services

bill surprises

billing laws

cellular

Telephones

BlackBerry Torch 9850, BlackBerry Bold 9930

cellular

cordless

smart

shopping apps

walking with

Television sets

LCD

picture quality

plasma

Sony, overheating

Thermometers, fever

Toasters & toaster ovens

Toilet paper

Top products

Towels, paper

Trash bags

Trimmers, string

Vacuum cleaners

Volunteering, health benefits of

Wall ovens

Washing machines

Water, bottled

terminology

Water filters

Wines

cabernet and chardonnay

red blends

shiraz and zinfandel

white

Jan 12, 12

Mar 12, 10

May 12, 6

Oct 11, 12

Dec 11, 60

Jun 12, 49

Jun 12, 6

May 12, 12

Dec 11, 9

Nov 11, 9; Mar 12, 11

Dec 11, 29; Feb 12, 41; Aug 12, 37

Feb 12, 12

Aug 12, 34

Dec 11, 24

Aug 12, 10

Oct 11, 30

Oct 11, 24

Feb 12, 28

Sep 11, 9

Nov 11, 14

Aug 12, 11

Dec 11, 18

Jan 12, 11; Feb 12, 5

Jul 12, 30

May 12, 42

Jul 12, 7

Mar 12, 8

May 12, 9

Dec 11, 10

Dec 11, 55

Dec 11, 11

Jan 12, 16

Sep 11, 39; Jun 12, 42; Aug 12, 48

Sep 11, 11

Jan 12, 10

Dec 11, 54; Aug 12, 49

Jul 12, 20

Jun 12, 12

Nov 11, 39; Jan 12, 5

May 12, 6

Mar 12, 30

Dec 11, 6

Oct 11, 6

Jul 12, 13

Sep 11, 12

Jan 12, 13

Sep 11, 26; Oct 11, 5

Nov 11, 12

Jul 12, 51

Dec 11, 52; Dec 11, 54

Feb 12, 9

Aug 12, 20

Jul 12, 14

Feb 12, 12

May 12, 24

Feb 12, 11

May 12, 13

Jun 12, 22

Feb 12, 10

Jul 12, 24

Nov 11, 51

May 12, 32

May 12, 34

Oct 11, 14

Aug 12, 10

Jan 12, 42

Oct 11, 27; Feb 12, 14

Jul 12, 52

Feb 12, 13

Nov 11, 11

Aug 12, 32

Jan 12, 8

Mar 12, 14

Sep 11, 20

May 12, 6

Oct 11, 7

Jul 12, 38

Jul 12, 12

Sep 11, 6

Jan 12, 12

Mar 12, 10

Mar 12, 6

May 12, 14

Jan 12, 9

Jun 12, 46

Mar 12, 46

Jan 12, 19

Aug 12, 8

Sep 11, 16

Sep 11, 6

Feb 12, 34

Jul 12, 13

May 12, 10

Jun 12, 7

May 12, 40

Nov 11, 12

Jan 12, 13

Dec 11, 58; Mar 12, 44; Jul 12, 38

Nov 11, 53

Jul 12, 44

Oct 11, 34

May 12, 8

Aug 12, 14

Mar 12, 13

Nov 11, 10

Mar 12, 10

Jun 12, 11

Mar 12, 9

Feb 12, 9

Jun 12, 8

Dec 11, 6

Aug 12, 8

Dec 11, 56

Jul 12, 36

Aug 12, 29

Oct 11, 13; Dec 11, 5

Nov 11, 11

Nov 11, 13

Mar 12, 16; May 12, 5

Nov 11, 16

May 12, 7

May 12, 16

Sep 11, 38

May 12, 29

Jun 12, 9

Jan 12, 14

Jun 12, 16

Aug 12, 12

Jul 12, 6

Jan 12, 28; Jan 12, 34

Nov 11, 52

Jan 12, 28; Jan 12, 34

Oct 11, 36

Feb 12, 42

May 12, 41; Jul 12, 52; Aug 12, 40

Dec 11, 10

Aug 12, 7

Mar 12, 34

Dec 11, 36

Oct 11, 35

Dec 11, 36

Jan 12, 14

Nov 11, 7

Mar 12, 45

May 12, 44

Nov 11, 21

Jan 12, 7

Jun 12, 10

May 12, 40

Nov 11, 35; Mar 12, 49

Dec 11, 12

Jul 12, 38

Aug 12, 52

Sep 11, 7

Jul 12, 9

Feb 12, 44

Jan 12, 10

Oct 11, 10

Dec 11, 11

Jul 12, 10



## Caustic (adj.): burning or corrosive

Wet&Forget stain remover is "non caustic," but what about this warning under its peel-up label: "Corrosive. Causes irreversible eye damage and skin burns. ... Wash thoroughly with soap and water after handling and before eating, drinking, chewing gum, using tobacco or using the toilet." There's more, but it's hard to type while we're wearing the required protective eyewear and chemical-resistant gloves.



## IOU a TON

A recent TV ad for Western Sky Financial offered loans of up to \$5,000. But don't be grateful. The small print says, "The APR for a typical loan of \$5,000 is 116.73% with 84 monthly payments of \$486.58." So if you take \$5,000 and pay the loan back over seven years, you're out \$35,872.29. The company received a rating of F from the Better Business Bureau, and the Federal Trade Commission has filed a complaint against it.



## Love ya, Mom!

Let's see: spa treatment or termite treatment? We can't wait to see what Mariners termite-control and wood-repair company offers on Valentine's Day. Maybe repair for the chair that Mom broke over the head of the person who gave her a termite treatment.

## Where's the rest of me?

**Missing:** ¾-inch-thick, high-pressure laminate table with solid oak banding. No legs.



## Almost forever

We'd call that "nowhere near" perpetual motion.

**Submissions:** SellingIt@cro.consumer.org or  
Selling It, Consumer Reports, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, NY 10703



## Pop(sicle) quiz

**Q:** What product shrank its contents from 24 items to 20?

**A:** See the photo above.

**Q:** Did a reader pay less for the 20-pop box?

**A:** Of course not.

**Q:** Is that fair?

**A:** A Popsicle customer-service rep said what a lot of downsized-product makers say: Prices are set by individual stores, not the manufacturer.



## Waiting to exhale

"Better stay clear of anyone who's breathing," wrote the reader who spied this ad. (Clearly, the alarm company meant to warn against CO, carbon monoxide.)



The Consumer Reports New Car Price Report includes access to the Build & Buy Service. Purchasers have saved over \$100 million vs MSRP using this program\*.



# Consumer Reports Holds the Key to Your New Car

Find the right price for the car you select with our New Car Price Report

We operate on the principle that an educated buyer gets the best deal. To that end, we provide you with extensive and essential information in our New Car Price Report.

Simply put, our New Car Price Report equips you with the information necessary to get a great price.

## Consumer Reports New Car Price Report

We offer a New Car Price Report for nearly every new car make and model. You can customize your Report

### Each Consumer Reports New Car Report Includes:

- Detailed Pricing of All Factory-Installed Options
- Unpublished Dealer Incentives and Holdbacks
- Equipment Cost and Recommendations
- Current Safety Ratings
- Negotiating Tips and Traps
- Reliability Ratings

by selecting vehicle equipment options that work for you. Not only do we supply you with key pricing information, but we also display it in an easy-to-read presentation.

### When it comes to pricing, we've got you covered:

- **Dealer Invoice Price.** It's the dealer's maximum cost to acquire the car from the manufacturer.
- **Incentives.** These include dealer incentives, customer cash incentives and finance incentives.
- **Consumer Reports Bottom Line Price.** This is the place to start negotiating, taking into account regional marketing fees, dealer incentives and holdbacks.

**ConsumerReports®**  
**New Car Price Service**

Call Now For Your \$14 Report.

\$12 for each additional report ordered at the same time.

**1-800-651-4636**

Or go to [www.ConsumerReports.org/greatprice](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/greatprice)

For service in Canada, go to: [www.ConsumerReports.org/canada27](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/canada27)

\*Cumulative savings off MSRP through 12/11.

NCPS28C4N



# Canada Extra

Information from CONSUMER REPORTS® for Canadian readers

## In this special section

Tablets	32A
E-book readers	32B
Washers	32B
Dryers	32B
Basic cameras	32C
Advanced cameras	32C
Autos	32D
Contact info	32D

## How to use the Canada Extra section

Every month, Canada Extra provides Canadian pricing and availability information about products tested for that issue. The Ratings in this section are based on this month's reports, but they narrow your choices to the products that are sold in Canada.

You can use this section in either of two ways: Start with the main report, read about the products that interest you, and turn to this section to find whether they're sold—and for what price—in Canada. Or start here, find products sold in Canada whose price and overall score appear promising, and read more about them in the main report and full Ratings chart; page numbers appear with each Canadian report. (For some products, the Canadian model designation differs slightly from the one used in the U.S.)

In most cases, the prices we list here

are the approximate retail in Canadian dollars; manufacturers' list prices are indicated by an asterisk (\*). Check marks identify CR Best Buys or Recommended products in the U.S. Ratings. "NA" in a chart means that information wasn't available from the manufacturer. We include, in the Contact Info list on page 32D, the manufacturer's phone number and Web address in Canada, so that you can call or go online to get information on a model you can't find in the stores. (Many products that aren't available in Canadian stores can be bought online.)

We appreciate your support but we don't take it for granted. Please write to [CanadaExtra@cu.consumer.org](mailto:CanadaExtra@cu.consumer.org) and tell us what you think. We can't reply to every e-mail message or implement every suggestion, but with your help we'll try to keep growing to serve your needs.

Paul Reynolds, *Canada Extra editor*

☒ **CR Best Buy** Products with this icon offer the best combination of performance and price. All are recommended.

☒ **Recommended** Models with this designation perform well and stand out for reasons we note.

## Tablets

Report and Ratings, page 38

Recommended models only, from 49 tested.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E

### A 9- TO -10-INCH SCREEN, 3G/4G+WI-FI

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Apple iPad (4G, 16GB) (3rd gen.)	\$750	85
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Samsung Galaxy Tab 8.9 (4G, 16GB)	650	84
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Apple iPad 2 (3G, 16GB)	420	82
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1 (4G, 16GB)	NA	80

### B 9- TO -10-INCH SCREEN, WI-FI-ONLY

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Apple iPad (16GB) (3rd gen.)	520	84
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Asus Eee Pad Transformer Prime TF201 (32GB)	500	83
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Samsung Galaxy Tab 2 (10.1) (16GB)	450	83
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	9	Apple iPad 2 (16GB)	550	80

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E

### B 9- TO -10-INCH SCREEN, WI-FI-ONLY continued

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	10	Sony Tablet S (16GB)	\$350	80
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	11	Acer Iconia Tab A510 (32GB)	450	79
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12	Asus Eee Pad Transformer (16GB)	400	76
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	13	Motorola Xoom (32GB)	500	75

### C 7- TO 8-INCH SCREEN, 3G/4G+WI-FI

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Pantech Element (4G, 16GB)	NA	75
-------------------------------------	---	----------------------------	----	----

### D 7- TO 8-INCH SCREEN, WI-FI-ONLY

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.0 Plus (16GB)	350	74
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Toshiba Thrive 7" (16GB)	400	71
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	BlackBerry PlayBook (16GB)	200	70

# E-book readers

Report and Ratings, page 37

Recommended models only, from 22 tested.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E
✓	1	<b>Barnes &amp; Noble</b> Nook Simple Touch with GlowLight	\$140	83
✓	2	<b>Barnes &amp; Noble</b> Nook Simple Touch Reader	100	82
✓	3	<b>Amazon</b> Kindle Keyboard 3G	190	79
✓	4	<b>Amazon</b> Kindle Keyboard 3G with Special Offers	140	79
✓	5	<b>Barnes &amp; Noble</b> Nook Color	170	77
✓	6	<b>Amazon</b> Kindle without Special Offers	110	74
✓	7	<b>Amazon</b> Kindle with Special Offers	80	74

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E
✓	8	<b>Kobo</b> eReader Touch Edition	\$100	72
✓	9	<b>Amazon</b> Kindle Touch 3G without Special Offers	190	71
✓	10	<b>Amazon</b> Kindle Touch 3G with Special Offers	150	71
✓	11	<b>Amazon</b> Kindle Touch without Special Offers	140	68
✓	12	<b>Amazon</b> Kindle Touch with Special Offers	100	68
✓	13	<b>Kobo</b> Vox eReader	180	67
✓	14	<b>Sony</b> Reader Wi-Fi PRS-T1	150	67

# Washers

Report, page 52; Ratings, page 53

Recommended models only, from 175 tested.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E

## A FRONT-LOADERS

✓	1	<b>LG</b> WM3470H[W]*	\$1,350	88
✓	2	<b>Whirlpool</b> Duet WFW94HEX[W]	1,100	87
✓	5	<b>Samsung</b> WF511AB[W]*	NA	86
✓	6	<b>LG</b> WM2650H[W]*	1,100	85
✓	7	<b>Samsung</b> WF431AB[W]	1,300	85
✓	8	<b>LG</b> WM2250C[W]*	850	84
✓	10	<b>Maytag</b> Maxima MHW6000X[W]	1,250	84
✓	13	<b>Maytag</b> Maxima MHW9000Y[W]	1,500	83
✓	14	<b>Samsung</b> WF520AB[P]	1,600	83
✓	17	<b>Samsung</b> WF331AN[W]	1,000	82

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E

## B TOP-LOADERS All are high-efficiency models.

✓	1	<b>LG</b> WT4801C[W]	\$ 900	80
✓	2	<b>Samsung</b> WA5451AN[W]	1,000	79
✓	3	<b>Maytag</b> Bravos XL MVWB750Y[W]	1,000	79
✓	4	<b>LG</b> WT5170H[W]	1,200	78
✓	5	<b>Maytag</b> Bravos XL MVWB950Y[W]	1,050	76
✓	6	<b>Whirlpool</b> Vantage WTW7990X[G]	1,800	75
✓	8	<b>Whirlpool</b> Cabrio WTW5700X[W]	900	74

\*Meets Energy Star Most Efficient Program criteria; models must be 50 percent more energy-efficient than Energy Star models.

# Dryers

Report, page 52; Ratings, page 54

Recommended models only, from 169 tested.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E

✓	1	<b>Samsung</b> DV5451AE[W]	\$1,100	78
✓	2	<b>LG</b> DLEX3885[W]	1,680	78
✓	3	<b>LG</b> DLEX5101[W]	1,250	77
✓	4	<b>LG</b> DLEX3360[W]	1,000	77
✓	5	<b>Samsung</b> DV419AE[W]	NA	77

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E

✓	6	<b>LG</b> DLEX2550[W]	\$1,300	77
✓	8	<b>Samsung</b> DV520AE[P]	1,200	77
✓	9	<b>LG</b> DLE2240[W]	900	76

\*Has a porcelain top.

# Basic cameras

Report, page 42; Ratings, page 44

Recommended models only, from 65 tested.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E

## A SUBCOMPACT For those who need a camera that fits in a purse or pocket.

✓	1	Nikon Coolpix S100	\$265	66
✓	2	Canon PowerShot Elph 310 HS	280	65
✓	3	Canon PowerShot S95	450	65
✓	4	Nikon Coolpix AW100	290	62
✓	5	Canon PowerShot Elph 110 HS	250	62
✓	9	Canon PowerShot S100	450	61
✓	10	Canon PowerShot Elph 300 HS	220	61
✓	11	Nikon Coolpix S1200pj	400	61

## B COMPACT For those who want the basics at a low price or advanced features.

✓	2	Nikon Coolpix P310	300	64
✓	3	Canon PowerShot Elph 510 HS	370	64
✓	4	Nikon Coolpix S8200	190	63

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E

## B COMPACT continued

✓	5	Nikon Coolpix S8100	\$210	63
✓	6	Panasonic Lumix DMC-TS4	400	62
✓	7	Canon PowerShot SX130 IS	250	61

## C SUPERZOOM For those who need an extremely versatile zoom lens.

✓	1	Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ47	400	69
✓	4	Nikon Coolpix L120	220	66
✓	5	Fujifilm FinePix F550EXR	300	65
✓	6	Panasonic Lumix DMC-SZ20	400	64
✓	8	Canon PowerShot SX30 IS	480	63
✓	10	Panasonic Lumix DMC-ZS15	330	63
✓	11	Canon PowerShot SX40 HS	430	63
✓	12	Olympus SZ-30MR	380	62
✓	16	Leica V-Lux 30	800	61

# Advanced cameras

Report, page 42; Ratings, page 45

Recommended models only, from 182 tested.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E

## A POINT-AND-SHOOT For those who want a built-in lens but advanced features similar to those on an SLR.

✓	1	Canon PowerShot G12	\$ 500	66
✓	2	Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ150	500	65

## B SLR-LIKE For those who want a smaller, lighter camera with interchangeable lenses.

✓	1	Sony SLT-A55VL	1,000	73
✓	5	Nikon 1 V1	880	69
✓	6	Sony SLT-A65VK	1,020	68
✓	7	Sony NEX-7K	1,375	67
✓	8	Sony SLT-A77V	2,050	67
✓	9	Panasonic Lumix DMC-G3K	700	67
✓	10	Samsung NX200	800	66
✓	11	Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF2K	380	65

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P   F   G   VG   E

## C SLR For those who want advanced features and performance, with interchangeable lenses and through-the-lens viewfinder.

✓	2	Olympus E-5	\$1,700	73
✓	3	Nikon D7000	1,180	72
✓	4	Canon EOS Rebel T3i	850	72
✓	7	Canon EOS Rebel T3	650	70
✓	8	Canon EOS Rebel T2i	750	70
✓	9	Nikon D3100	700	68
✓	10	Pentax K-5	1,400	67
✓	11	Nikon D5100	720	67
✓	12	Pentax K-r	650	67
✓	14	Nikon D5000	765	64



# Autos

Reports and Ratings, pages 56-60

All of the tested vehicles are available in Canada.

Make & model	Price range	Acceleration (sec.)				Fuel economy (liters per 100 km)		
		0-50 km/h	0-100 km/h	80-100 km/h	500 meters	City driving	Highway driving	Overall
COMPACT SPORTS SEDANS								
BMW 3 Series	\$35,900-\$86,200	2.7	6.6	3.0	17.0	12.5	6.1	8.5
Mercedes-Benz C-Class	36,700-65,000	3.1	8.0	3.6	18.1	14.1	6.9	9.6
FAMILY SEDAN								
Chevrolet Malibu Eco	NA	3.4	9.1	4.0	19.3	11.6	5.8	8.0
SUBCOMPACT HATCHBACK								
Scion iQ	16,760	4.2	11.3	4.4	20.9	8.6	5.8	6.9

## Contact info

How to reach manufacturers in Canada.

### Acer

800-565-2237  
acer.ca

### Amazon

amazon.ca

### Apple

800-692-7753  
apple.com/ca

### Asus

888-678-3698  
ca.asus.com

### Barnes & Noble

800-843-2665  
barnesandnoble.com

### BlackBerry

877-644-8405  
ca.blackberry.com

### Canon

800-652-2666  
canon.ca

### Fujifilm

800-461-0416  
fujifilm.ca

### Kobo

855-732-3662  
kobo.com

### LG

888-542-2633  
lge.ca

### Leica

800-222-0118  
leica-camera.com

### Maytag

800-807-6777  
maytag.ca

### Motorola

847-523-5000  
motorola.ca

### Nikon

877-534-9910  
nikon.ca

### Olympus

800-622-6372  
olympuscanada.com

### Panasonic

800-622-6372  
panasonic.ca

### Pentax

800-301-8833  
pentax.ca

### Samsung

800-726-7864  
samsung.ca

### Sony

877-899-7669  
store.sony.ca

### Toshiba

800-867-4422  
toshiba.ca

### Whirlpool

800-807-6777  
whirlpool.ca