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- ▶ Useless repairs
- ▶ Coupon come-ons
- ▶ Bogus job offers
- ▶ Fake sweepstakes
& much more

SLASH
YOUR
ENERGY
BILLS
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PLUS Store brands that save you money PAGE 16

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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.

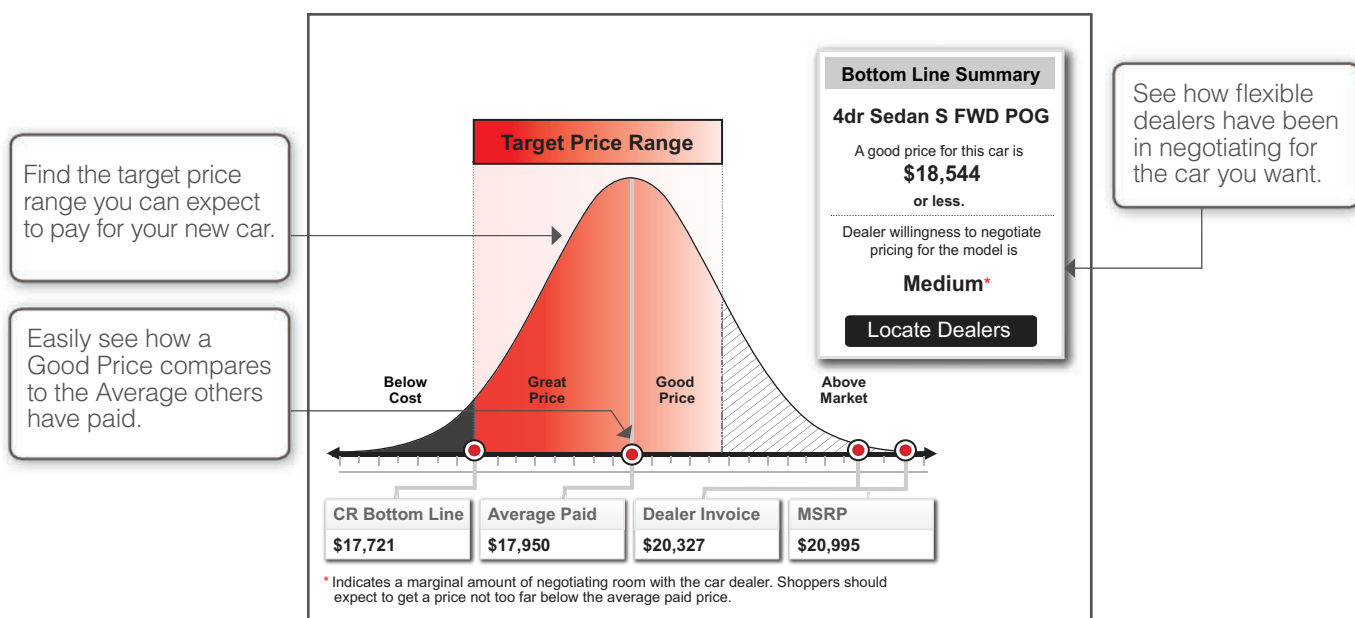
The enhanced Report now features an easy-to-read price curve that includes:

- Great, Good, and Above Market price ranges for your area
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- The Build & Buy Service, providing a transparent car-buying experience through a network of pre-qualified dealers
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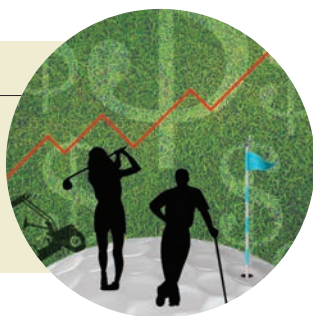
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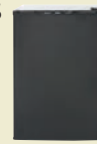
This issue by the numbers

Best & worst scores

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EcoSmart LED bulb



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What you'll save

\$1,900 Buy a Troy-Bilt **generator** listed in our Ratings instead of the Honda to get a top-scoring model and save this much.

\$250 Buy a Google Nexus 7 instead of the Toshiba Excite to get a fine-performing **tablet computer** and save this amount.

\$120 Unplug or power down some of your electronic gear when not in use to save this much in **energy costs** a year.



CARS

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Coming in November

Best products of the year, health insurance, car batteries, tires, cordless phones, online retailers, and blood glucose meters.

Check out our iPad app

Look for videos of road tests and lab tests, plus more photos and interactive navigation. Now included with your paid magazine subscription.



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.
• For news tips and story ideas, go to ConsumerReports.org/tips.
• E-mail submissions for Selling It to SellingIt@cro.consumer.org.
• For subscription information, go to 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

Hospital safety

In "How Safe Is Your Hospital?" (August 2012), what does it say about the nation's health-care system when the highest safety score is 72 out of 100 and when of 1,159 hospitals rated, only seven score above a 70? We expect more than a C-minus average from our high school and college graduates, so why can we accept less from our hospitals when they have our lives in their hands? Hospitals need to be held to higher standards and to perform at higher levels.

—E.E. Reynolds Warner Robins, GA

Your article and Ratings sound an alarm bell that goes to the core of what should be the central argument in the health-care reform debate. Our hospitals are substantially unsafe because of the lack of market discipline in



health-care delivery. There is scant data on how hospitals are performing, leaving patients who want to make intelligent choices without the tools to do so. The focus of reform should be to reshape the system to be more consumer-driven. And increased transparency is a critical stop on the way to better outcomes at lower costs.

—Michael Abrams St. Louis, MO

Text me not

You write "If you must walk and talk or text, act like a driver and pull over into a quiet area," in your Up Front report in August. As if that's what drivers would do! If it were up to me, dangerous drivers who don't pull over would be stopped *before* they hit an innocent citizen.

—Richard Siegelman Plainview, NY

Correction The Ratings table with "How Safe Is Your Hospital?" in August showed an incorrect infection rating for certain hospitals, though the error doesn't affect any of the hospitals' safety scores or their overall ranking. Specifically, 128 of the 1,159 hospitals were shown as having a better infection rating than they actually had; five others were listed as having a worse rating than they had. (Your copy of the magazine carried fewer than the 1,159 total because the table was split into four regional editions.) All changes were limited to one-step moves in our five-point scale. We don't believe the changes should affect your choice of hospital because, as the article said, you should pay attention to differences in the safety score, and those were all correct. For a list of changes and affected hospitals, go to ConsumerReports.org/HospitalCorrection.

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO

ConsumerReports.org/lettertoeditor.

Ask our experts

Q Can hard plastic mud flaps on vehicles compromise gas mileage?

—Bob Reinhardt Canyon Lake, Texas

Mud flaps (hard or soft plastic) will reduce fuel economy, but only slightly, and only on roads such as highways, where aerodynamics play a big part in fuel economy. It's a bigger issue for heavy trucks, which have large mud flaps and spend more time on the highway.

Q When my faucet-mount water filter cartridge stops working after about two months, I remove it from the unit and then reinstall it and it flows again. Am I compromising its filtering ability?

—Eric Morey Woodacre, CA

Yes. Follow the directions, and replace the filter when instructed. If you don't, some of the contaminants the filter collects might be dumped back into the water flowing through.

Q How meaningful is the "best by" or expiration date on bottled water? How soon should I use it after I buy it?

—Rich Green Palo Alto, CA

The FDA considers bottled water to have an indefinite shelf life if it's produced in accordance with regulations and remains unopened. So expiration dates on bottles are voluntary and may reflect concerns about taste and odor rather than safety. Bottled water should be stored in a cool location away from direct sunlight.

Q I am hearing impaired. Which cell phone should I buy?

—Morris Sunshine Miami Beach, FL

At the store, try them out to find out not only which phone is louder but also which speech



SOLID The EPA says granite typically doesn't emit high levels of radon or radiation.

sounds most intelligible and natural to you. Adjust the volume to determine the range. Listen in a noisy-background environment. And ask about the phone's Hearing Aid Compatibility rating.

Q We are considering granite counter-tops but have seen articles citing possible health issues such as radon and radiation risks. Should we be concerned?

—Jim Baker Malta, NY

Probably not. The EPA says radiation and radon emissions attributable to granite

aren't typically high, though spikes occur. Other sources, such as radon in the soil beneath homes, are more common and are a larger health risk than radon from granite building materials. Concerning radiation, it's extremely unlikely that granite countertops in homes could increase the radiation dose above normal background levels, the EPA says. For more information, go to epa.gov/radon.

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 In July, the Food and Drug Administration announced that children's drinking cups and baby bottles can no longer contain the chemical bisphenol A. That's a start, but BPA is still widely used in infant-formula containers.

OUR TAKE Exposure to BPA has been linked to an increased risk of cancer; diabetes; and reproductive, neurological, and developmental disorders.

We believe babies' exposure to BPA should be minimized in every way possible, and eliminating it from formula cans is the obvious next step.

Last year, the state of California enacted a law co-sponsored by Consumers Union to ban BPA in baby bottles and sippy cups. Immediately after the passage of the California law, the U.S. chemical industry's trade association, the American Chemistry Council, asked the FDA to phase out rules



CLOSE-UP Bisphenol A, a chemical commonly used in the lining of food containers, should be restricted, our experts say.

allowing BPA in such products, stating that manufacturers of bottles and sippy cups had already stopped using the chemical because of consumer preferences.

Consumers Union will continue to lobby, as we have for years, for restrictions on BPA in substances that contact food, including children's items and the linings of cans.

\$210 million

That's the amount Capital One has to pay to settle charges of deceiving credit-card customers. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau said Capital One pressured and misled people into paying for "add-on products" such as payment protection and credit monitoring, which the company promoted as free or mandatory. Almost half of the money will go toward refunds for 2 million customers.

STATE LINES

Foggy and foggier

Consumers in California, Connecticut, Nebraska, New Jersey, and Washington have the best chance of knowing what goes on in their state governments, says a new report from the State Integrity Investigation. The coalition analyzed each state's laws and practices that deter corruption and promote accountability and openness. No state got an A on the report card, but plenty received F's, including Tennessee, which established its ethics commission six years ago but hasn't issued a single ethics penalty. That state's residents can't find out whether the

oversight is working effectively because complaints aren't made available to the public. In Maine, a state senator stayed mum about \$98 million in state contracts "that went to an organization for which he served as executive director," the report says. Because of a loophole in Maine's law, he was under no obligation to speak up. Find out what grade your state got, and why, at stateintegrity.org.



Come to our annual meeting

Please join us on Saturday, Oct. 20, at our national headquarters, 101 Truman Ave., Yonkers, N.Y. Doors open at 9:45 a.m., the meeting begins at 10 a.m., and the expo runs from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (No lab tours this year.) For details go to ConsumerReports.org/annualmeeting.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The last laugh

In October 1962, exactly 50 years ago, we ran a short piece about United Salt of Houston. The company had been convicted of claiming its expensive "sea salt" would cure or prevent a host of diseases as varied as cancer and insanity. Seems as long as there are consumers, there will be rip-offs. (Turn to page 22 for the latest.) Our Consumerist website is also tracking gotchas. Here are a few that our editors found:



Less isn't actually less

Those of us watching our sodium intake might have cheered the Campbell's tomato soup-can label proclaiming "25% less sodium." But the small print was a big letdown; the company meant less sodium than the average of regular condensed soup, not less than the previous version of Campbell's tomato soup. The district attorneys of two counties in California thought that misled consumers, and they settled with the company (which didn't admit liability) for almost \$174,000.

Flights of fancy

Treating airline passengers fairly, the government says, includes telling them up front how much their tickets will cost. Spirit Airlines had some trouble with that last November when it tweeted \$9-each-way fares. Customers had to follow the link, then another link, to finally find out how much they'd have to pay once taxes and fees boosted the price and that a round-trip ticket was required. Bad Spirit, said the Department of Transportation, and slapped the carrier with a \$50,000 fine.

Driving a hard bargain

If you owe more on your car than it's worth, you might jump at a car dealer's offer to pay off that old loan if you buy a new car from them. Five dealerships around the country made that grand gesture, then recouped the money they spent by slipping the cost into buyers' monthly payments—plus interest. Not so fast, said the Federal Trade Commission. It told the dealers to stop the misrepresentations, start making clear disclosures to customers, and file compliance reports for 20 years.

Jim Guest
JIM GUEST
President



Up front

Tips, trends, everyday products



How we dote on dogs (and cats)

HAVE YOU SEEN the bumper sticker “My dog is smarter than your honor student”? It might adorn the car of a fellow *CONSUMER REPORTS* reader. When we surveyed 1,300 subscribers about their pets, just 3 percent of dog owners and 5 percent of cat owners said their pet was “less smart than average.” Other evidence of pet pride: Half of pet owners give Fido and Fifi holiday gifts; 36 percent sign cards with their pet’s name or photo. Two percent have even given their pet its own social media page.

That doesn’t mean pets are never in the doghouse. More than one-third of cat owners reported that their pet had damaged furniture, and one-quarter of dog owners said theirs had stolen food meant for people. (Personally, we’d like to report a missing wheel of Camembert.) Next-biggest gripe for cat owners was a pet that bit or scratched a member of the family; for dog owners, a pet that ran away or escaped.

Asked the most they had ever spent on their pet for a vet procedure, readers cited an average of \$609. The average most would spend to save their pet’s life: \$1,620. That figure was \$1,824 for dog owners; \$1,309 for cat owners. The sums might have been higher, but we asked about each person’s oldest pet and heard about those that were an average of nine years old.

At feeding time, most owners said they seek a balance between price and quality, but 14 percent said a food’s price is no object, and 4 percent said they buy inexpensive food because they think it’s as

high in quality as the rest. Apparently there are a few especially lucky dogs and cats out there: One percent of owners said, “I make most of my pet’s meals myself.”

We turned up some differences in the way men and women treat their pets. More women let their pet sleep with them (70 percent, compared with 57 percent of men). But men and women are about equally likely to put their pets in cute outfits.

It’s a dog’s life?

What readers did	Dog owners	Cat owners
Fed the pet human food	63%	41%
Taught it tricks	57	14
Let it sleep with you	55	75
Gave it holiday gifts	55	43
Took it on vacation	45	7
Signed a card with its name or photo	40	29
Put photos of it on social media sites	32	23
Dressed it in outfits	18	5

BY THE NUMBERS

35%

Percent of pets that readers adopted from a shelter or rescue group. Many cat owners also took in a stray.

Pasta with a side of fiber

STANDARD-ISSUE semolina pasta, low in fat and sodium, isn't exactly an evil food, but that doesn't stop manufacturers from trying to make it better. One way: boost pasta's fiber, either by using whole grain or by adding fiber sources such as oats, inulin, or legume flour blend. Another way: add nutrients such as calcium, folic acid, iron, thiamine, or omega 3s. A recent survey by the Food Marketing Institute found that the proportion of consumers who reported they were buying more foods with "plus" claims was up 32 percent compared with a year earlier. Our trained tasters sampled 13 such good-for-you spaghettis, sans sauce.

Taste. Among whole-grain pastas, the two Very Good choices are store brands. (For more on store brands, see the report on page 16.) Whole Foods and Trader Joe's are sweet and nutty, with a chewy texture. (That's a good thing.) Other choices lost points for, among other issues, crumbly texture and cardboardy flavor. Lowest-rated Hodgson Mill is not only crumbly but pasty and very bitter.

Two of the Very Good added-nutrient spaghettis, Dreamfields and Ronzoni Smart Taste, are much like regular pasta, but the third, Ronzoni Garden Delight, has a carrot flavor, despite a website claim that its carrot, tomato, and spinach ingre-



TALK THE TALK

The grain game

Whole grain contains 100 percent of the original kernel—bran, germ, and innermost part (endosperm). Whole wheat is just one type of whole grain, which could instead be oatmeal, millet, or brown rice, for starters. For all the grains you eat in a day, according to Department of Agriculture guidelines, half should be whole. Eating whole grains regularly may help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. To find whole-grain products, look

for "whole grain" as one of the first ingredients.

Multigrain simply means that a food contains more than one type of grain—and not necessarily whole.

Refined grains contain only the kernel's innermost part.

Fortified products contain added nutrients that weren't in the original product.

Enriched products have had some of the original nutrients lost during processing added back in.

dients "cleverly hide" in the pasta.

Our trained tasters tried the lower-rated brands with tomato sauce to see whether it masked their faults. It didn't.

Nutrition. Most of the spaghettis earned a nutrition score of Very Good or Good, based on calories per gram, fats, sodium, sugars, iron, calcium, and fiber. Almost all have more fiber than regular spaghetti—5 or 6 grams per 1-cup serving (cooked), vs. about 2 grams. (The recommended daily value for fiber is about 25 grams for a person eating 2,000 calories per day.) Just keep in mind that 1 cup of pasta isn't much. Scarf down the contents of a big bowl, and you'll

CLOSE-UP

Travel bag: Five supplies to have on hand

Out and about this fall? Here's what to bring for safe travels, our medical experts suggest.



Hand sanitizer.

Soap and water aren't always available. A travel-sized bottle of alcohol-based sanitizer will battle germs in any season.



First-aid kit.

Basic supplies include adhesive bandages, alcohol wipes, antibiotic ointment, anti-itch cream, gloves, and tweezers.

Contacts and info.

On an index card, write the name and contact info for your spouse or other emergency contact and your primary care doctor. List your current medications and allergies. Laminate the card or seal it inside a plastic bag, and keep it with you.



Sun protection.

Even in fall and winter, sunscreen and sunglasses are important.



Travel pill case.

Include any regular medications you take, of course, and also a few doses each of acetaminophen, antihistamine (either over-the-counter drugs such as Benadryl or one that's been prescribed to you), Pepto-Bismol or other anti-diarrhea medicine, and cough drops.



Ratings Spaghetti

In taste order.



365 Everyday Value



Dreamfields

☒ Recommended

Rec.	Product	Nutrition	Per 1 cup (cooked)			Taste
			Cost	Calories	Fiber (g)	

WHOLE-GRAIN

VERY GOOD

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	365 Everyday Value Organic Whole Wheat (Whole Foods)	—	23¢	200	5	Sweet, nutty, whole-grain flavor, chewy texture much like regular pasta.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trader Joe's Organic Whole Wheat	○	17	210	5	Sweet, nutty, whole-grain flavor, chewy texture.

GOOD

	Barilla Whole Grain	○	21	200	6	Decent but somewhat crumbly, hint of cardboard and bitter flavors.
	De Cecco Whole Wheat	—	39	180	7	Decent but slightly crumbly, hint of cardboard flavor.
	Market Pantry Whole Wheat Thin (Target)	—	18	210	5	Thin, slightly crumbly, somewhat bitter, slight cardboard flavor.
	Great Value Whole Wheat (Walmart)	—	16	210	5	Starchy, astringent, slightly bitter, hint of cardboard flavor.
	Ronzoni Healthy Harvest Whole Grain Thin	—	21	180	6	Thin, crumbly, starchy, astringent, a bit bitter, slight cardboard flavor.

FAIR

	Hodgson Mill Whole Wheat Whole Grain	—	29	210	6	Crumbly, pasty, very bitter, cardboard flavor.
--	---	---	----	-----	---	--

REFINED, WITH ADDED NUTRIENTS

VERY GOOD

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dreamfields Healthy Carb Living	○	41	190	5	Like regular pasta. Mild, a bit starchy and sweet, thick, a bit slick/slippery.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ronzoni Smart Taste Thin	—	22	170	5	Like regular pasta. Mild, thick, starchy, slightly astringent.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ronzoni Garden Delight	○	25	200	2	Slightly orange with a very slight, sweet cooked-carrot flavor, a bit sour.

GOOD

	Trader Joe's High Fiber	—	17	180	6	Thin, crumbly, starchy, astringent, slightly soft, slight cardboard flavor.
	Barilla Plus	—	32	210	4	Crumbly, astringent, a bit bitter, slight black-pepper taste, odd off-flavor.

consume far more calories than advertised.

Bottom line. The five recommended spaghetti taste very good, and most provide 5 grams of fiber. No pasta is pricey, but whole-wheat and added-nutrient types tend to cost a bit more than the regular type. Among the recommended products, Trader Joe's is the least expensive, at 17 cents per serving—less than half the cost of Dreamfields. Try any pasta with our top-rated tomato sauce, Giada De Laurentiis (Target). And if you're cooking for a crowd, note that many products no longer come in a 1-pound package. Sizes ranged from 12 ounces to 17.5 ounces.

Vizio tackles black-bar syndrome

Like a horror-flick monster that just won't die, "letterboxed" movies—which torture you with annoying black bars above and below the image—keep coming back. Vizio has a solution: an ultrawide-screen TV that mimics the shape of a movie-theater screen.

You may remember seeing thick black bars when watching DVD movies and even some wide-screen TV broadcasts on an older, squarish tube TV with a 4:3 aspect ratio. When HDTVs with more rectangular 16:9 screens came along, the bars on wide-screen movies became thinner but didn't disappear. (The only way to get rid of them completely is to stretch or zoom the picture, but that distorts the image or crops off the edges.) There are no black bars on high-definition TV programs, which are made for 16:9 screens.

Vizio's answer is the 58-inch XVT3D580CM CinemaWide-series LCD TV, which has a 21:9 screen that's noticeably wider than a typical LCD or plasma TV. As a result, most wide-format movies fill the screen, with no black bars, providing a theater-like viewing experience.

But there is a downside: You're trading one

THEATER STYLE Vizio's new 58-inch TV, \$2,500, uses an ultrawide movie format.



type of black bars for another. Any content that has been formatted to fill a 16:9 screen will have black bars on both sides of the image (an effect called pillarboxing, in industry jargon) when displayed on this 21:9 screen. That includes virtually all high-definition TV programs and some movies, too. So if you watch mostly TV broadcasts, you'll see black bars even more often than you do now.

Bottom line. Vizio's CinemaWide TV isn't for everybody, especially with its \$2,500 price. But we won't be surprised to see die-hard (if not "Die Hard") movie fans embrace the TV and its ability to display movies in all their wide-screen glory. And it appears that the ultrawide-screen concept isn't going to be relegated only to TVs: We now have the first 21:9 notebook computer, from Toshiba, in our labs.

Thumbs-up for chicken fingers



CALL THEM STRIPS, nuggets, fingers, or tenders, those boneless pieces of fried chicken are an American staple. To see whose chicken would make you cross the road, we sent two trained tasters to three different locations of five big restaurant chains: Country Kitchen, Cracker Barrel, Denny's, IHOP, and Perkins. Chicken-finger meals usually include two side dishes: Tasters ordered mashed potatoes and broccoli (carrots at Cracker Barrel).

Bottom line. Perkins (shown) wins. Its fingers were the only ones whose chicken flavor stood up to the crust. Its broccoli tasted freshly steamed, and its potatoes were full flavored. Cracker Barrel's sides were also tasty, but those from Country Kitchen, IHOP, and Denny's were less successful: The broccoli was flavorful but waterlogged; the potatoes had that fake-butter flavor found in some microwaved popcorn.

Ratings

In taste order.

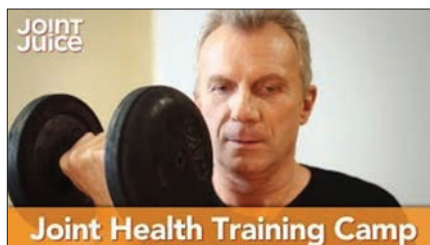
Restaurant	Comments
EXCELLENT	
Perkins	Golden-brown, very crispy, crunchy, flour-type crust; juicy, flavorful chicken; mild seasonings.
VERY GOOD	
Cracker Barrel	Crunchy, flour-type crust; juicy, tender meat, but tasted more of batter than chicken.
Country Kitchen	Crust has cornmeal texture. Seasoned with pepper, salt, and garlic, but you could barely taste chicken.
IHOP	Crunchy, flour-type coating sometimes so thick it turned mushy. Pepper, garlic, and seasonings, with slight heat.
GOOD	
Denny's	Crunchy, thick, flour-type coating; some pieces dry. Taste of fried crust, spicy heat.

CLAIM CHECK

Does Joint Juice help against arthritis?

The claim. "My joints have gotten a little stiff lately, and at first I thought I had to live with it because of pro football and just getting older, but then my doctor told me about Joint Juice," says former quarterback Joe Montana in a recent TV commercial for the berry-flavored drink. Each 8-ounce serving has 1,500 milligrams of glucosamine hydrochloride and 200 milligrams of chondroitin sulfate, along with green-tea extract and vitamins C and D. Orthopedic surgeon Kevin Stone, M.D., created the product after patients credited glucosamine and chondroitin with reducing joint stiffness yet complained about having to take too many pills.

The check. We looked at results of the Glucosamine/chondroitin Arthritis Intervention Trial (GAIT), which involved two studies. In the first, groups of knee-arthritis sufferers were treated with glucosamine or chondroitin sulfate, or both; or celecoxib, a prescription pain reliever; or placebo. Only the celecoxib group had significant pain relief.



There was little difference overall between the placebo group and those treated with glucosamine or chondroitin. The exception: a subgroup of people suffering moderate to severe pain who took a combination of glucosamine and chondroitin and reported a 20 percent reduction in pain. In the second GAIT study, no group fared better than the placebo group, though each experienced some pain relief.

A 2010 survey of CONSUMER REPORTS subscribers who used alternative therapies is also worth noting. Of the 2,485 respondents who said osteoarthritis was one of their most bothersome conditions, just 25 percent of those who used glucosamine and chondroitin found that they "helped a lot." Yoga and massage were rated twice as helpful.

Bottom line. Just say maybe. Ned Amendola, M.D., a spokesman for the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons, says that reducing your weight and building muscles around joints is more important to



joint health than taking glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate. But based on studies such as GAIT and the minimal adverse effects reported for a glucosamine-chondroitin combo, he adds, "If there's a chance of reducing pain by 20 percent, then why not use them?"

A 30-day supply of Joint Juice costs \$30. The makers say to try it for at least 30 days but that it may take up to six months to see improvement. Our medical experts say there's little point in continuing such supplements if you've seen no relief after three months. Always tell your doctor if you're taking any supplement.

BY THE NUMBERS

6 million

The number of American adults taking glucosamine regularly, according to the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

What to do when a loved one dies

When Jeanne Kiefer's mother died at 93 under hospice care, the nurse knew whom to call and what to do, so the death and its immediate aftermath were, in Kiefer's words, "peaceful" and "seamless." She and her sister had discussed end-of-life arrangements—the hospice nurse and counselor "bring it up and encourage you to kind of deal with it," said Kiefer, a research consultant in Cave Creek, Ariz.—and could focus on being with their mother.

Compare that with the experience of Kiefer's relative, whose 97-year-old mother died at home attended by a nurse's aide and children who hadn't discussed end-of-life plans. The aide couldn't legally declare the mother's death, so the family called 911. The police came, began CPR, and investigated the scene as a potential crime, questioning the family to rule out elder abuse. Only when paramedics arrived could the body be removed and resuscitation attempts stopped.

File this checklist to use when needed to keep a sad event from becoming even more painful. Responsibility for the various actions can be divided among family members and close friends of the deceased.

■ Immediately

1. Get a legal pronouncement of death. If no doctor is present, you'll need to contact someone to do this:

- If the person dies at home under hospice care, call the hospice nurse, who can declare the death and help facilitate the transport of the body.

- If the person dies at home without hospice care, call 911, and have in hand a do-not-resuscitate document if it exists. Without one, paramedics will generally start emergency procedures and, except where permitted to pronounce death, take the person to an emergency room for a doctor to make the declaration.

2. Arrange for transportation of the body. If no autopsy is needed, the body can be picked up by a mortuary (by law, a mortuary must provide price info over the phone) or crematorium.

3. Notify the person's doctor or the county coroner.

4. Notify close family and friends. (Ask some to contact others.)

5. Handle care of dependents and pets.

6. Call the person's employer, if he or she was working. Request info about benefits and any pay due. Ask whether there was a life-insurance policy through the company.

■ Within a few days after death

7. Arrange for funeral and burial or cremation. Search the person's documents to find out whether there was a prepaid burial plan. Ask a friend or family member to go with you to



the mortuary. Prepare an obituary.

8. If the person was in the military or belonged to a fraternal or religious group, contact that organization. It may have burial benefits or conduct funeral services.

9. Ask a friend or relative to keep an eye on the person's home, answer the phone, collect mail, throw food out, and water plants.

■ Up to 10 days after death

10. Obtain death certificates (usually from the funeral home). Get multiple copies; you'll need them for financial institutions, government agencies, and insurers.

11. Take the will to the appropriate county or city office to have it accepted for probate.

12. If necessary, the estate's executor should open a bank account for the deceased's estate.

13. Contact:

- A trust and estates attorney, to learn how to transfer assets and assist with probate issues.

- Police, to have them periodically check the deceased's house if vacant.

- Accountant or tax preparer, to find out whether an estate-tax return or final income-tax return should be filed.

- The person's investment adviser, for information on holdings.

- Bank, to find accounts and safe deposit box.

- Life insurance agent, to get claim forms.

- Social Security (800-772-1213; socialsecurity.gov) and other agencies from which the deceased received benefits, such as Veterans Affairs (800-827-1000; va.gov), to stop payments and ask about applicable survivor benefits.

- Agency providing pension services, to stop monthly check and get claim forms.

- Utility companies, to change or stop service, and postal service, to stop or forward mail.

Know the person's wishes

For an elderly friend or relative:

- Know the location of the will, birth certificate, marriage and divorce certificates, Social Security information, life-insurance policies, financial documents, and keys to safe deposit box or home safe.

- Ask the person's wishes about funeral arrangements, organ donation, and burial or cremation.

- Have the person complete an advance directive, including a living will, which specifies wanted and unwanted procedures. The person should also appoint a health-care proxy to make medical decisions if he or she becomes incapacitated.

- Have a do-not-resuscitate order drawn up if the person desires. That tells health-care professionals not to perform CPR if the person's heart or breathing stops and restarting would not result in a meaningful life.

- Make sure the person gives copies of the documents to his or her doctor and a few family members or friends. Take the documents to the hospital if the person is admitted.

■ DID YOU KNOW?

Free, state-specific advance directives are at caringinfo.org, a website of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

When costlier care isn't better



John Santa, M.D., M.P.H., an internist, is director of the Consumer Reports Health Ratings Center.

IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY figuring out whether your health care is worth what you or your insurer pay for it. That's because key information that you'd need to make that judgment—like how well doctors do at treating or preventing disease, how satisfied patients are, and how much it all costs—usually isn't available.

That's not the case in Minnesota, where two nonprofit organizations, HealthPartners and MN Community Measurement, have independently collected that information and agreed to share some of it with Consumer Reports as part of a joint project to rate primary-care physician groups in the state.

The data show that you don't have to pay the highest prices to get the best quality care. And some more-expensive practices in fact don't deliver on quality.

Measuring value

The chart at right lists 18 primary-care doctor groups in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area that participate in HealthPartners' network. That organization provides health insurance as well as physician and hospital care, all overseen by a 15-member board made up mostly of consumers. HealthPartners is doing two things that are unique among insurers. First, it's not only assessing quality of care, patient satisfaction, and affordability among its providers but also making the information and the methodology used to arrive at it available to the public, free, so that others can do the same. Second, its cost-measurement method has been vetted and endorsed by a group of providers, purchasers, and consumer advocates (Consumer Reports among them).

Quality scores for each group are based on 88 measures, including the percentage of patients who reach goals for high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes, and how well it scores in patient surveys. The higher the score, the higher the quality. For a full explanation of the methodology, go to healthpartners.com/costandquality or myhealthscores.org.

Cost scores are based on all care that the group provides, including preventive

tests, medication, and care for acute and chronic illnesses. In this case, the higher the score, the lower the cost. The "good value" column identifies groups that scored highly for both quality and cost.

As the chart shows, high-quality groups varied in their cost scores, as did groups that scored in the middle for quality. And the low-scoring group for quality was in the middle of the pack for cost. The bottom line: You can't judge quality by cost.

There are some limitations to the data. They come from just one health insurance plan, for one thing. And practices within each group may perform better or worse than the medical group as a whole.

Cost vs. performance

The findings might surprise some patients—but not many health experts. After all, the U.S. health-care system outspends the rest of the world but has worse out-

comes on many health measures than other industrialized nations. And we've reported on the overuse of medical tests and treatments that don't necessarily lead to better health but do lead to higher costs and medical risks. For example, back-pain sufferers in a 2010 study who had an MRI within the first month didn't recover any faster than those who didn't have the test—but had a fivefold increase in medical costs.

Several organizations in other states, including Michigan and Utah, are headed in the same direction as Minnesota, in some cases using the HealthPartners cost measure as a model. In the meantime, the effort in Minnesota shows that good health care isn't always the most expensive. And it points to a day when health-care systems will compete based on proven measures of quality and cost rather than on reputation, advertising, and hype.

Comparing quality and cost

The highest-quality care isn't necessarily the most expensive, as this chart shows. Under "Quality" and "Cost," higher scores (3 or 4) indicate higher quality and lower cost, respectively. A bullet under "Good value" identifies groups that scored well on both measures.

Group name	Better ← → Worse		
	Quality	Cost	Good value
Northwest Family Physicians	4	4	•
Entira Family Clinics	4	3	•
HealthPartners Clinics	4	3	•
Park Nicollet Clinics	4	2	
Allina Medical Clinics	4	2	
Aspen Medical Group	4	2	
Quello Clinic	4	2	
Stillwater Medical Group	3	4	•
Blaine/Fridley/Rosedale Medical Centers	3	3	•
North Memorial Clinics	3	3	•
Lakeview Clinics	3	3	•
Buffalo Clinic	3	3	•
Apple Valley Medical Clinic	3	3	•
Ridgeview Clinics	3	3	•
Edina Family Physicians	3	2	
HealthEast Clinics	3	2	
Fairview Clinics	3	2	
North Clinic	2	3	

Source for cost and quality data: HealthPartners, 2012 (www.healthpartners.com/costandquality).

How much is your stuff worth?

IMAGINE SELLING a painting at a yard sale for \$10, then learning the buyer later sold it at auction for \$137,500. You'd want to kick yourself.

A discovery that big isn't common, says Alasdair Nichol, vice chairman at Freeman's Auctioneers & Appraisers, the Philadelphia-based auction house that sold the painting—a winter landscape by the Pennsylvania impressionist Kenneth Nunamaker—in 2004. But Nichol, a featured appraiser on the PBS program “Antiques Roadshow,” says smaller surprises happen often enough. “You frequently get people bringing in something that they bought for \$5 that's worth \$3,000 to \$4,000,” he says.

Whether you want to know an item's value for a sale, insurance coverage, estate valuation, a charitable donation, or just to satisfy your curiosity, it's often worth spending some time and money to find out. Here are resources to help you proceed.

Professional appraisals. You can find an appraiser for almost any item, whether it's an antique Greek vase or a Richard Simmons autograph. The key is finding one who's accredited and meets professional and ethical standards (see below).

An appraiser's written report should include a full description of your item and the procedure used to estimate its current value. (Fair-market value is what a buyer would pay you; replacement value is what it would cost today at retail.) Appraisers might charge a flat fee or an hourly rate from \$200 to \$400 depending on their expertise and location, says Nancy Harrison, president of the Appraisers Association of

GARAGE-SALE GEMS Before your next tag sale, get an expert to make sure you're not giving away treasures, like the paintings by Tom Thomson, below, and Kenneth Nunamaker, at right.



America, in New York. Avoid an appraiser who asks for a fee based on a percentage of the item's value.

Harrison recommends seeking a certified appraiser's valuation before taking the item to a local antiques or collectibles dealer. An appraiser is more likely to give a fair judgment because there's no conflict of interest; it's a violation of professional ethics to offer to buy an item he has appraised. If an appraiser thinks an object isn't worth a written appraisal, she might recommend other resources to arrive at a value.

Auction houses, like Sotheby's and Christie's, periodically provide free, oral valuations to the public. Search on their websites for “valuation day” or “appraisal day.” To have an item appraised on “Antiques Roadshow,” you'll need a ticket to an appraisal event. For more information, go to pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow.

Price guides. Many collectibles have well-established guidebooks. There's “A Guide Book of United States Coins,” for example, and the “Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue.” Two baseball-card sources are “The Standard Catalog of Baseball Cards” and the “Beckett Almanac of Baseball Cards & Collectibles.” “Kovels' Antiques & Collectibles Price Guide” reports on recent prices paid for items in more than 700 categories at auctions, shops, shows, flea markets, and online.

Online valuations. Several websites offer estimates by professional appraisers

and other experts in areas as diverse as antique furniture, political memorabilia, and Barbie dolls. You upload photos of your items and provide descriptions; the sites send back valuations, not authentications, usually within a week.

What's It Worth to You (wiw2u.com) charges a minimum of \$10 to value a single item. Its appraisers can also provide opinions on how much something on eBay is worth. Value My Stuff (valuemystuff.com/us) also charges \$10 per appraisal. WorthPoint (worthpoint.com) valuations start at \$30 an item; you can also pay \$10 or more for a monthly membership that provides access to a database of sales records and instant valuations or price lookups. A free introductory week is available.

To find the tax-deductible value of donated items, check out the free valuation sites available year-round by tax-prep companies. Turbo Tax's ItsDeductible Online is at turbotax.intuit.com/personal-taxes/itsdeductible/index.jsp. H&R Block's Deduction-Pro is at deductionpro.com/dpro/Welcome.jsp. The Salvation Army also offers a valuation guide at salvationarmyusa.org.

Databases and online auctions. Kovels offers a free subscription to its antiques price guide at kovels.com and two premium services, at \$39 and \$60 a year. Craigslist is useful for seeing what others are willing to pay for similar items. Prices on eBay give you a more global view, but the downside is that if you plan to sell there, you'll probably get only the wholesale price.

How to find an appraiser

You can search online by specialty and location for appraisers who belong to these professional organizations:

American Society of Appraisers (appraisers.org) has almost 5,000 members worldwide. Among its disciplines is personal property, including African sculpture and violins.

Appraisers Association of America (appraisersassoc.org) has more than 500 members worldwide. Most specialize in fine and decorative arts, jewelry, and household contents.

International Society of Appraisers (isa-appraisers.org) has about 900 members, mostly in North America, who specialize in personal property.

▶ Detergent warning

Single-use, concentrated detergent packets have become the latest trend in clothing care, promising to make laundry day less complicated. But poison-control centers nationwide have received more than 1,400 calls about kids eating such packets of concentrated liquid detergent, mistaking them for candy. Symptoms such as vomiting, wheezing, and gasping appear very quickly after exposure. Some toddlers have had to be hospitalized and put on ventilators after biting into a packet. Procter & Gamble, maker of the market-leading Tide Pods, has introduced a double-latch closure lid for containers to help keep children from getting their hands on the pods. Always keep detergents locked up and out of reach of children. If you think a child has been exposed to a packet, immediately call poison control at 800-222-1222.



▶ CONSUMER NOTES

Protect yourself from tainted meat

The summertime recall of almost 30,000 pounds of ground beef linked to salmonella cases highlights the need for consumers to handle meat safely to protect themselves and their families.

The Department of Agriculture says it found out about the problem through an investigation in June of 33 cases of patients with salmonella poisoning in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia. Five cases were linked to the ground beef products, and two people were hospitalized.

The agency says that Cargill Meat Solutions of Wyalusing, Pa., sold the meat wholesale and that it was further processed into retail packages at supermarkets in the Northeast.

To avoid problems with possible meat contamination, follow these steps:

- Wash hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat and poultry. Also wash cutting boards, dishes, and utensils.
- Keep raw meat, fish, and poultry away from food that won't be cooked.
- Use a food thermometer. Cook ground beef to an internal temperature of 160° F, poultry to 165° F. Thorough cooking can kill bacteria.
- Refrigerate raw meat and poultry within 2 hours after purchase (1 hour if temperatures exceed 90° F). Refrigerate cooked meat and poultry within 2 hours after cooking.

Eating salmonella-tainted food can cause fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps within 12 to 72 hours. Nausea, vomiting, and headache can last up to seven days.

▶ Recalls on the go

To check for government recalls on your Android phone, check out this free mobile app, called Recalls.gov. You can access it wherever you are—at a day care center, garage sale, or shopping mall—to get info on a whole spectrum of products. Type a product name into your phone and find out instantly whether it has been recalled. Also find out what to do with recalled products in your home.



\$400,000

That's the fine recently levied on Battat for waiting two years to inform the Consumer Product Safety Commission about a hazard involving its Magnabild magnetic building sets. There were 16 reports of magnets coming loose, including two reports of kids ingesting them. More than 130,000 of the Magnabild sets were recalled in 2008. In a separate action, the CPSC has sued two companies that make magnetic toys aimed at adults, Zen Magnets and Maxfield & Oberton, importer of Buckyballs. It says the products pose a substantial risk of injury to the public, especially children. Eleven other companies have agreed to stop sales.

RECALLS

AUTOMOBILE:

'07-'09 Hyundai Santa Fe



Faulty electronic not accurately detect small-statured adults in the front-passenger seat and could fail to deploy the passenger air bag in a collision.

MODELS 199,118 '07-'09 Hyundai Santa Fe vehicles manufactured from April 19, 2006, through July 7, 2008.

WHAT TO DO Hyundai will notify owners, and dealers will update the occupant classification software (OCS) free of charge. Call Hyundai at 800-633-5151 for details.

'13 Ford Escape

The engine compartment fuel line may split and leak, posing a risk of fire.



MODELS 9,320 2013 Ford Escape vehicles manufactured from Oct. 5, 2011, through July 11, 2012.

WHAT TO DO Ford will notify owners to stop driving their vehicles and contact a dealer to arrange pickup, providing a rental car if needed. Dealer will replace the engine compartment fuel line. Call Ford at 866-436-7332 for more details.

'12 Honda CR-V/'13 Acura ILX

If the door lock is activated while the interior front door handle is being operated, the connecting cable may loosen and shift, possibly far enough to prevent the door from latching. If that happens, the door may open while driving or in a crash, posing risk of injury.



MODELS 172,837 '12 Honda CR-V and '13 Acura ILX vehicles.

WHAT TO DO Honda will notify owners and dealers will replace front-door latch assemblies. Some interior door handles in CR-Vs will also be replaced. Call Honda at 800-999-1009 for details.

HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Family Dollar mini lights

Mini-light sets do not meet UL standard and pose fire and shock risks.

PRODUCTS 280,000 light sets sold at Family Dollar from September 2011 through December 2011 for \$8.



WHAT TO DO Stop using the lights and return them to the store for a full refund. Call Family Dollar at 800-547-0359 for details.

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FIT TO BE TIED These are about equal in quality. Peaches from Sweet Harvest, an Aldi supermarket brand, are mild and firm but varied from one can to another. Peaches from Del Monte, a national brand, have a bit less flavor and are slightly softer. Del Monte costs 55 cents per serving; Sweet Harvest, 25 cents.

Store-brand taste-off

Our tests pit 19 private-label products against big-name rivals

TRADE BIG BRANDS for store brands and you'll save big bucks—an average of 25 percent, according to industry experts.

In comparing store-brand and name-brand versions of 19 products, our savings ranged from 5 percent (frozen lasagna) to 60 percent (ice cream).

Many of those store brands were also as tasty as the alternative. Our sensory experts found that the store brand and name brand tied in 10 cases, the name brand won in eight cases, and the store brand won once.

A tie doesn't indicate that the tastes were identical. Two products might have ingredients of similar quality—good, bad, or in between—but taste very different because those ingredients differ. A case in point: our pair of wheat breads. Freihofer's has mild grain and malt flavors; Hy-Vee has a sourdoughlike flavor.

Nutrition for the pairs is similar, with a

few exceptions we've noted in the results starting on the facing page.

Over the years, we've found that a wide variety of store brands perform about as well as name brands. That's what readers have told us, too. When we surveyed more than 24,000 of them about supermarket shopping last year, 72 percent said they'd bought store brands in the past month, and 74 percent were highly satisfied with the quality of store brands at their supermarket. Asked "In general do you think that store brands are usually better, the same as, or worse than national brands," 3 percent said better, 78 percent said the same, and 18 percent said worse.

National brands produce and package a wide variety of store-brand products. Among the many big names known to make store brands are Hormel (canned meats, bouillon, and desserts), Marcal (paper towels, tissues, and napkins), Mc-

Cain (french fries, appetizers, and frozen pizza), and Reynolds (foil, plastic wrap and bags, and disposable plates and cups).

Rarely will you find clues to a store brand's heritage, and suppliers can change at any time. Nor is there any guarantee that national brands simply slap different labels on products rolling off the same assembly line. Store-brand products might be made to different specifications.

They're here to stay

Store brands continue to chip away at the leading brands' market share. Almost two-thirds of shoppers surveyed in May and June 2012 by the management consulting company Accenture said that their grocery carts were at least half full of store-brand products. The biggest categories: milk, bread, baked goods, and cheese.

In tough economic times, shoppers are naturally drawn to cheaper brands. But

private label is not a flash in the pan, says Matt Arnold, a senior consumer analyst with Edward Jones, an investment company based in St. Louis. "If you are able to create a private-label brand that garners trust among your shoppers," he says, "it almost becomes a national brand within your four walls." Indeed, more than half of respondents to the Accenture survey said that it would take a permanent price reduction of a brand-name product—down to the price of the store brand—to persuade them to return to buying it.

Consumers have more store-brand choices, too, as retailers tap into product categories that lack clear national-brand leaders. Arnold notes that there are more "upper tier" private-label products, which let customers trade up when the economy improves. Publix, for example, sells dozens of organic foods under its own brand; Costco sells Kirkland Signature bourbon, Greek yogurt, and green tea; Price Chopper sells its own gelati and an extensive line of mustards.

But with those fancier store brands and a current rise in the cost of commodities, exacerbated by drought, the price gap between store brands and name brands could be narrowing. A recent poll of retailers by Supermarket News found that store-brand price increases are outpacing those of national brands. National brands also have more invested in research and development, packaging, advertising, and marketing, so ingredients represent a smaller slice of their cost. As a result, says Neil Stern, senior partner with McMillanDoolittle, retail experts based in Chicago, a rise in the price of commodities is more likely to hike prices of private-label products than those of national brands.

Bottom line. Based on our tests, store brands are often at least as good as national brands and usually cost much less. They're worth a try. Your taste buds might be happy; your wallet certainly will be.

▶ BY THE NUMBERS

23.6

Percentage of supermarket products that are store brands, according to the Private Label Manufacturers Association.

Taste-test results

In blind tests, our trained tasters evaluated 19 pairs of staple foods. National brands and store brands tied 10 times; national brands won eight times; store brands, once. Costs are based on the average prices our shoppers paid.

▶ Store-brand winner



Swanson
66 cents per serving



Giant Eagle
52 cents per serving

VERDICT Giant Eagle. It's a simple, mild broth with a slight taste of roasted chicken. Swanson's broth tastes highly processed, has hints of dehydrated spice and off-tastes, and varied a bit from one sample to another.

▶ Toss-ups



Skippy
20 cents per serving



Wegmans
15 cents per serving

VERDICT Tie. Both are fine choices. Skippy is a bit sweeter and slightly more bitter than Wegmans, which has more of a roasted impression.

Continued

▶ Toss-ups continued



Ocean Spray
44 cents per serving



Meijer
37 cents per serving

VERDICT Tie. They are of about equal (though imperfect) quality. Ocean Spray has more fruit flavor and tastes slightly less “cooked,” but it’s a bit bitter and has an odd perfumelike note. Meijer is very tart—more sour than sweet. Both contain juices from other fruits, such as grape and apple.



Friendship
68 cents per serving



H-E-B
31 cents per serving

VERDICT Tie. Friendship’s small curds are soft, and the product is bland overall. H-E-B’s curds are chewy and a bit salty, with a tangy, slightly sour dairy flavor.



Sunshine
38 cents per serving



Clover Valley (Dollar General)
19 cents per serving

VERDICT Tie. Sunshine has more sour-dairy flavor (think sour cream), with a cheesy flavor at the finish; Clover Valley is slightly saltier and more toasted.



Chobani
\$1.31 per serving



Winn-Dixie
\$1.09 per serving

VERDICT Tie. Even for our experts, it was hard to tell these two apart. Both are tasty, but the Winn-Dixie is a bit sweeter, with slightly more dairy flavor.



Hidden Valley
22 cents per serving



Market Pantry (Target)
10 cents per serving

VERDICT Tie. They are of about the same quality, but they taste different. Hidden Valley has black-pepper bits and flavors of Parmesan and Dijon; Market Pantry has more prominent buttermilk and vinegar flavors.



Freihofer's

26 cents per two slices

Hy-Vee

14 cents per two slices

VERDICT Tie. Their textures are similar—soft—but their tastes are not. Freihofer's has mild grain and malt flavors and a caramel color, plus a burnt top that adds bitterness. Hy-Vee looks almost like white bread. It has a yeasty, sourdoughlike flavor and slight off-tastes.



Nature Valley

56 cents per serving



Great Value (Walmart)

33 cents per serving

VERDICT Tie. Both are chewy and have nuts, raisins, and dried cranberries. The dried fruit is slightly more flavorful in Nature Valley's bars.



Diamond

52 cents per serving



Kirkland Signature (Costco)

35 cents per serving

VERDICT Tie. They're basically interchangeable, but the Kirkland Signature walnuts are slightly sweeter, with a little less roasted flavor.

▶ Name-brand winners



Kellogg's

48 cents per serving



VERDICT Kellogg's.

Kellogg's, with a pancake-syrup flavor, isn't great, but Essential loses because of slightly chalky oats, with just a few clusters; an oxidized taste; and a lingering bitter aftertaste. It also has more sodium.

Essential Everyday (Supervalu-Jewel and other chains)

37 cents per serving



Bush's

56 cents per serving



Food Lion

37 cents per serving



Ben & Jerry's

\$1.12 per serving



Kroger Private Selection

45 cents per serving

VERDICT Bush's. Bush's boasts brown-sugar and molasses flavors, with a slight smoky note. Food Lion has a harsh, ashy artificial smoke flavor, is bitter, and has a metallic off-note. Those drawbacks overwhelm the more subtle flavors of onion and molasses.

VERDICT Ben & Jerry's. It has flavorful dark-chocolate chips and lots of big dough chunks that are a bit gritty. Kroger's ice cream is mediocre, and the dough is in small, gritty pellets, with artificial butterscotch and raw-flour flavors.



Quaker

16 cents per serving



Publix

11 cents per serving

VERDICT Quaker. It has clean, nutty grain flavors with a toasted taste. Publix, on the other hand, is soft and a bit mushy, with lots of broken oat pieces.



Birds Eye

35 cents per serving



Stop & Shop

31 cents per serving

VERDICT Birds Eye. Its flavorful, fresh-tasting vegetables trounce the starchy, shriveled, low-flavor veggies from Stop & Shop, which also have more sodium.

Continued

▶ Name-brand winners *continued*



Stouffer's
\$1.58 per serving

VERDICT Stouffer's. The name-brand lasagna wouldn't be mistaken for homemade, but it's decent. The Eating Right product is dominated by dehydrated-oregano and greasy/fatty flavors. The meat bits are chewy; the noodles, pasty. But Stouffer's has more sodium than Eating Right.



Eating Right (Safeway)
\$1.50 per serving



Soy Dream
84 cents per serving



Price Chopper
40 cents per serving

VERDICT Soy Dream. Soy Dream is sweet and off-white, and has vanilla and slight malt flavors. Price Chopper is thin, beige, and lightly sweetened, with hints of adhesive-bandage and Play-doh-like tastes and a licorice aftertaste.



Tropicana
60 cents per serving



Nice (Walgreens)
28 cents per serving

VERDICT Tropicana. It has distinct orange flavor and is moderately sweet. In Nice, cooked flavors with marmalade and vitamin notes detract from the score, as does a lingering bitterness. Nice is "pasteurized from concentrate"; Tropicana claims its product is "never from concentrate."

Other store-brand products worth trying

We combed through recent test results to find the highest-rated store brands in 10 additional product categories. All items are still being sold.

PAPER TOWELS

Excellent

Up & Up (Target), Eastern U.S.

Very good

CVS Big Quilts
Great Value (Walmart)
Walgreens Ultra
Kirkland Signature (Costco)

BEER

Very good

Name Tag Classic Lager (Trader Joe's)
Big Flats Lager 1901 (Walgreens)

LIGHTBULBS

Very good

Utilitech 100W Soft White CFL (Lowe's)
EcoSmart 100 W Soft White CFL
(Home Depot)

BAGELS

Very good

Kirkland Signature Plain (Costco)

TOILET PAPER

Excellent

White Cloud 3-Ply Ultra Soft and Thick
(Walmart)

Very good

Great Value Ultra Strong (Walmart)
White Cloud Soft and Thick (Walmart)
CVS Premium Ultra

PICKLES

Excellent

365 Everyday Value Organic Kosher Dill
(Whole Foods)

SUNSCREEN

Excellent

Walgreens Continuous Spray Sport SPF 50

KITCHEN TRASH BAGS

Very good

CVS Odor Control Drawstring
Kirkland Signature Drawstring Trash
50787 (Costco)

FROZEN FRUIT BAR

Excellent

365 Everyday Value Strawberry
(Whole Foods)

LAUNDRY DETERGENTS

Very good

Up & Up Ultra Concentrated conventional
powder (Target)
Up & Up HE Fresh Breeze liquid (Target)
Kirkland Signature Ultra HE liquid
(Costco)
Sears Ultra Plus Concentrated 9879
powder

▶ CLOSE-UP

Earlier this year, our reporter shopped for the same basic products—dog biscuits, mustard, trash bags, and many others—in four ways: buying any brand he wanted without discounts, using a savings card and coupons and buying discounted items, buying store brands, and buying at a warehouse club. He saved the most by buying store brands, spending about \$66 for our market basket of groceries, compared with about \$164 as an impulsive shopper.



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Scamnation!

Fraud is on the rise. Protect yourself from the latest tricks.

THE ECONOMY may be struggling but the fraud business is booming. Although comprehensive data aren't kept, the fingerprints of a crime wave are all over. Fraud and identity-theft complaints tracked by the Federal Trade Commission topped 1.2 million last year, up 19 percent over 2010 and 800 percent since 2000.

Moreover, the FBI says fraud involving investments, mortgages, and the Internet is growing. Government takedowns of multimillion-dollar schemes are common.

"Fraud is as high as it's ever been, because the scam artists are using brand-new channels and technology that didn't exist 15 years ago," says Martha Deevy, director of the Financial Fraud Research Center at Stanford University's Center on Longevity. The center estimates the measurable direct cost of financial fraud to Americans to be \$40 billion to \$50 billion a year.

Experts also say the need for law enforcement to pursue terrorists has shifted FBI resources from fraud cases. "After 9/11 the scammers realized, 'This is our time,'" says Doug Templeton, chief investigator for the Pinellas County (Fla.) Department

of Justice and Consumer Services, who has tracked criminals in the state for 13 years.

David Vladeck, director of the bureau of consumer protection at the FTC, says, "What we're seeing is 'last dollar' fraud aimed at taking the last dollar from the unemployed or underemployed."

Like a good novel, a scam is all about the story. It must be convincing and, above all, new. Consequently, con artists change their techniques to respond to changing consumer awareness, says the latest threat assessment by the International Mass-Marketing Fraud Working Group.

We interviewed experts, scoured the complaint files of regulatory and consumer-protection agencies, and followed our readers' tip-offs to present the latest frauds making the rounds—and some of the classics. Here's what to watch out for.

1 This solar-energy system pays for itself. Cut your bills by \$1,000 a year.

A new twist on the home-improvement scam targets folks who want to cut their energy bills with rooftop solar panels or windmills. Solar energy, of course,

can reduce your electric bill. But making the big up-front investment is the equivalent of paying for 30 to 40 years of electricity in advance. And lots of variables can confound payback, including living where cloudy weather is commonplace or in the shadow of towering trees, terrain, or nearby tall buildings.

Solar-panel scams. Consumers unfamiliar with those caveats give double-dealers an opportunity to lowball costs and talk up savings. The promised best-case scenario can lure you into paying a big deposit to a contractor who skips town or otherwise never delivers the system or savings. Some victims have been burned for several thousand dollars. Home-improvement companies are the third most complained about businesses, according to the latest survey of consumer-protection agencies by the Consumer Federation of America and the North American Consumer Protection Investigators.

Protect yourself: California is the leader in residential solar, so go to its electric utility website, at pge.com/csi, to see whether solar makes sense for you. If it does, work only with licensed contractors

specializing in solar installation. Conduct an energy audit and get bids from at least three companies. Check their Better Business Bureau rating and references. Never pay the full price up front or a deposit of more than \$1,000 or 10 percent of the project price, whichever is smaller.

2 We'll remove the virus we found for \$100.

Some scoundrels fly under the radar via telephone. A tech-support person, purportedly from a trusted company like Dell or Microsoft, calls to warn you that its security systems have remotely detected a virus on your computer and offers to remove it—for a fee of \$100 or more.

Bogus tech-support scams. Of course, there is no virus, so you pay for unnecessary service. The crook may also take the opportunity to install mock antivirus software that later starts “finding” nonexistent malware. That can cost you a bundle for removal. Worse, the tech may also install software that scans your computer to steal your passwords and hijack your computer to generate ads and spread spam.

Protect yourself: See our June report on security software to find legitimate antivirus and antimalware software that we've rated, install it on your PC, and keep it up to date. Hang up on anyone outside your home who claims to find trouble on your PC.

3 Confirm the flight reservation you didn't make.

You get an e-mail notifying you about airline reservations you didn't make, a package from UPS you weren't expecting, or a problem with your bank account. Just click on this link or attachment.

Phishing and malware scams. If you follow the instructions, you might end up downloading malware designed to take control of your computer and turn it into a spamming robot, harm it with a virus, or mine your files for financial information. Following the link will take you to a site that looks real but is fake. When you log in, it captures your user name and password so that the bad guys can get into your real accounts.

For years, those threats were limited to your PC, which should be protected with security software. But the popularity of smart phones has opened the door to “smishing.” (The word combines “SMS,” or short-message service—aka text messaging—and “phishing.”) Some smart-phone users don't

realize that their phone is a computer and prone to the same security risks as a PC.

Those deceptions work. More than 9 million households had at least one member who gave up information to phishers, and 30 million suffered a malware attack in the previous year, according to our latest survey of online households. The Better Business Bureau pegged phishing as its top scam of 2011. Moreover, today's fake sites are more believable than ever.

Protect yourself: Never click on a link to your online accounts through e-mail or call an account-related phone number in a text message someone sends you. Instead,

Smart phones can be subject to the same security threats as PCs.

open your PC or mobile Web browser and type in the desired address on your own. And don't click on an e-mail attachment unless you're expecting it.

4 You've just won a \$100 gift card!

In this new bamboozle, burglars claiming to be from a local store call to tell you that you've just won the prized plastic, and you must come in to pick it up.

Burglary. The game is to get you out of the house so that robbers can carry out an old-fashioned break-in while you're gone.

Protect yourself: This simple trick works because it catches you by surprise. Always be suspicious when someone promises you something for nothing. The Better Business Bureau, which first warned about this scam, advises “winners” to ask questions: What contest did I win? How was I chosen? Call the store to independently confirm the details. After you determine that it's a scam, notify the police. And take extra precautions to lock up your house, set your alarms, and protect valuables when you do leave, since burglars have clearly targeted your home.

5 OMG. Now you really can see who views your Facebook profile!!!

Social-media networks are fertile ground for fakery. You might have received, for example, news-feed messages from Facebook friends raving about an app that

claims to let you see who's checking out your profile. Such messages can be spam in disguise, leading to “bait pages.” Other bait involves purportedly bizarre or salacious videos. Consumers who take the bait never get the promised software or film.

Instead, the link drives the curious to a fake Facebook website. You're asked to “like” the app or other bait, which forwards the spam to all of your friends. Then you have to complete a survey, which collects personal information and opinions.

Survey scams. The goal is to trick you into filling out surveys for online advertisers, with the person who set up the operation collecting commissions for each one completed by an ever-expanding circle of friends, says Chet Wisniewski, senior security adviser at Sophos, an information security firm. One “clickjacker,” Adscend Media of Wilmington, Del., raked in a significant amount of money, according to a lawsuit filed by the Washington state attorney general. The case was settled in May under a consent order in which the company agreed to stop certain marketing.

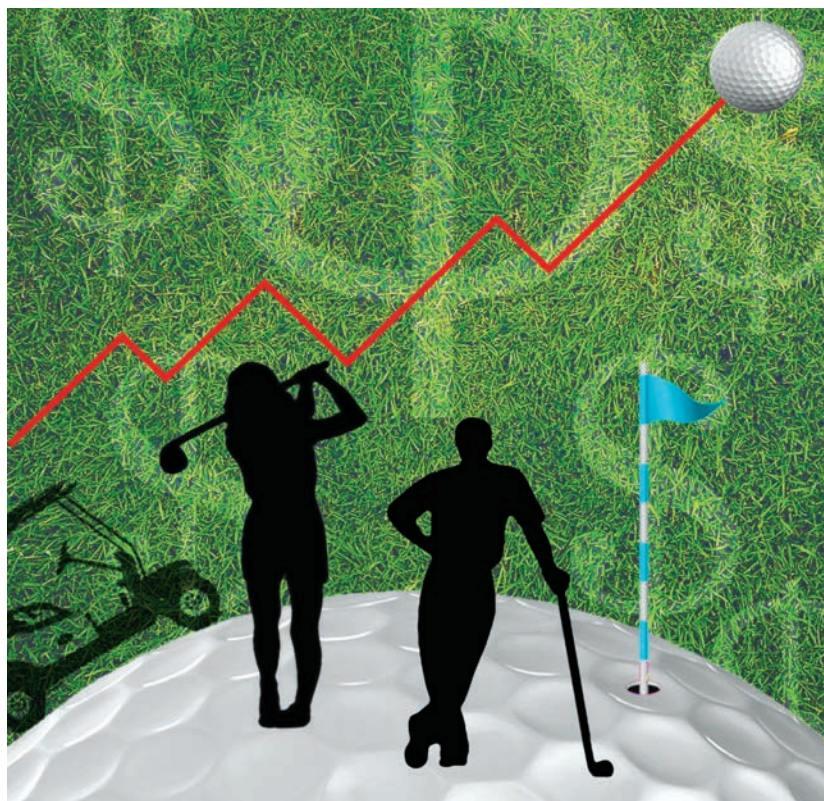
There's a difference between scam surveys and legitimate surveys, like those Consumer Reports e-mails to subscribers. Our surveys link you directly to the questionnaire; you don't need to “like” us first. And your responses are confidential; they aren't used for marketing or fundraising.

Protect yourself: Don't reveal personal information online to anyone who initiated contact with you unless your trust is certain. Look for the survey company's name and go to its website independently by reopening your browser, or call it. Ignore product promos from Facebook friends. Use caution in granting access to your profile. And think before you “like.”

6 Cut your credit-card interest rate to 4.75%.

Who doesn't want to cut sky-high credit-card interest costs in today's low-rate environment? An unsolicited caller falsely implying that he's affiliated with your credit-card issuer offers to reduce your interest rate and save you \$2,500. The service costs \$695 up front, and you must fill out a “financial profile form” with details about your debts, including balances, credit limits, interest rates, and customer-service numbers, plus your name, address, and Social Security number.

Credit-card interest rate-cut scams. The full extent of the “service” typically involves a conference call with the thief,



victim, and creditors, during which the shark asks for a rate reduction and the creditor usually refuses. Consumers, of course, can do this on their own—free. One such operation, Select Personnel Management, a Canadian company, and eight associated companies and defendants were ordered by a U.S. District Court in Illinois in 2009 to pay more than \$7.8 million and stop telemarketing after the FTC said they hoodwinked more than 12,000 consumers.

Protect yourself: Don't give personal information such as account numbers to anyone who initiates contact with you. Go to donotcall.gov or call 888-382-1222 to register your phone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry. Hang up on unsolicited telemarketers.

7 Free golf, dinner, and priceless investment advice for savvy retirees.

Investment advisers, broker-dealers, and people from other financial-services firms invite wealthy seniors to enjoy fun, food, and access to investment secrets that will add \$100,000 to their net worth, get them 40 percent investment returns, or turn \$100,000 into \$1 million for their heirs. Attendees might receive a sleeve of golf

balls or even win golf clubs.

Investment-seminar scams. The main goal of this educational “opportunity” is to sell investment products that generate commissions for promoters, mostly annuities, real-estate investment trusts, mutual funds, and reverse mortgages. That's all perfectly legal.

But the ads, sales materials, and pitchmen can be misleading or promote strategies inappropriate for seniors. Reported problems have included promises of a 38 percent rate of return with no risk, the liquidation of investments without the customer's knowledge or consent, the misappropriation of customers' funds to buy unregistered oil and gas partnerships, and the sale of nonexistent investments to pay a salesman's personal expenses and trading losses.

Protect yourself: Deal only with long-time, trusted financial advisers, never with new “friends” from a rubber-chicken sales seminar. Accept the invite and fun, but provide zero financial information and don't sign blank authorization forms or anything else. And just say no to follow-up one-on-one meetings that will probably be suggested on the pretense of preparing a financial plan.

8 A national family health-care plan for \$3 a day.

The Supreme Court's June ruling upholding most of the Affordable Care Act is expected to revive this scam, which appeared after the legislation was passed in 2010. An “emergency broadcast” and video of President Obama discussing health care prompts viewers to call a toll-free number to reach one of many telemarketers. They imply that they're selling affordable, government-authorized health insurance that provides “significant” savings on prescription drugs, doctor and hospital fees, and labs coast-to-coast.

Medical discount plan scams. The product isn't insurance; it's a discount card costing an enrollment fee of \$29 to \$500, plus monthly fees of \$90 to \$1,300. That's deceptive enough, and the FTC has taken action against more than 50 such operators in recent years. But when ill customers finally need to use the card, many health-care providers don't honor it. Refunds? Fuggedaboutit!

Protect yourself: Discount plans aren't illegal, but we consider them to be junk insurance. They're often sold deceptively as insurance, but unlike real health coverage, discount plans don't pay any of your medical bills. Instead, they amount to a list of providers who may be willing to offer plan members a discount. Think coupons, not coverage, and this poor bargain becomes obvious.

9 We can ‘clean-pipe’ your car to pass smog inspection.

When a car is unlikely to pass a state smog inspection, a technician or other mechanic simply tests a stand-in car that does meet standards, and voilà! The good numbers are used to certify the belcher.

Auto-repair scams. They continue to thrive; auto-repair rip-offs were No. 8 in the BBB's complaint rankings in 2011. Among the most common tricks: Mechanics give a good estimate up front but pad the bill with extra work. Some shops make a business of this by advertising a low-priced oil-and-lube job to suck in customers, then “finding” much more expensive problems that need to be fixed.

Another scam involves counterfeit, used, or substandard parts used in place of the new parts you pay for. Sometimes the mechanic doesn't provide any replacement parts and doesn't do the work. Bogus billing can add up. After a mechanic

in Palm Desert, Calif., claimed to have rung up more than \$11,000 in parts and labor on one car, inspectors from the California Department of Consumer Affairs Bureau of Automotive Repair said they found something else: fraud.

Protect yourself: The Coalition Against Insurance Fraud says you should always get a written estimate before work is done, ask to see the repairs and discarded parts, use a shop recommended by knowledgeable friends, check the shop's BBB rating and Yelp page, and be wary if the mechanic says he'll help "waive" the deductible on insurance-financed repairs.

10 You could win an iPad. Start bidding!

Hot electronics are commonly used to entice victims into a shakedown. A pop-up ad on your computer invites you to bid on an iPad, laptop PC, or wide-screen TV, but you must include your cell-phone number to play. Submitting your bid sends a text message to your cell phone that, whether you respond or not, may authorize an unwanted \$9.99 a month subscription to some useless service. The charge gets tacked onto your cell-phone bill, where you're unlikely to notice it.

Cramming. The auction is smoke and mirrors designed to capture your cell-phone number to place unauthorized charges on your bill, a practice called cramming. Unlike numbers for landlines, cell-phone numbers aren't published in directories, so scammers must be underhanded to get it.

Cell-phone companies, which can collect \$1 to \$2 commissions per charge, claim that wireless cramming isn't a problem. But we found 480,000 alleged cell-cramming victims in one case, and in 2011 a Senate committee investigation concluded that landline and cell-phone crammers could be fleecing \$2 billion a year from consumers.

"We have multiple wireless-cramming investigations under way," says Vladeck at the FTC, "and we're quite quickly seeing the migration of cramming from landline to wireless phones."

Protect yourself: Guard your cell-phone number like a credit card; don't give it to strangers. Demand refunds from your cell provider if you've been crammed. Tell your wireless and landline carriers to block all third-party billing to your account, and check previous bills for cramming charges.

11 Buy a gourmet dog-food coupon worth \$61—for just \$16.

You receive an e-mail that alerts you to a website—not the manufacturer's—where you can purchase high-value coupons. They're not your typical 25 cents off but special coupons for \$2 to \$60 off or free high-priced products like shaving razors, pricey pet food, diapers, infant formula, coffee, and even restaurant meals. Such giveaways are rarely circulated, but manufacturers do use them to introduce new products or as a goodwill gesture to win back a wronged customer.

Coupon scams. Problem is, there's no way anyone can accumulate enough of those rare coupons to make a business of it, "so they have to be counterfeit or stolen," says Bud Miller, executive director of the Cou-

Type a company's address into your browser. Don't just click a link.

pon Information Corporation, an industry group that works to stop coupon fraud. Other coupon flimflams involve money-making ventures based on inflated earnings promises, in which consumers invest several hundred to several thousand dollars for coupon booklets that are difficult to sell, or they toil at work-at-home coupon clipping.

Protect yourself: Avoid such coupons.

12 Grandpa? I've been in an accident in Canada and need your help.

It's the phone call every grandparent dreads: Bad news about a grandchild coming in the middle of the night. Maybe the car has broken down or been involved in a crash, maybe the kin has been unjustly arrested, or a family member in the military has been mugged overseas while on leave. The caller may attempt to impersonate the grandchild or a police officer, lawyer, or doctor. Whatever the details, the family elder needs to wire money ASAP.

Grandparent scams. The caller, however, is not a relative but a cheat who'll collect the untraceable wire transfer you might send, typically to Canada, Mexico, or another country. This dirty deal has been working since 2008 at least, but the

Internet Crime Complaint Center reports that scammers have lately become more sophisticated by mining social-networking sites for personal details that make their impersonation more credible. One couple was pinched first for \$3,000 when their "grandson" was supposedly caught fishing in Canada without a license, then for a whopping \$30,000 more when the drama escalated to Mounties finding drugs and alcohol on the boat, the Michigan attorney general said.

Protect yourself: Ask for details about your last visit that your grandkid should recall and a stranger couldn't. Jot down the caller's location and number. Hang up, and instead of calling Western Union, call the grandchild's parents or the number you usually use to reach him to verify his whereabouts—even if the caller pleads, "Don't call my parents!" Don't send a dime unless you confirm the story.

13 Sweet deal: \$15,000 for a car with a \$28,000 book value.

Hard times nudge many consumers into the used-car market, and some wind up with this bargain hunter's nightmare: Crooks steal a car, then copy the vehicle identification number (VIN) from another car—same make, model, year, color—in a mall parking lot. They use the legitimate VIN to counterfeit VIN dashboard plates and Mylar stickers, slap them on the stolen vehicle, and sell that car to you at an attractively low price. The registration documents are also forged.

VIN cloning scams. Sooner or later, because you must register and insure your car, insurance carriers and state motor vehicle departments eventually figure out that two vehicles are using the same VIN, which draws the police to repossess your sweet deal. You're now out the car and the money you paid to the long-gone criminals. This and many other schemes help put auto sales in second place among the top 10 complaints listed by the National Association of Attorneys General.

Protect yourself: Watch for red flags: a far-below-market price, a private seller doing business in an odd location, a cash deal. When you call a seller, ask for the VIN and check it, free, at vehiclehistory.gov or nich.org, the website of the National Insurance Crime Bureau. While sizing up the vehicle, compare the VIN you were given with those in several places on the car—dashboard, glove box, side door, in the



trunk, under the hood near the radiator post. If there's any mismatch, remain poker-faced, don't confront the seller, walk away from the deal, and call the police.

14 I'm a recruiter. Want a \$17.50-an-hour job?

Last May, job hunters using computers at a public library in Columbus, Ohio, to search the want ads were approached by a "recruiter" looking to fill positions at a new store nearby. The sneak used the library to conduct job interviews, and candidates filled out applications with their name, date of birth, Social Security number, and more.

Identity-theft scams. When the applicants later went to the store for training, they learned that the recruiter wasn't associated with it at all. Rather, face-to-face job interviews are a new and brazen way to extract information for ID theft.

Job scams rank seventh on the BBB's top 10 scams list, and such come-ons also involve work-at-home schemes including stuffing envelopes, assembling merchandise, medical billing and claims processing, and reshipping what the victim may not know are stolen goods.

ID theft was the biggest category on the

FTC's 2011 complaint list. Thieves use a wide variety of tactics to get you to give up key information that lets them steal from your existing bank and credit accounts or use your Social Security number to open phony financial accounts and commit other crimes in your name. The most effective deceptions appear to come from your bank or credit-card company, a government agency, or other entity that you trust, and they wheedle information out of you by saying they need it to correct an error or prevent a problem.

Protect yourself: Never give your personal information to anyone who telephones, e-mails, texts, or otherwise initiates contact with you. Don't participate in fun-looking online pop-up quizzes that ask for your mother's maiden name, your first pet's name, or other information commonly used to verify your identity. Monitor your financial accounts weekly or even daily, place a security freeze on your credit reports at all three credit bureaus, and file an ID-theft report with the local police if you get swindled.

If someone approaches you with a job, contact the prospective employer to verify that the recruiter and the job opening are legitimate. There should be no need for

checking-account and other financial information on your application.

15 Gold prices will peak in the next 60 days. Invest now!

Telemarketers promise senior citizens with assets that gold, silver, platinum, and palladium bars, bullion, and coins are a surefire, low-risk investment and use high-pressure sales tactics to close the deal. In fact, precious metals are a commodity subject to erratic short-term pricing with no guarantee of any net return.

Gold investment scam. What consumers aren't told is that their investment is really a credit purchase. Their money is deposited in an account, and the scammers don't actually buy any precious metals. Instead, the crooks rake off poorly disclosed fees and commissions.

Protect yourself: Hang up on telemarketers who call out of the blue. Deal only with reputable precious-metals dealers. Find one at money.org, the website of the American Numismatic Association. Take delivery of your gold at your bank, where you can keep it in a safe-deposit box.

16 I overpaid you. Deposit my check and wire me the difference.

You post an item for sale on Craigslist or another classified-ad website and you're pleasantly surprised when an out-of-state buyer quickly responds by mailing you payment. But yikes! The buyer has mistakenly sent you a check for much more than he owes. You contact him about the mix-up. No problem: He trusts you to deposit his check and wire the overage to him via Western Union, MoneyGram, or other service. To show how nice you are and to uphold the goodness of mankind, you go ahead.

Overpayment scams. But the check bounces, so you don't get the snake's money; he gets yours. Overpayment fraud was fifth-ranked among complaints filed with the Internet Crime Complaint Center last year. You're also stuck with any returned-deposit fees from your bank.

Protect yourself: Deal only with people you can meet in person, Craigslist warns. (Its founder, Craig Newmark, is on the board of Consumer Reports.) Exchange goods for cash, don't deal with distant buyers or wire them money, and don't accept checks, not even cashier's checks or money orders, which can be faked.

17 Hello! National Sweepstakes Bureau calling.

In a new spin on a timeworn fraud, you receive mail or a call from a seemingly authentic government agency that is “supervising” the safe transfer of—congratulations!—your sweepstakes winnings. Among the agencies supposedly calling are the fictitious National Consumer Protection Agency, the make-believe National Sweepstakes Bureau, and even the misappropriated FTC.

Sweepstakes scams. Spoofing technology makes the callback number look like it’s really in Washington, D.C., and the official-looking documents have lots of gravitas and seem authentic. But it all works to fool you into paying a transfer or processing fee, or taxes and insurance on “winnings” of \$20 to \$10,000. Of course, there are no prizes, but any lost fee payment is real. Sweepstakes scams are surprisingly popular, ranking third on the FTC’s annual complaint list.

Protect yourself: Never pay lottery-win fees, which are a red flag of fraud. Legitimate sweepstakes don’t require winners to pay insurance, taxes, shipping and handling, or any other fees. Other tip-offs include high-pressure efforts to get you to wire the fee immediately to beat a deadline. And though governments definitely tax prize winnings, they don’t “supervise” delivery.

18 Pay me up front for this repair, or I’ll go elsewhere.

In the wake of tornadoes and other severe weather, these hustlers take advantage of the surge in demand for repairs. The push is for up-front money.

Storm-repair scams. Once they get your money, these skunks may do shoddy work, delay the work endlessly, or take the money and run. Tina Shelton of Manvel, Texas, a Houston suburb, lost \$12,000 to a contractor who bilked her and elderly neighbors after Hurricane Ike swept through their area in 2008. Roofers in general generate more than 8,000 complaints a year with the BBB and rank 15th among all industries for number of complaints.

Protect yourself: Ask your insurer about coverage and to get a correct estimate. Never pay the full price of a job before it’s done; pay in increments as work is completed. A down payment of less than a third of the estimated total cost is OK. It allows the contractor to buy materials, which you should see arrive at your

home along with invoices indicating what was bought and paid. Pay with a personal check or credit card, which you can keep better track of than cash. Don’t do business with contractors who knock on your door; find listed, licensed, and insured local construction companies. Get at least three written estimates.

19 The government wants you to have a scooter.

Someone at the door or at a church presentation tells a Medicare beneficiary that the federal health program will pay for so-called durable medical equipment; all you have to do is ask. Motorized scooters and power wheelchairs are the big prizes. The trickster collects info about the person’s medical conditions, doctors, and—most important—Medicare account number.

ID theft is the biggest consumer complaint, federal officials say.

The beneficiary may never receive the equipment or may receive a \$500 unpowered wheelchair while Medicare gets billed \$11,000 for a feature-laden powered one. Gaming a government program is easy: A 2009 report by the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General said that 60 percent of standard and complex power wheelchair claims lacked proper documentation.

Medicare scams. Dishonest doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and ordinary cons use your warm body and Medicare account number to steal money from the government. But you might also get stuck with co-pays for things the thief billed to Medicare without telling you. Your identity may also be stolen and sold off, your medical records altered to create a billable phony affliction, and your health may be jeopardized by a resulting false diagnosis. “Patient brokers” may offer you free groceries, rides, or even cash (which are illegal kickbacks, the FBI says) for your ID number so that they can bill Medicare for medical treatments never performed.

Protect yourself: Never give your Medicare number to a stranger who claims to be a government employee. Check your Medicare Summary Notice for equipment

or services that you never received, were double-billed, or billed at a higher price than you were told. Check your credit report periodically for past-due or collection accounts for medical equipment or services never received. Don’t sign blank authorization forms. You can get medical equipment, subject to the rules and co-pays of Medicare, but it must be medically necessary and authorized by your doctor.

20 But we already sent your tax refund.

No one likes letters from the Internal Revenue Service, but this one is both baffling and terribly worrisome. After you file your income tax return, the IRS notifies you that you’ve filed more than one return and that someone else has already filed using your identity.

Fraudulent tax return scams. This crime is relatively new but has jumped this year to 940,000 returns filed by identity thieves using other people’s names. How do they make money paying your taxes? They use your identity to claim a tax refund, and if you don’t have money coming to you, they lie about deductions to concoct a refund—\$5 billion in ripped-off refunds this year.

Protect yourself: File an IRS Identity Theft affidavit, available on the agency’s website at irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/ft14039.pdf. If the problem persists, you can also get help from the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 800-908-4490. Be prepared to wait. Howard Shoelson, of Davie, Fla., learned in March that a thief filed a return using his name and Social Security number, and he was still waiting for IRS help when we spoke to him in August. Also report the situation to the Social Security Administration to protect your benefits, which could be at risk.

21 We’ll recover the cash scammers stole.

Adding insult to injury, “recovery room” operators buy “sucker lists” of people who’ve already been conned to fleece again—this time on the promise that for a fee they’ll recover your losses.

Recovery-room scams. Fees cost hundreds of dollars, and you don’t recover the original losses.

Protect yourself: Hang up on anyone who tries to sell, give, or help you with anything. Short-circuit the key step in every scam and never give money or personal information to acquaintances or strangers.

Test your energy IQ

If you're like the typical American, you know a thing or two about energy efficiency, but you're also leaving serious savings on the table. That's clear from our 2012 Energy IQ Quiz, a nationally representative survey of 1,035 Americans conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. No one got every question right, and only a third answered most correctly. Test your own Energy IQ, then read through our answers to learn the latest efficiency news and advice, which could lower your utility bills by hundreds of dollars. And don't miss the reports that follow on lightbulbs, programmable thermostats, and space heaters.



▶ Since the late 1970s, the energy consumed by all households in the U.S. has ...

- ☐ increased by about 50 percent
- ☐ increased by about 25 percent
- ☐ stayed about the same
- ☐ decreased by about 25 percent
- ☐ decreased by about 50 percent

Today's homes are about 30 percent bigger than those built in the late 1970s, they're buzzing with electronics, and nine out of ten have air conditioning. And yet, total energy consumption has been basically flat, which just 7 percent of survey respondents knew. "But the bar was unbelievably low to begin with," says Arthur Rosenfeld, Distinguished Scientist Emeritus at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and a two-term commissioner with the California Energy Commission. "Energy was dirt cheap back then, and if you were in the

market for a new car or refrigerator, you had no way of measuring efficiency."

Appliance standards have done the most to counteract other increases in home energy use. Take refrigerators: A typical 1975 model consumed about 1,750 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year. Efficiency standards helped bring that figure down to around 500 kWh in 2011, and a target of about 400 kWh is set for 2015. Clothes washers and dishwashers have also seen impressive efficiency gains. The new lighting standard that took effect in January is projected to cut the average household's lighting-related energy use in half by 2035. And standards set for 2015 and beyond will improve the efficiency of air conditioners and water heaters, which together account for almost one-third of the average home's energy use.

▶ Which home improvement will usually lower a household's annual energy costs the most?

- ☐ Upgrading windows
- ☐ Adding insulation to an attic
- ☐ Installing light-colored roof shingles
- ☐ Sealing all air leaks, including leaky ducts

Slick advertising by manufacturers may be the reason 34 percent of people incorrectly choose windows in this question. Though new windows can save energy, especially double-glazed units with low-emissivity (low-E) coatings, our tests have found that it could take 20 years to recoup the investment.

The swiftest savings come from sealing air leaks in your home's walls, windows, and especially its ductwork, which 33 percent of respondents answered correctly. "Leaky return ducts can also introduce unwanted air pollutants into the home," adds Kathleen Hogan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency at the Department of Energy. Duct insulating and sealing are best left to a professional and could lower your annual heating and cooling bills by \$400. You can then use a combination of caulk, foam board, expandable sealant, and weather stripping to plug leaks around windows, doors, electrical outlets, and other openings in your home.

Adding attic insulation is often the next best way to save energy. In a typical residence, laying 11 inches of fiberglass or rock wool or 8 inches of cellulose insulation could save up to \$200. Cool roofs are designed to reflect more sunlight and absorb less heat. They can trim cooling costs in warm regions, especially if there's conditioned living space directly beneath the roof.

▶ Which renewable energy device doesn't qualify for a federal tax credit?

- ☐ Solar water heater
- ☐ Pellet stove
- ☐ Geothermal heat pump
- ☐ Residential wind turbine

Almost three-quarters of respondents correctly identified pellet stoves as the one form of renewable energy not eligible for a federal tax credit, which expired in 2011. The pellet stove industry is lobbying hard for its reinstatement, saying the U.S. is the potential world leader in the production of the appliances and their clean-burning fuel.

For now, geothermal heat pumps, residential wind turbines, and solar energy systems qualify for a credit, covering 30 percent of the cost with no cap. The tax credit is good through 2016 and can be applied to existing homes and new construction using IRS form 5695. Check www.dsireusa.org for state and local incentives.



► Which configuration typically uses more energy?

- ❑ A standard high-definition DVR set-top box and 55-inch LCD TV
- ❑ A standard-sized side-by-side refrigerator

Seventy percent of respondents correctly identified the refrigerator as the more energy-intensive configuration, with an approximate annual consumption of 500 kWh, compared with around 300 kWh for the TV and set-top box. But most homes have just one fridge, and multiple TVs and cable boxes are the norm. What's more, our calculations assumed a set-top box that meets the latest Energy Star 3.0 specification, which could be at least 40 percent more efficient than what you may have at home. That's why the total energy that many households consume watching TV is greater than what they use to keep their food and drinks cold.

If you have an old set-top box, ask your cable provider to replace it with one that meets Energy Star's 3.0 specification. The country's six largest cable companies, serving approximately 85 percent of cable households, promised that at least 90 percent of new set-top boxes deployed to customers by the end of 2013 will be Energy Star 3.0 qualified. And if you keep a TV in a guest room or other seldom-used part of the house, unplug it and any ancillary equipment.



► Which driving habit uses the most gas?

- ❑ Not keeping a car's tires properly inflated
- ❑ Excessive idling (keeping a car running when parked)
- ❑ Driving more than 10 mph over the posted highway speed limit
- ❑ Not using aftermarket products such as fuel additives or gas-saving devices

Soft tires and senseless idling waste gas, but not as much as highway speeding, as 31 percent of respondents knew. Our tests found that going from 65 to 55 mph could improve fuel economy by 5 mpg. If you travel an average 9,600 highway miles each year and pay about \$3.60 per gallon, those extra 5 mpg can save you about \$130 annually. Safety is an added bonus—roughly one-third of all traffic fatalities are speeding-related.

Only 2 percent of our respondents believed that fuel additives and other aftermarket products can save gas. That's encouraging because we've never found any benefit to those devices. We've tested Fuel Doctor FD-47, Fuel Genie, Platinum Gas Saver, and TornadoFuelSaver. Our advice: Don't waste your money.

► Adjusting a thermostat 5° to 10° F at night and when you're not at home can cut a household's annual energy costs by how much on average?

- ❑ Under 10 percent
- ❑ 10 to 20 percent
- ❑ 21 to 30 percent
- ❑ Over 30 percent

Each degree you adjust the thermostat could translate into 2 percent savings if the setback period covers the sleeping and working hours. So in this scenario, the correct answer is 10 to 20 percent, which 57 percent of respondents got right. Given that the average American household spends about \$1,000 on heating and cooling, that amounts to potential savings of \$200—enough to cover the cost of several programmable thermostats recommended in our latest report on page 35.



► On average, which appliance uses more energy per load?

- ❑ A washing machine
- ❑ A dryer

This question stumped the fewest respondents, with 83 percent correctly choosing the dryer as the more energy-intensive laundry appliance. Dryers generate heat, which most people know requires a lot of energy—upward of 900 kWh per year to be exact. But increased focus on dryer efficiency could make this question less of a no-brainer.

The Energy Star program named Advanced Clothes Dryers the winner of its 2012 Emerging Technology Award. Heat pump clothes dryers, which already command significant market shares throughout parts of Europe, have the most promise. Those dryers extract heat from a home's ambient air and release it at a higher temperature inside the drum. Compared with conventional electric dryers, they could save \$30 to \$40 per year and as much as \$700 over the life of the unit, though consumers will need to get used to longer drying times and steeper up-front costs.

The first advanced clothes dryers are expected to be out in 2013. Energy Star is also developing a specification for conventional dryers that could improve their efficiency by 5 to 10 percent. In the meantime, your best bet for saving energy on laundry is to buy a high-efficiency washer that will spin the most water from a load before it goes in the dryer.

Unplug it! Stop standby power losses

Many devices in the home consume electricity even when you're not actively using them. All that vampire power can add up to 10 percent of your electricity bill. Unplugging or powering down the following gadgets could save you approximately \$120 dollars a year, especially if they're older models without auto-shutdown modes.

Video game console
(idle mode)
\$75

Digital set-top box
(with TV off)
\$25

Combo DVD/VCR player
(on)
\$13

Cordless power tool and charger
(fully charged)
\$8

Sources: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Carnegie Mellon University



HEAT CHECK An infrared sensor measures surface temperatures on the top-scoring Dyson AM04.

Space heaters

Eight picks chase chills in a hurry

THE BEST space heaters can quickly heat you and an average-sized room for as little as \$40. Electric heaters such as those we tested include an array of safety features that reduce the risk of fire. But that doesn't mean all of them are risk-free.

Many we tested got hot enough to cause the equivalent of a bad sunburn within a second of contact. Almost all the hot spots are small and relatively hard to reach, though the one on the Sunbeam SQH310 covers 112 square inches. There's also a hot metal bar at the top that's tempting to grab as a handle. The Sunbeam didn't get hot enough to pose a fire risk, but it singed one of the terry-cloth lab towels we use in our fire-safety tests.

Our tests of 18 space heaters also found that some cost hundreds more and add little or no performance, while others make you wait for the comfort you crave. Here are the details:

Dyson wins, but not in value. The fastest space heaters brought our 200-square-foot test chamber from a chilly 63° F to a comfy 70° F in 15 minutes or less. We

also used a test dummy with heat sensors to see how quickly models would heat you and others if you were directly in front of them. Speedier spot heating helped Dyson's AM04, \$400, edge out the other top performers. But the Holmes HFH436, \$40, did virtually as well and includes a start-up timer for preheating cold rooms.

Larger models offer mostly style. Paying more for the top-scoring larger space heaters buys a fancier wood casing. The \$400 Heat Surge HT-XL has a fake-flame display and a cabinet the company touts as Amish-built. But like most heaters we tested, its working parts hail from China. The Duraflame performed similarly and trades the fake flames and Amish cachet for friendlier controls and a much lower price. But as the scores show, neither of those heaters performed better than the best smaller models.

Three were slow to heat. Larger heaters can also be slower at heating, despite their added size. Leisurely room and spot heating dinged the Soleus Air we tested and put the DeLonghi and wall-mounted Eco-Heater at the bottom of our Ratings.

How to choose

We think all manufacturers should keep hot surfaces completely out of reach. Models that scored Very Good or higher in our hot-surface tests make even minor burns unlikely, if not impossible. Here's what else to consider while shopping:

Choose the right type. Look for fast spot heating if you care more about quickly heating one or two people than heating a roomful of guests. Consider larger heaters if you like the look of wood and an electronic flame display. And consider propane or kerosene heaters strictly for screened-in porches and other well-vented outdoor areas. Both types pose a carbon-monoxide hazard indoors and typically get hot enough to ignite fabrics.

Look for safety features. All of the heaters we tested include a sensor that shuts them off if they overheat. A switch that does the same if they tip over is a welcome plus for taller models, especially with kids and pets nearby. Instructions for all the models we tested also warn consumers to keep them away from water. The small Holmes has a plug that's ground-fault protected, though kitchens, bathrooms, and other moist areas should already have protected outlets.

Insist on a fan. It helps distribute heat more quickly, and it shows: The three slowest heaters in our tests are the only ones without one. Some models can oscillate for more-even heating.

Don't expect savings. More than 60 percent of homeowners we polled in our Energy IQ Quiz thought that space heaters could trim their energy bills. Yet the only way you can save is if you lower heat in other rooms, since electricity is the priciest way to heat. So consider a space heater strictly for comfort. And think about adding insulation to attics, basements, crawl spaces, and other key areas for savings.

■ DID YOU KNOW?

\$90

That's about how much a 1,500-watt space heater usually costs to run a year if used 25 hours a week during a 20-week heating season. Inadvertently leave it on at night, and you could easily pay three times that.

Overview

All our top picks include a fan and combine quick room heating with surfaces that stay cool enough to avoid burning you upon contact. And like nearly all we tested, they have a sensor that shuts them off if they overheat. We focus below on those with special strengths, value, or both.

CR Best Buy These blend performance and value. All are recommended.

☒ **Recommended** These high-scoring space heaters stand out for the reasons below.

BEST FOR MOST

A1 Dyson \$400

A2 Holmes \$40 CR Best Buy

A5 Bionaire \$55 CR Best Buy

A6 Ambia \$60

All are relatively compact. **A1** offers the best blend of heating speed and safety, and includes multiple fan speeds and remote control. **A2** and **A5** trade some spot-heating speed and features for a much lower price. **A6** offers even faster room heating, though its hotter surface means you should keep it out of children's reach.

STYLISH UNITS FOR LARGER ROOMS

B1 Duraflame \$230

B2 Heat Surge \$400

Both of these console heaters performed similarly and are encased in wood to look more like furniture. Paying more for **B2** buys fireplace styling with a fake-flame display.



LIGHT SHOW Heat Surge's HT-XL, \$400, mimics a fireplace and includes electronic "flames."



A2 Holmes



A5 Bionaire



B1 Duraflame

Ratings Space heaters

All tested models In performance order, within types.

 CR Best Buy

☒ Recommended

☒ Excellent
☐ Very good
☐ Good
☐ Fair
☐ Poor

		Brand & model	Price	Weight (lb.)	Overall score	Test results				Features						
						Room heating	Spot heating	Hot surface	Fire safety	Ease of use	Noise	Multiple fan speeds	Oscillating	Tip-over switch	Timer	Remote control

A SMALL ROOM HEATERS These compact electric models have a fan for faster heating.

[illegible]

B LARGE ROOM HEATERS Some of these electric models are styled like furniture; most have fans.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Duraflame 10HM4126-0107	230	37	68	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Heat Surge HT-XL	400	52	67	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>			
	3	Soleus Air HM2-15R-32	80	11	58	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	2		
	4	Edenpure GEN4	397	26	57	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>			
	5	Lasko 760000	90	15	52	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>			
	6	DeLonghi TRD0715T	75	26	39	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	2		
	7	Eco-Heater NA400S	95	11	37	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	2	3	

① Includes a ground-fault circuit interrupter plug for shock protection around water. ② Lacks a fan. ③ Not applicable; model is wall-mounted.

Guide to the Ratings

Overall score is the weighted average of room and spot heating, hot-surface and fire safety, ease of use, and noise. Scores of previously tested models may have changed due to changes in testing. **Room heating** is the ability to heat a 200-square-foot room in 15 minutes. **Spot heating** is the ability to heat a person sitting in its path in 15 minutes, using a test dummy with sensors. **Hot surface**

gauges the risk of a first-degree burn from touching a model's heat-exhaust area, based on its hottest portion and the size and accessibility of its exhaust area.

Fire safety is the potential for igniting fabrics, based on a terry-cloth towel.

Ease of use includes ease of carrying and using controls. **Noise** is loudness based on the heater's highest setting, using a sound meter. **Price** is approximate retail.



WINNERS CIRCLE Craig Limbert uses an integrating sphere to measure brightness and light color.

Lightbulbs

LEDs outshine CFLs in our latest tests

LIGHT-EMITTING DIODE bulbs typically use around 75 percent less energy than standard incandescent lights, can last decades, and also solve many of the problems people told us they have with energy-efficient bulbs. The catch? They're expensive, and some of them aren't very good.

Though prices have dropped by about 20 percent since last year, most LEDs we tested cost \$25 to \$60 before rebates. Many experts estimate that prices will drop to \$10 or lower in two to three years for 60-watt replacements. But even at \$25, the best LEDs can save you about \$130 over their 23-year life, compared with an incandescent.

Unlike compact fluorescent lightbulbs, LEDs brighten instantly, even at frigid temperatures. Turning them on and off frequently doesn't affect performance. None of the LEDs in our labs have failed after being turned on and off almost

200,000 times. Another advantage: They don't use mercury, which reduces cleanup problems if one breaks.

Decide whether those conveniences outweigh an LED's high price. If not, there are plenty of fine, inexpensive CFLs in our Ratings that can save you around \$60 overall. There are also more CFLs for special applications such as chandeliers, three-way lamps, and 100-watt replacement bulbs.

■ FIRST LOOK: PHILIPS L PRIZE LED

In the ultimate battle of the bulbs, the Philips LED won \$10 million in the Department of Energy's L Prize competition for energy-efficient 60-watt replacement bulbs. To win, the bulb had to meet high standards for brightness, cast a warm light evenly, last 25,000 hours, be highly accurate in revealing colors, use 10 watts or less, be dimmable, and be assembled or partially manufactured in the U.S.

In our initial tests, the Philips L Prize LED instantly provided a warm and bright light, meeting its claim of 940 lumens. That's

about 100 lumens brighter than its sibling in our Ratings, making the L Prize the brightest 60-watt replacement LED we've seen. The bulb's Color Rendering Index (CRI) is around 93, also much higher than others we've tested. So it's much better at showing the true colors of furnishings.

So far, so good. We'll put the L Prize bulb through all our tests and report back. At \$50 it would take about seven years to pay for itself compared with an incandescent and save about \$140 over its life.

Then it comes down to choosing the right bulb for the task. Remember, you won't save by switching from CFLs to LEDs until LED prices drop. Here's what else our testing and survey revealed:

Some LEDs earn near-perfect scores.

The EcoSmart A19 and Philips AmbientLED, which replace 60-watt bulbs; the Philips AmbientLED that replaces a 75-watt bulb; and the GE PAR38 20W floodlight, a \$60 replacement for a 75-watt bulb, are bright, dimmable, mimic the color of an incandescent or halogen bulb, and shine light where you need it.

But not all LEDs are good. Our tests also found dim bulbs, ghostly light color, and LEDs that can't cast light in all directions. The MiracleLED, \$20, for example, wasn't bright enough to replace a 40-watt bulb, but it's sold as a 60-watt replacement, and it gives off a sickly bluish-white light. The GeoBulb 3, \$25, wasn't much brighter. It was also lousy at shining light where you need it, as were LG's LED replacements for 60- and 40-watt incandescents. Stick to our LED recommendations or buy Energy Star qualified LEDs, which must meet stringent standards that are independently verified.

Changing bulbs. About 90 percent of Americans have used LEDs or CFLs, with most choosing CFLs, according to a June survey conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. Almost 75 percent currently use CFLs and 26 percent use LEDs. Just 7 percent have switched back to using only incandescent bulbs. Potential energy-cost savings and longer bulb life are the top reasons people bought efficient bulbs, followed by a desire to help the environment.



HOW WE TEST LIGHTBULBS

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



Overview

These CFLs are Energy Star qualified. Some LEDs are too, but check EnergyStar.gov for updates. The Energy Star matters if you're looking for utility rebates.

- ✓ **CR Best Buy** These bulbs offer the best combination of price and performance.
- ✓ **Recommended** All are top performers.

BEST FOR LAMPS & CEILING FIXTURES

- A1 EcoSmart** LED \$26
- A2 Philips** LED \$25
- A3 GE** CFL \$10
- A4 EcoSmart** CFL \$1.25 **CR Best Buy**
- A5 Feit** CFL \$2.50
- C1 Philips** LED \$40
- D1 Utilitech** CFL \$2.50
- D2 Feit** CFL \$2
- D4 Philips** Halogen \$5.50

A1, A2, A3, A4, and **A5** replace 60-watt incandescents. **A1** and **A2** are bright,

dimable, and last longer than CFLs. **A1** produces a white light; **A2**, a warmer, yellow light. **A3's** protective coating will contain the pieces and mercury if the bulb breaks. **A4** brightens the fastest of these CFLs, and **A5** is the brightest but shouldn't be used in a fixture that's frequently turned on and off. **C1** replaces a 75-watt bulb and earned a near-perfect score. **D1** and **D2** replace a 100-watt bulb, though **D2** takes longer to brighten. **D4** is brighter and dimable but won't last as long or save as much energy as a CFL.

BEST FOR RECESSED LIGHTS

- E1 EcoSmart** LED \$25
- E2 GE** CFL \$12
- E3 Feit** CFL \$2.25 **CR Best Buy**

These replace 65-watt incandescent bulbs and work well in fixtures that are frequently turned on and off. All but **E3** are dimable. **E1**, an LED, fits in a 6-inch can. Colors appear more accurately under its warm light. But

installation is harder than screwing in a bulb. **E2** is the brightest, but like **E4**, also a CFL, it takes more than 3 minutes to fully brighten.

BEST FOR OUTDOOR LIGHTS

- F1 GE** LED \$60
- F2 LG** LED \$43
- F3 EcoSmart** LED \$37
- F4 Sylvania** CFL \$18
- G1 TCP** LED \$40
- G3 Utilitech** CFL \$7.50

Among 75-watt replacements, **F1** is the brightest. **F2** and **F3** are supposed to last twice as long. All three brighten instantly, even in cold temperatures. **F1** and **F2** work with an electronic timer, photocell, and motion sensor. **F4** offers the quickest payback but takes long to brighten. **G1** replaces 90-watt incandescent bulbs and works with an electronic timer, photocell, and motion sensor. **G3**, a CFL, is brighter but takes more than 7 minutes to fully warm up.

continued

Ratings Lightbulbs

All tested models In performance order, within types.



Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Bulb type	Claimed life (hr.)	Test results					Features						
							Brightness	Rapid on/off testing	Warm-up time	Life testing	Light distribution	Brightness (lumens after 3,000 hr.)	Color temperature (kelvins after 3,000 hr.)	Payback time (yr.) vs. incandescent	Dimmable	Works in fully enclosed fixture	Works with electronic timer	Works outdoors, not exposed to moisture
				0100														
				P F G V E														

A 60-WATT REPLACEMENTS GENERAL PURPOSE Most have a Color Rendering Index (CRI) between 81 and 83. CFLs are spiral unless noted.

✓	1	EcoSmart A19 60W Bright White 400674 Dimmable (Home Depot) 1 2	\$26.00	99	LED	25,000	• • • • •	817	3247	3.9	• • •
✓	2	Philips AmbientLED 12.5W 12E26A60 60W 409904	25.00	98	LED	25,000	• • • • •	848	2709	3.8	• •
✓	3	GE Energy Smart SAF-T-GARD 60W 78961	10.00	85	CFL	8,000	• • • • •	857	2737	1.5	• •
✓	4	EcoSmart 60 Watt Soft White 423-599 E55M8144 (Home Depot)	1.25	84	CFL	10,000	• • • • •	775	2664	0.1	• •
✓	5	Feit Electric Ecobulb Plus 60W ESL13T4/ECO 1 2	2.50	81	CFL	10,000	• • • • •	865	2692	0.3	• • •
	6	Utilitech 800 Series A19 60W 0352216 (Lowe's) 1 2	25.00	74	LED	25,000	• • • • •	741	3005	3.7	• • •
	7	Philips Energy Saver 60W Soft White Mini 227827	2.00	73	CFL	12,000	• • • • •	766	2694	0.2	• •
	8	GE Energy Smart Soft White 60W FLE13HT3/35W 97689	1.70	70	CFL	10,000	• • • • •	689	2753	0.2	• •
	9	Sylvania Soft White Micro-Mini 60W CF13EL 26959 2	3.00	69	CFL	12,000	• • • • •	710	2647	0.4	• •
	10	GE Mini Spiral 13-60W Soft White 85383	5.00	66	CFL	12,000	• • • • •	749	2708	0.7	• •
	11	EcoSmart 60 Watt Soft White A19 E55A8142 967034 (Home Depot) 3	2.50	65	CFL	8,000	• • • • •	683	2692	0.3	• •
	12	GE Energy Smart Soft White 74437 3	5.00	61	CFL	8,000	• • • • •	756	2660	0.7	• •
	13	LG A19 12.5 60W 36514 1 2	17.00	61	LED	30,000	• • • • •	737	2714	2.5	• • •
	14	ArmorLite Safety ECO CFL Safety Coating 3	8.00	59	CFL	10,000	• • • • •	703	2699	1	• •
	15	Utilitech Soft White 60W LBP16AM2 0082382 (Lowe's) 3	4.00	57	CFL	8,000	• • • • •	731	2672	0.6	• •
	16	Utilitech Soft White Mini 13W-60W 0252003 L13T6/27K (Lowe's)	1.50	56	CFL	8,000	• • • • •	635	2682	0.2	• •
	17	MiracleLED Un-Edison 60W Equivalent Frost 1 2	20.00	48	LED	30,000	• • • • •	359	6852	3.2	• • •
	18	EcoSmart Shatter Resistant 60W Craft Light E55M814FSSS (Home Depot) 4	6.00	46	CFL	10,000	• • • • •	595	4727	0.9	• •

B 40- TO 50-WATT REPLACEMENTS GENERAL PURPOSE Most have a CRI between 81 and 85.

✓	1	GE Energy Smart 40W LED9A19/830/CD 62180	30.00	97	LED	25,000	• • • • •	468	3113	6	• •
	2	LG A19 7.5 40W 1 2	10.00	67	LED	29,000	• • • • •	434	3061	2.0	• •
	3	EcoSmart A 19 LED Bright White 40W ECS 19WW 120 864680 (Home Depot)	10.00	54	LED	50,000	• • • • •	387	3054	2.2	• •
	4	GeoBulb 3 A19 Soft White LED 5	25.00	43	LED	50,000	• • • • •	444	3725	4.1	• •

Ratings continued on next page.

Ratings Lightbulbs

All tested models In performance order, within types.



C1 Philips



D1 Utilitech



E3 Feit



F1 GE



Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Bulb type	Claimed life (hr.)	Brightness	Rapid on/off testing	Warm-up time	Life testing	Light distribution	Brightness (lumens after 3,000 hr.)	Color temperature (kelvins after 3,000 hr.)	Payback time (yr.) vs. incandescent	Dimmable	Works in fully enclosed fixture	Works with electronic timer	Works outdoors, not exposed to moisture
				0														
				100														
				P F G V E														

C 75-WATT REPLACEMENTS GENERAL PURPOSE Most have a CRI between 81 and 82.

✓	1	Philips AmbientLED 17W 75W A21 Soft White 418400	\$40.00	99	LED	25,000	●	●	●	●	●	1196	2694	4.5	●	●	●	●
	2	GE Energy Smart 75W New Hybrid Halogen-CFL PLGA2125W20HBF 63506	5.50	59	Hybrid	8,000	●	●	●	●	●	NA	1011	2811	0.5	●	●	●

D 100-WATT REPLACEMENTS GENERAL PURPOSE Most have a CRI between 79 and 82. CFLs are spiral.

✓	1	Utilitech 100W Soft White CFL UHS236B 0252475 (Lowe's)	2.50	68	CFL	10,000	○	●	●	●	●	NA	1378	2724	0	●	●	●
✓	2	Feit Electric Ecobulb Plus 100W BPESL23TM/ECO 87533	2.00	68	CFL	10,000	●	●	○	●	●	NA	1413	2687	0	●	●	●
✓	3	EcoSmart 100W Soft White CFL ES5M8234 EDX023 475110 (Home Depot)	1.50	63	CFL	10,000	○	●	●	●	●	NA	1281	2771	0	●	●	●
✓	4	Philips Energy Saver 100W T60 Halogena 20969 816952 Dimmable ① ② ④	5.50	61	Hlgn	3,000	●	●	●	○	●	NA	1790	2854	0.9	●	●	●
	5	GE Energy Smart 100W 50% longer life 73864	3.20	57	CFL	12,000	○	○	●	●	●	NA	1333	2904	0.1	●	●	●
	6	MaxLite Home Comfort Series MicroMax Spiral HCS23WW	2.00	54	CFL	10,000	○	●	○	●	●	NA	1298	2607	0	●	●	●
	7	Sylvania Soft White Halogen 100W Dimmable 72A17/SS/HAL/SW/4 50006 ① ② ④	1.75	54	Hlgn	1,000	●	●	●	○	●	NA	1541	2999	0	●	●	●

E 65-WATT REPLACEMENTS FLOOD/REFLECTOR Commonly used in recessed or track lights. Most have a CRI between 81 and 84.

✓	1	EcoSmart 6-in. 9.5-Watt (65W) LED Downlight(E) ECO 575L (Home Depot)	25.00	87	LED	35,000	●	●	●	●	●	583	2725	2.2	●	●	●	●
✓	2	GE Energy Smart 65W R30 Floodlight Dimmable 21710	12.00	79	CFL	6,000	●	●	●	●	●	817	2730	1.4	●	●	●	●
✓	3	Feit Electric Ecobulb Plus Soft White R30 65W Rohs BPESL15BR ① ②	2.25	75	CFL	8,000	●	●	●	●	●	662	2738	0	●	●	●	●
✓	4	Sylvania R30 Soft White 65W Indoor/Outdoor 29998 ②	17.00	73	CFL	8,000	●	●	●	●	●	634	2684	1.1	●	●	●	●
✓	5	Utilitech R30 Reflector Soft White 65W 022419 (Lowe's)	5.00	72	CFL	8,000	●	○	●	●	●	683	2665	0.3	●	●	●	●
	6	EcoSmart R30 Soft White 65W Dimmable Reflector Flood 530236 (Home Depot)	10.00	67	CFL	8,000	●	●	●	●	●	609	2729	1.1	●	●	●	●
	7	Philips Energy Saver R30 Dimmable Reflector Flood 150417 EL/A	12.00	55	CFL	8,000	○	●	●	●	●	526	2674	1	●	●	●	●

F 60- TO 75-WATT PAR38 REPLACEMENTS FLOOD/REFLECTOR Mostly used in accent or security lights. Most have a CRI between 82 and 84.

✓	1	GE PAR38 20W 61927 ① ②	60.00	98	LED	25,000	●	NA	●	●	●	1123	3056	4.1	●	●	●	●
✓	2	LG PAR38 E26 36516 ① ②	43.00	89	LED	50,000	●	NA	●	●	●	992	3106	3	●	●	●	●
✓	3	EcoSmart PAR38 ECS 38 Bright 75W 866194 Dimmable LED (Home Depot)	37.00	78	LED	50,000	●	NA	●	●	●	924	3106	3.4	●	●	●	●
✓	4	Sylvania 75W Indoor/Outdoor CF23EL/PAR38/BL1 29625 ②	18.00	72	CFL	8,000	●	NA	●	●	●	1029	2713	1.8	●	●	●	●
	5	Sylvania LED 18W PAR 38 Flood Dimmable 78495	55.00	67	LED	50,000	○	NA	●	●	●	876	3086	5.1	●	●	●	●

G 90- TO 110-WATT PAR38 REPLACEMENTS FLOOD/REFLECTOR Mostly used in accent or security lights. Most have a CRI between 82 and 84.

✓	1	TCP 17W PAR38 Flood LED17E26P3830KFL ① ②	40.00	72	LED	50,000	○	NA	●	●	●	1071	3074	3.0	●	●	●	●
✓	2	EcoSmart PAR38 110W 407414 Daylight (Home Depot) ① ② ⑤	40.00	69	LED	25,000	●	NA	●	●	●	1338	5083	2.4	●	●	●	●
✓	3	Utilitech Soft White PAR38 90W Outdoor Flood 075232 60064 (Lowe's)	7.50	68	CFL	8,000	●	NA	●	●	○	1223	2696	0.3	●	●	●	●
	4	Philips Energy Saver Reflector Flood PAR38 90W 22791 642687	8.00	57	CFL	10,000	●	NA	●	●	●	1125	2627	0.5	●	●	●	●
	5	EcoSmart Soft White PAR38 90W ES5P8232 159979 (Home Depot)	5.00	34	CFL	8,000	●	NA	●	●	●	965	2691	0.1	●	●	●	●

H 40- TO 60-WATT REPLACEMENTS PORCH/POST Used in outdoor fixtures. Most have a CRI between 83 and 84.

✓	1	Philips Soft White 60W Postlight with Built-in Sensor 405852 ①	10.00	76	CFL	8,000	●	NA	●	●	●	818	2715	1.5	●	●	●	●
✓	2	GE Energy Smart 40W Postlight 85384	8.00	76	CFL	10,000	●	NA	●	●	●	671	2474	2.0	●	●	●	●

① Works with photocell. ② Works with motion sensor. ③ Covered CFL. ④ Color Rendering Index (CRI) is much higher than others in group. ⑤ CRI is much lower than others in group.

Guide to the Ratings

Overall score combines life and rapid on/off testing, brightness after 3,000 hours of use, efficiency, and warm-up time. **Brightness** is measured after life testing and was compared with a comparable incandescent bulb. **Rapid on/off testing** reflects the average number of 2-minute-on and 2-minute-off cycles each bulb survived. **Warm-up time** is how long the bulb took to reach near-full brightness. **Life testing**

measures how many bulbs survived 3-hour-on and 20-minute-off cycles after being on for 3,000 hours. **Brightness** and **color temperature** are the averages of 10 bulb samples after life testing. **Payback time** is when the bulbs will start saving you money compared with a similar incandescent, assuming the bulb is on 3 hours a day; models with zero save money immediately. **Price** is approximate retail per bulb.

Five ways to better lighting

Stores are making buying energy-saving bulbs easier. Displays use lit bulbs to show differences in light color. Packaging has helpful information, including a Lighting Facts label.



But none of that is much help with the biggest beef people have with CFLs and LEDs: 23 percent of those surveyed said the bulbs cost too much. Even at current prices, you'll still save money over time. And rebates of \$10 to \$25 per bulb are often available from manufacturers and utilities.

Here are five other common bulb complaints from our survey, and advice from our experts on how to avoid them.

PROBLEM Bulb isn't bright enough.

SOLUTION Get more lumens. The higher the number, the brighter the bulb. Look for 800 or more when replacing a 60-watt incandescent, 1,100 or more for a 75-watt replacement, and at least 1,600 lumens for a 100-watt bulb. Dark shades absorb light, so you might need a brighter bulb. For floodlights, the lumens should be at least 10 times the watts of the bulb you're replacing.

PROBLEM Bulb burns out too quickly.

SOLUTION Contact the manufacturer or return the bulb to the retailer. You may need the receipt, model number, and UPC, so keep them in the box. CFLs that are Energy Star qualified have a warranty of at least two years, and LEDs, three or longer. But using a bulb in a fixture that it's not designed for can shorten its life, so check the package.

PROBLEM Light is the wrong color.

SOLUTION Light color is measured in kelvin. The higher the kelvin (K) number, the cooler, or bluer, the light appears. You want a bulb marked 2700 K or so if you like an incandescent's warm yellow light. At 3000 K the light is whiter, like a halogen bulb. Expect cool, bright white at 3500 K to 4100 K, and at 5000 K to 6500 K, bluer light.

PROBLEM Fabric colors look off.

SOLUTION The higher the Color Rendering Index, the truer colors look. A CRI of at least 80 is suggested for interior bulbs. Most of the LEDs and CFLs we tested are in the low- to mid-80s. Those with higher or lower CRIs are footnoted in the Ratings.

PROBLEM Bulb is an odd shape.

SOLUTION Bring the bulb you're replacing with you to compare it with the CFL or LED you're considering.



CLEAR FAVORITES Some thermostats were a snap to set, even without reading the manual.

Thermostats

Saving energy can be easy with the right model

PROGRAMMABLE thermostats can trim about \$180 a year from your energy bills by automatically reducing heating and cooling needs when you're away or asleep. Sounds simple. Though some of the 30 models we tested were easy to set and use, others were so complicated that you might give up in frustration and end up spending more, not less.

That's typically what was happening across the country, which is why you won't find the Energy Star on any thermostats. The program stopped certifying them in 2009 mostly because they were hard to use. New standards that factor in ease of use are being developed.

But you don't have to wait. Our testers rated ease of use based on how simple each thermostat was to set up and make routine adjustments to before reading the manual and then, if needed, with the manual. Most thermostats can keep rooms close to the chosen temperature, and all the thermostats in the Ratings have basic preprogrammed settings. Here's what else our testing found:

Displays and prompts improve. The top three models have colorful interactive touch-screen displays that were especially easy to use and see. You can zip through the prompts on the top-rated Venstar ColorTouch, \$170. The Honeywell Prestige \$250, and the Ecobee, \$300, let you program them using prompts or by answering

questions about your daily habits. And if you get stuck at work, you can adjust the Ecobee's settings, using your computer or smart phone, to turn the heat on later.

Smarter isn't always better. The Nest, \$250, is a learning thermostat. It continually senses whether you're home and automatically adjusts its program based on changes you made the first week. From then on, it takes in your preferences and schedules and continually readjusts. It's also improving: Nest recently alerted customers of software updates done automatically via Wi-Fi. You can program the Nest yourself, but our panelists found the round, ultra-sleek model wasn't as intuitive as the top-rated thermostats. Like the Ecobee, you can remotely adjust the settings on the Nest using your computer or smart phone. You can also set the Nest to send you e-mail updates.

Some models mystify testers. You have to push a combination of buttons and hold them for several seconds to program the bottom-rated Venstar Wireless Remote, \$105. But there's no indication that you're pushing the right buttons unless you use

DID YOU KNOW?

The best place to put a thermostat is on an interior wall that's away from vents and other sources of heat and drafts that could distort temperature readings.

the manual. The buttons and onscreen prompts on the Filtrete 3M-22, \$45, may leave you wondering what to do next. Both thermostats also have tiny screens that are relatively hard to read.

How to choose

Almost all of the tested models work with common heating and cooling systems, but check the box for exceptions. Then:

Look at your lifestyle. Most let you program different settings for each day. If you're on a regular routine, consider a thermostat that offers one schedule for weekdays and one or two for weekends. We've footnoted those in our Ratings.

Think about installation. Most attach to heating and cooling systems with a few low-voltage wires, so you can replace your old one in about an hour. If it's more than a simple replacement, call a pro.

Overview

These are easy to use, so you won't need the manual every time you make changes. And the clarity of the screen displays makes them a cinch to see, even at night.

✓ **CR Best Buy** These models offer the best combination of price and performance.

✓ **Recommended** All are top performers.

MOST INTUITIVE

- 1 **Venstar** \$170
- 2 **Honeywell** \$250
- 3 **Ecobee** \$300

All of these models have sharp, interactive displays with clear, easy-to-follow programming prompts. In addition to prompts, **2** offers the option of answering questions about your preferences to program settings. **3** has built-in Wi-Fi so that you can adjust the program remotely using your computer, tablet, or smart phone.

BEST FOR TECHIES

- 6 **Nest** \$250

If you love gadgets and interacting with your electronics, **6** is for you. It can program itself based on changes you make the first week. It readjusts itself and contacts you via built-in Wi-Fi. The latter lets you view conditions and control the thermostat via your computer, tablet, or smart phone.

BEST LOW-COST OPTIONS

- 5 **Lux** \$70 **CR Best Buy**
- 7 **Honeywell** \$80

Both trade lower cost for no-frills operation. **5** lets you program different settings for each day of the week using a touch screen. **7** has buttons and offers one program for weekdays and another for weekends.



1 Venstar



2 Honeywell



3 Ecobee



5 Lux

Ratings Thermostats

All tested models In performance order.

● Excellent
 ○ Very good
 ○ Good
 ○ Fair
 ● Poor

✓ CR Best Buy
 ✓ Recommended

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Test results	Features
		Similar models, in small type, are comparable to tested model.			Ease of use	Display clarity
					Easy to program time/temperature	Easy to set time/date
					Interactive display	Can be programmed remotely
						Warranty (yr.)

SEVEN-DAY MODELS unless noted. These let you program a different schedule every day.

✓	1	Venstar ColorTouch Series T5800 [1]	\$170	96	●	●	●	●	●	1
✓	2	Honeywell Prestige HD YTHX9321R [1]	250	95	●	●	●	●	●	5
✓	3	Ecobee EB-STAT-02	300	94	●	●	●	●	●	3
✓	4	Aprilaire Communicating Touchscreen 8800	300	78	●	○	●	●	●	5
✓	5	Lux TX9600TS Smart Temp LTX9600TS (Lowe's), ATX9600TS (Ace)	70	75	○	○	●	●	●	3
✓	6	Nest Learning Thermostat	250	74	○	●	●	●	●	5
✓	7	Honeywell FocusPRO 6000 TH6110D [2]	80	74	○	○	●	●	●	5
✓	8	Robert Shaw 9801i2	125	73	○	○	●	●	●	5
	9	Honeywell RTH7500D RTH7600D	90	70	○	○	●	●	●	1
	10	Emerson Blue Easy Reader 1F95EZ-0671	100	70	○	●	●	●	●	5
	11	Honeywell Z-Wave TH8320ZW	160	69	○	○	●	●	●	5
	12	Radio Thermostat CT80 [1]	275	68	○	○	●	●	●	5
	13	Honeywell Touchscreen RTH8500D	130	68	○	○	●	●	●	1
	14	Lennox ComfortSense 7000 Series	230	68	○	○	●	●	●	1
	15	Honeywell RTH6350D RTH6450D [2]	50	68	○	○	●	●	●	1
	16	Evolve Z-Wave T-100R	130	67	○	○	●	●	●	1
	17	Lux ATX9000TS (Ace) TX9000TS, LTX9000TS (Lowe's)	65	66	○	○	●	●	●	1
	18	Lux TX1500U LTX1500U (Lowe's), ATX 1500U (Ace) [2]	40	60	○	○	●	●	●	3
	19	Hunter 44272 [2]	40	57	○	○	●	●	●	1
	20	Venstar T-1050 [2]	60	56	○	○	●	●	●	1
	21	Jackson Systems Wireless Comfort WCT-32	170	53	○	○	●	●	●	5
	22	Hunter 44377	50	52	○	○	●	●	●	1
	23	Hunter 44132 [2]	30	48	○	○	●	●	●	1
	24	Filtrete 3M-50 3M-30	110	46	○	○	●	●	●	5
	25	ICM Controls SimpleComfort PRO SC5813	110	44	○	○	●	●	●	5
	26	Emerson Big Blue 1F95-1277	165	42	○	○	●	●	●	5
	27	Jackson Systems T-32-P	110	40	○	○	●	●	●	5
	28	Hunter 44905	80	37	○	○	●	●	●	1
	29	Filtrete 3M-22	45	35	○	○	●	●	●	5
	30	Venstar Wireless Remote T1100RF	105	27	○	○	●	●	●	1

[1] Needs additional Wi-Fi module to program thermostat remotely. [2] One schedule for weekdays; one or two for weekends.

Guide to the Ratings

Overall score is based on programming ease and display clarity. **Ease of use** denotes ease of setup and making adjustments and changes to setback programs, including overrides. **Display clarity** includes clarity and visibility of information. Models with built-in Wi-Fi can be programmed remotely with a computer or smart phone. Models that need Wi-Fi modules are footnoted. **Price** is approximate retail.

Reports

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Home generators 40

Lab tests

Google takes on Apple iPad with Nexus 7

Google's new tablet is a worthy competitor to Apple's latest iPad (not included in this group of smaller tablets). The Nexus 7's 7-inch size makes it more portable than the 9.7-inch iPad, and it's among the lightest tablets, at 0.7 pounds. The \$250 price for the 16-gigabyte version (**B2** in our Ratings) makes it a CR Best Buy. An 8GB model costs \$200.

The Nexus 7 runs on Android 4.1, Jelly Bean, the latest version of Google's operating system. The new Google Now feature lets you search by using voice commands and has "cards" that automatically pop up for weather, nearby places, traffic, and other information, depending on where you are, what you searched for, and what you're doing.

The display was very good, with 1280x800 resolution, high for a tablet this size. Colors looked natural, and the viewing angle was quite wide in portrait and landscape mode. There was noticeably less glare than on many tablets, and the screen was relatively easy to read in sunlight.

Other notable features include a speedy quad-core processor. We really liked the Nexus 7's very smooth swiping capability, without delays or jerkiness. Its 9.5 hours of battery life make it the longest-lasting among Wi-Fi-only 7- to 8-inch tablets. The Nexus lacks a camera, though it has a webcam for video chats.

Still, the iPad has an excellent display and is better for reading magazines. It has longer battery life than the Nexus 7, at 11.5 hours, and Apple's App Store has superior apps.

■ DID YOU KNOW?

Android tablets have had an advantage over the Apple iPad because you could play Flash videos on them. But Adobe says its Flash Player will not be compatible with devices that use Android 4.1 or greater. Developers have been moving to a new technology, HTML 5, for some time. But Flash could still be around for a while.



B2 Google Nexus



Apple iPad
Not in Ratings; shown for size comparison.

Ratings 7- to 8-inch tablets

Recommended models only From 23 tested.

☒ CR Best Buy
☒ Recommended

● Excellent
● Very good
○ Good
○ Fair
● Poor

	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Test results	Features & specs
Recommendation	Rank			Screen size (in.) Ease of use Portability Display Versatility Touch response Battery life (hr.) Weight (lb.)	Storage options (GB) Memory-card reader
			0 100 P F G V E		

A 3G/4G PLUS WI-FI All have camera, webcam, and GPS.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.7 (Wi-Fi, 4G, 16GB)	\$700	80	7.7	●	●	●	●	●	8.3	0.8	16	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Pantech Element (Wi-Fi, 4G, 16GB)	450	76	8.0	●	●	●	●	●	10.2	1.0	16	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.0 Plus (Wi-Fi, 4G, 16GB)	500	74	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	6.2	0.8	16	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	T-Mobile SpringBoard (Wi-Fi, 4G, 16GB)	430	73	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	6.1	0.9	16	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	Motorola Droid Xyboard 8.2 (Wi-Fi, 4G, 16GB)	600	73	8.2	●	●	●	●	●	5.2	0.9	16, 32	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	ZTE Optik (Wi-Fi, 3G, 16GB)	350	72	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	6.6	0.9	16	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	Sony Tablet P (Wi-Fi, 4G, 4GB)	550	67	7.0	●	○	●	○	●	6.3	0.8	4	●

B WI-FI ONLY All have camera, webcam, and GPS except as noted.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Toshiba Excite 7.7 (Wi-Fi, 16GB)	500	80	7.7	●	●	●	●	●	9.3	0.7	16	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Google Nexus 7 (Wi-Fi, 16GB) ¹	250	80	7.0	●	●	●	○	●	9.5	0.7	8, 16	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Samsung Galaxy Tab 2 (7.0) (Wi-Fi, 8GB)	250	77	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	8.3	0.8	8	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4	Samsung Galaxy Tab 7.0 Plus (Wi-Fi, 16GB)	350	74	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	6.5	0.8	16, 32	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5	BlackBerry PlayBook (Wi-Fi, 16GB)	200	71	7.0	●	●	●	●	●	7.6	1.0	16, 32, 64	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	Toshiba Thrive 7" (Wi-Fi, 16GB)	380	71	7.0	●	○	●	●	●	5.0	0.8	16, 32	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	7	Amazon Kindle Fire (Wi-Fi, 8GB) ²	200	67	7.0	●	●	●	○	●	6.3	0.9	8	●
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	8	Barnes & Noble Nook Tablet (Wi-Fi, 16GB) ²	250	65	7.0	●	●	●	○	●	6.2	0.9	8, 16	●

¹ Has no camera. ² Has no camera, webcam, or GPS.



A5 Homelite



C6 Weed Eater



D2 Husqvarna



E1 Little Wonder

Best leaf blowers

TIRED OF RAKING? You'll find gas leaf blowers that vacuum with the flick of a switch plus a new electric that frees you from a cord. But our tests of 29 models show that the best choices put power before pizzazz.

For small properties. Plug-in blowers save weight, noise, and maintenance over gas models. The **A5 Homelite**, a CR Best Buy, swept leaves almost as well as the top Toros for less, though it was a notch down in loosening and vacuuming.

For added mobility. Gas-powered handheld blowers pack power without the cord. The **C6 Weed Eater**, a CR Best Buy, gives lots of performance for the price. But top-scoring models such as the **C1 Echo** started with fewer pulls and had less vibration.

For larger properties. Backpack blowers shift most of the weight from your arms to your shoulders. At \$250, the new **D4 Craftsman** might seem like a bargain. But paying a little more for the **D2 Husqvarna** buys a lot more oomph. The **E1 Little Wonder**, \$800, is a wheeled blower with roughly twice the power of a backpack; consider it for really big jobs if you can handle pushing its 117-pound weight.

Whichever blower you consider, be sure it meets any local noise regulations; models that scored Good or better in our noise tests at 50 feet should meet most.

Three that were blown away

Blowers that can vacuum usually do so through a separate tube that you must attach and remove. The **A12 Worx** and **A13 Troy-Bilt** let you skip that step by blowing and vacuuming with their twin nozzles, though both were subpar at clearing debris. The **B1 Stihl** is among the first electrics that trade a cord for a battery. But your \$500 buys relatively modest performance and roughly 7 minutes of run time before the battery needs recharging.

Ratings

All tested models In performance order, within types.

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Weight (lb.)	Overall score	Test results					
		Similar models, in small type, are comparable to tested model.		0 100 P I F G V G I E		Sweeping	Loosening	Vacuuming	Handling and ease	Noise at 50 ft.	Noise at ear

● Excellent
● Very good
○ Good
○ Fair
● Poor

✓ CR Best Buy
✓ Recommended

A CORDED-ELECTRIC HANDHELD The best blend performance and value for small yards.

✓	1	Toro Ultra Blower Vac 51599	\$ 70	8	79	●	●	●	●	●	●
✓	2	Toro Super Blower Vac 51592	60	8	78	●	●	●	●	●	●
✓	3	Stihl BGE 61	100	7	75	●	●	NA	●	●	○
✓	4	Toro Rake and Vac 51574	50	7	74	●	○	●	●	●	●
✓	5	Homelite UT42120	43	6	71	●	○	●	●	○	●
	6	Black & Decker LH5000	85	8	69	●	○	●	●	●	●
	7	Craftsman 74828	80	8	68	●	○	●	●	●	●
	8	Troy-Bilt TB195	60	7	64	●	●	○	●	●	●
	9	Weed Eater WEB160	35	5	54	○	●	NA	●	●	●
	10	Homelite UT42100	33	5	53	○	○	NA	●	●	●
	11	Black & Decker BV2500	60	9	50	●	○	●	●	●	●
	12	Worx WG500	90	8	40	●	●	●	●	○	●
	13	Troy-Bilt TB125QS	85	9	36	●	●	○	○	●	○

B CORDLESS-ELECTRIC HANDHELD This adds mobility at a much higher price.

	1	Stihl BGA85	500	10	69	●	○	NA	●	●	○
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C GASOLINE HANDHELD The best are more powerful than electrics but cost more.

✓	1	Echo PB-250	170	10	80	●	●	NA	●	●	●
✓	2	Husqvarna 125BVx	190	10	80	●	●	●	●	○	●
✓	3	Stihl BG55	150	9	79	●	●	NA	●	○	●
✓	4	Hitachi RB24EAP	150	9	75	●	●	NA	○	●	●
✓	5	Troy-Bilt TB4HB EC*	180	11	73	●	●	NA	○	●	●
✓	6	Weed Eater VS2000BV Craftsman 79470, Poulan Pro BVM200VS	100	10	70	●	○	●	●	●	●
	7	Ryobi RY09053	100	10	66	●	○	○	●	●	●
	8	Weed Eater FB25	90	8	65	●	●	NA	●	○	●
	9	Troy-Bilt TB320BV	135	12	55	●	○	○	○	●	●

D GASOLINE BACKPACK These shift weight off your arms, a plus for larger jobs.

✓	1	Echo PB-500H	330	23	87	●	●	NA	●	○	●
✓	2	Husqvarna 150BT	300	23	86	●	●	NA	●	○	●
✓	3	Stihl BR 380D	360	21	83	●	●	NA	●	○	●
	4	Craftsman 79401*	250	17	72	●	●	NA	○	●	●
	5	Troy-Bilt TB4BP*	230	17	71	●	●	NA	○	●	●

E GASOLINE WHEELED This offers the most blowing power but weighs and costs the most.

✓	1	Little Wonder LB160H*	800	117	87	●	●	NA	○	●	○
---	---	-----------------------	-----	-----	----	---	---	----	---	---	---

*Four-stroke engine; other gas models are two-stroke.

Compact refrigerators: Not so chill



A1 Frigidaire

Mini-fridges go where full-sized models can't, including home offices and some college dorms. But our tests of 19 models found that they don't provide anywhere near the same temperature performance or energy efficiency; some cost almost as much to run as a full-sized top-freezer refrigerator.

Winner's list of one. The A1 Frigidaire, \$220, is the only model that performed well enough in both the fridge and freezer compartments to make our recommended list. Its category-best 3.9 cubic feet of usable capacity is neatly organized around adjustable glass shelves, a crisper drawer and door bins.

Inconsistency a concern. Different temperatures in different parts of the refrigerator affected almost every mini-fridge. On two-door models, performance was uniformly poor in the refrigerator section, and most tall models were erratic in the freezer and fridge. If you plan to keep dairy or mayonnaise products, a refrigerator thermometer is a must to make sure temperatures don't exceed 40° F, the point at which harmful bacteria start to thrive.

Ratings

All tested models In performance order, within types.

☒ Recommended

● Excellent
● Very good
○ Good
● Fair
● Poor

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score	Test results				Features				
		Similar models, in small type, are comparable to tested model.			Refrigerator performance	Freezer performance	Energy efficiency	Noise	Energy cost/yr.	Capacity claimed/measured	Light	Lock	Can dispenser
			0100										
			P F G V E										

A TALL These are up to 36 inches high and have freezers within the refrigerator.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Frigidaire FFPH44M4L[M] BFPH44M4L[] (Best Buy), LFPH44M4L[] (Lowe's)	\$220	65	○	●	●	●	27	4.4/3.9	●	●
	2	Kenmore 9338[2]	145	35	○	●	●	●	34	3.3/2.4	●	●
	3	Emerson CR519B (Target)	150	32	○	●	○	●	30	4.5/3.2	●	●
	4	GE GMR04HAS[CS] GMR04BAN[]	210	26	○	●	●	●	52	4.3/3.4	●	●
	5	Black & Decker BCE46B (Walmart)	145	25	○	●	○	●	28	4.5/3.1	●	●
	6	Danby DCR122BSLDD	250	25	○	●	○	●	38	4.3/3.4	●	●
	7	Frigidaire FFPH25M4L[B] BFPH25M4L[] (Best Buy), LFPH25M4L[] (Lowe's)	160	22	○	●	●	●	37	2.5/1.7	●	●
	8	Daewoo DW-FR-147RV[SS]	160	22	○	●	●	○	52	4.4/3.3	●	●
	9	Haier HNSE045[BB]	160	20	○	●	○	○	40	4.5/3.1	●	●
	10	Igloo FR283I (Walmart)	95	20	○	●	●	○	38	2.8/1.9	●	●
	11	Igloo FR465 (Walmart) FR464 (Walmart)	140	19	○	●	●	○	49	4.6/3.2	●	●
	12	Haier ESRN046[BB]	180	18	○	●	●	○	45	4.6/3.2	●	●

B TWO-DOOR These are up to 36 inches high and have separate freezer doors.

	1	Kenmore 9568[3]	170	39	●	●	○	●	40	3.1/2.6	●	●
	2	Frigidaire LFPH31M6L[M] (Lowe's) FFFPH31M6L[M], BFPH31M6L[M] (Best Buy)	240	38	●	●	●	●	57	3.1/2.4	●	●
	3	Danby DCR326BSL	230	30	●	●	●	●	58	3.1/2.8	●	●
	4	Haier HNDE03V[S]	190	29	●	●	○	○	61	3.3/2.7	●	●

Cubes can be cool. Just looking to chill beverages or keep your packed lunch cold? A cube-style refrigerator (not included in the Ratings) could fit the bill. With 1.2 cubic feet of usable capacity, the **Danby DCR059BLE**, \$100, was tops in our tests, with excellent

refrigerator performance, plus it features a handy can dispenser. It will cost almost \$60 per year to run, though.

Dorm rules vary. Some colleges restrict the use of refrigerators or impose size restrictions, so check before making a purchase.

Samsung Galaxy S III is out of this world

The much-anticipated **Samsung Galaxy S III**, is one of the top-rated smart phones in our latest test. Price is \$200 to \$280 for the 16-gigabyte version; \$250 to \$330 for 32GB. (Prices are based on a two-year contract, including rebates.) Available on AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, and Verizon.

Performance and features. The Galaxy S III excelled in many of our tests, beating all but one other smart phone. Only the Motorola Droid Razr Maxx edged it out in the Verizon group, largely because of its longer battery life. The Galaxy S III stands out for its huge, top-notch display and innovative features. It runs on the fastest (4G) data networks, ensuring quick file downloads and uploads and optimal phone responsiveness.

Display and camera. The 4.8-inch, high-definition (720p) display, which earned an excellent score, performed well in bright light. The rear-facing 8-megapixel camera took very good still images, as good as any we've seen from a phone, including the Apple iPhone 4S. Video quality was good, but the iPhone's was much better. The camera has a very short shutter lag and can take a series of photos in rapid succession while in camera mode. You can also snap a photo while shooting a video.

Smart Stay feature. The front-facing



camera monitors your eyes while you're reading a Web page or other document to prevent the screen from timing out.

Sharing. You can wirelessly beam Web links, contact info, and even photos and videos to other Galaxy S III phones.

Pop-up player. You can minimize a video playing on the screen so that you can perform other tasks, such as browsing the Web and sending e-mail messages.

Bottom line. The Samsung Galaxy S III offers top-notch performance and some of the most innovative features the Android platform has to offer.

**POWERFUL
VALUE** Generac's GP5500 5939, a CR Best Buy at \$670, is one of our top picks.



Generators

Six strong choices keep you powered

BLACKOUTS LIKE the one that crippled the East Coast last June needn't lead to spoiled food and nights by flashlight. Our tests of 14 generators show that you can start powering a houseful of lights and appliances for less than \$700. But as we found, some important components cost extra.

We focused on moderately priced portable and stationary models that deliver 5,000 to 7,000 watts, enough for most needs. Portables cost the least and can be stored in a garage or shed when you don't

need them. Generac's GP5500 5939, a CR Best Buy at \$670, powered refrigerators, well pumps, and other home gear almost as well as the pricier, top-scoring Troy-Bilt.

Stationary models install permanently outside your home and start automatically when needed. And because they run on propane or natural gas instead of gasoline, they offer extended or unlimited run time. Generac was also the value leader in this group; its CorePower 5837, a CR Best Buy at \$1,800, performed capably for far less than the top-rated Kohler we tested.

Buying a generator is just the beginning. Many models don't come with parts that you'd think would be part of the price. And some could let you down when you need them most or put an added load on appliances. Here are the details:

"Batteries not included" applies. Several portables offer electric starting. But the battery required for that feature usually costs an extra \$50. And if you think all portables have wheels, think again: They're a \$150 option on the Yamaha we tested.

Some slipped when demand surged. All of the tested generators met their basic wattage claims. Manufacturers also make higher surge-wattage claims for the extra power needed when fridges, air conditioners, and pumps cycle on. Subpar surge wattage lowered the power-delivery scores for the All Power APG3560, Gentron GG3203, and Briggs & Stratton 30468.

Two could overheat appliances. Our power-quality test judges the ability to deliver the 120 volts that home circuits usually need. Most met that challenge. The Generac XG7000E 5798 was more than 10 volts shy under heavy load. Voltage from the stationary Briggs & Stratton EmPower 040301 was also low—and slightly uneven. Both conditions make motorized appliances and some electronics run hotter.

One model came with glitches. Two samples of the portable ETQ PG60B12 started and idled without delivering power. We called the company and found that some left the factory improperly adjusted. A wrench and screwdriver got them working, though performance was just so-so.

How to choose

Decide what you really need to power. If that includes a central air conditioner or

Wattage ranges: How much machine do you need?

How much generator should you buy? Here's what different sizes can power. Pick a model with a wattage at least equal to the total for what you're powering. Manufacturers also suggest totaling the higher surge watts some appliances draw when they cycle on. Models that scored well for power delivery were up to that surge; for untested models, we suggest simply focusing on running watts.

▶ Small portable, 3,000 to 4,000 watts

What it powers The basics, including items such as:

- Refrigerator (600 watts)
- Microwave (1,500 watts)
- Sump pump (600 watts)
- Several lights (400 watts)
- TV (200 watts)

Price range \$400 to \$800 for most; more for inverter models.

▶ Midsize portable and small stationary, 5,000 to 8,500 watts

What it powers Same as small models, plus:

- Portable heater (1,300 watts)
- Computer (250 watts)
- Heating system (500 watts)
- Second pump (600 watts)
- More lights (400 watts)

Price range \$500 to \$1,000 for portables; twice that for stationary.

▶ Large portable, 10,000 watts

What it powers Adds choice of:

- Small water heater (3,000 watts)
- Central air conditioner (5,000 watts)
- Electric range (5,000 watts)

Price range \$2,000 to \$3,000.

▶ Large stationary, 10,000 to 15,000 watts

What it powers

Same as large portable models, plus:

- Clothes washer (1,200 watts)
- Electric dryer (5,000 watts)

Price range \$5,000 to \$10,000 or more, plus installation.

an electric dryer or range oven, you'll need a larger generator than the ones we tested. Here's what else to keep in mind:

Count on a transfer switch. It costs about \$500 to \$900 installed and connects a portable generator to your home's circuit box as with a stationary model. In addition to eliminating the risk and hassle of extension cords, the switch protects the generator and appliances from damage when grid power returns and keeps the generator from endangering technicians working on the power lines.

Think about the fuel. Most portables use roughly 8 to 22 gallons of gasoline a day, compared with four to eight 20-pound

tanks of propane for portable models. (A 250-gallon tank for stationary units can run 8 to 15 days.) Buying and storing lots of fuel before a storm can also be unwieldy, though you can pour unused gasoline into your car's gas tank.

Look for smart features. All but the portable Troy-Bilt 6000 and Briggs & Stratton turn themselves off when engine oil is low. And the fuel shutoff on all tested gasoline models lets you run the engine dry to draw gas out of the fuel system to keep it from fouling parts if it degrades during storage.

Play it safe. Minimize carbon-monoxide risks: Run generators outside—as far from the house as possible and never indoors.



A1 Troy-Bilt



B2 Generac

Ratings

All tested models In performance order, within types.

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

Recommendation	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Specs			Overall score	Test results			Features				
				Claimed output (watts)					Power delivery	Power quality	Noise	Ease of use	Fuel shutoff	Oil shutoff	Electric start
				Weight with fuel (lb.)											
				Run time (hr.)											
				0100			P F G V E								

A PORTABLE All run on gasoline unless footnoted and can be stored away when they aren't needed.

1	Troy-Bilt XP7000 30477	\$ 900	7,000	270	15	72	●	○	○	○	●	●
2	Generac GP5500 5939	670	5,500	212	11	67	●	○	○	○	●	●
3	Troy-Bilt 6000 30475	700	6,000	204	13	65	●	○	○	○	●	●
4	Honda EM6500SX	2,800	5,500	298	9	64	●	○	○	○	●	●
5	Yamaha EF6600DEM	2,450	6,000	291	10	62	●	○	○	○	●	●
6	Champion 41535	1,000	7,500	248	9	57	●	○	○	○	●	●
7	All Power APG3560	850	5,000	218	5	51	○	○	○	○	●	●
8	Gentron GG3203	1,250	5,000	358	9	50	○	○	○	○	●	●
9	Generac XG7000E 5798	1,200	7,000	262	15	49	●	○	○	○	●	●
10	ETQ PG60B12	900	6,000	194	4	47	○	○	○	○	●	●
11	Briggs & Stratton 30468	700	5,500	199	9	45	○	○	○	○	●	●

B STATIONARY These install outdoors, run on propane or natural gas, and start automatically.

1	Kohler 8.5 RES-QS7	3,200	7,000	NA	224	92	●	●	●	●	●	●
2	Generac CorePower 5837	1,800	6,000	NA	296	77	○	○	○	○	●	●
3	Briggs & Stratton EmPower 040301	1,800	6,000	NA	277	69	●	○	○	○	●	●

① The average we measured over various loads. ② Has feature but requires optional battery, about \$50. ③ Price includes optional wheel kit, \$150. ④ Runs on propane. ⑤ Runs on diesel fuel. ⑥ Claimed output is with natural gas; output with propane is 1,000 to 1,500 watts higher (as tested). ⑦ With 250-gallon liquid-propane tank; runs indefinitely with natural gas. NA=not applicable; stationary unit.

Guide to the Ratings

Overall score is based on power delivery, power quality, run time, noise, and ease of use. **Claimed output** is maximum wattage for continuous operation, as per manufacturer. **Weight with fuel** is the generator's weight to the nearest pound when fully fueled. (Propane tanks are separate, and natural-gas models are fueled externally.) **Run time** is our average of how long a generator ran, over various loads, on a full tank of gasoline or diesel fuel, a 20-pound tank for propane-based portables, or a 250-gallon propane tank for stationary models. **Power delivery** is how much wattage models delivered and how well models handled surges in power demand over various loads. **Power quality** is ability to deliver power smoothly with consistent voltage. **Noise** is at 23 and 50 feet from the generator. **Ease of use** is starting, transport for portables, fuel shutoff, and other helpful features. **Price** is approximate retail.

Overview

Generators that made our winners' list produce smooth, steady power for refrigerators, well pumps, and other home items without losing voltage under load. Most also shut off automatically if engine oil is low. We focus below on top picks with specific strengths, value, or both.

CR Best Buy These blend performance and value. All are recommended.

Recommended These high-scoring models stand out for the reasons below.

PORTABLE MODELS

A1 Troy-Bilt \$900

A2 Generac \$670 **CR Best Buy**

Both gasoline-powered models have wheels, so you can put them away when they aren't needed. **A1** offers longer run time and battery-powered starting. **A2** delivers slightly cleaner power and less weight at a much lower price. Also consider **A3** if you're diligent about checking the oil level.

STATIONARY MODELS

B1 Kohler \$3,200

B2 Generac \$1,800 **CR Best Buy**

These run on propane or natural gas, saving you the hassle of storing gasoline. They also turn on and off automatically as needed. **B1** delivers the best blend of power, ease of use, and quietness. **B2** offers capable performance for much less and has a transfer switch—usually \$400.



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New for 2013

A fresh wave of sedans and SUVs promises better gas mileage and high-tech features

THE QUEST for better fuel economy is taking shape in large and small ways. Family sedans such as the redesigned Ford Fusion and Honda Accord, for example, will offer a choice of versions, including conventional gasoline-powered models, hybrids, and new plug-in hybrids that can go gas-free for longer periods.

Most automakers are chipping away at fuel use by using lighter-weight materials,

better aerodynamics, and transmissions with more gears, and by using turbocharged four-cylinder engines in place of larger V6s. They're also adopting tricks from the hybrid world, such as engine stop-start systems to boost gas mileage.

In a paradox of thrift, the luxury-SUV market is growing by offering smaller vehicles. New models such as the compact BMW X1 and Buick Encore promise an inviting blend of efficiency and flair.

▣ Ford Fusion fall 2012

Ford's widely sold midsize sedan has grown larger with its 2013 redesign. With its wheelbase stretched 5 inches, it should have ample passenger space, front and rear. Most versions will have small, turbocharged four-cylinder engines, good for 180 and 237 hp, respectively. That should help fuel economy. All-wheel drive will be available. And there will be two hybrid models, one with a conventional hybrid system and the other with a plug-in system that will allow the car to run on electric power more of the time.

Bottom line. Based on our first impressions from behind the wheel, the Fusion is a solid, sophisticated car with agile handling. Overall, it seems like a better choice than its larger, costlier brand-mate, the Taurus.

▣ BMW X1 fall 2012

Keeping with BMW tradition, the new compact X1 SUV is touted as combining luxury and sportiness in a small, fuel-efficient package. It will come in three versions. The rear-wheel-drive s28i and all-wheel-drive xDrive28i models will use a turbocharged 240-hp four-cylinder engine and eight-speed automatic transmission. The higher-trim AWD xDrive35i will get a 300-hp turbo six. Borrowing from hybrids, the X1 uses energy from coasting to recharge its 12-volt battery, and four-cylinder versions will have an engine stop-start system.

Bottom line. We were very impressed with the redesign of BMW's sporty X3 SUV, and that same character should come through in the smaller X1 to justify a starting price of about \$31,500.



► Nissan Pathfinder fall 2012

The redesigned Pathfinder has entered the modern age by trading its former trucklike body-on-frame design for a carlike unibody, like practically every other SUV today. It has a larger cabin and three rows of seats, which allow seating for up to seven passengers. Large rear doors and second-row seats that easily slide forward ease access to the rear. The new Pathfinder uses a strong 3.5-liter, V6 engine and continuously variable transmission, and is said to get 30 percent better fuel economy than the old Pathfinder. If it does, that would bump it from 15 mpg overall to about 20, good for a three-row SUV.

Bottom line. The interior looks roomy and versatile. But based on our testing of the Infiniti JX, the Pathfinder's upscale cousin, we're not expecting much driving excitement.



► Honda Accord fall 2012

Honda says its eighth-generation Accord will be lighter and sportier, with more power and better fuel economy. It's a bit smaller on the outside, but with comparable interior space, which is quite generous. Powering the car will be either an all-new four-cylinder engine, coupled with a new continuously variable transmission, or a reworked V6, mated to a new six-speed automatic. A plug-in hybrid version, which adds two electric motors to the four-cylinder, is due this winter. Honda claims its electric range is 10 to 15 miles before the gas engine kicks in.

Bottom line. The new Accord promises to be sportier than its rival, the Toyota Camry. But with the redesigned Ford Fusion and Nissan Altima, competition in this class will be tight.



► Chevrolet Impala early 2013

This large sedan has received a thorough redesign for the first time since the 2000 model year. Designated a 2014 model, the born-again Impala will share a platform with the very good Buick LaCrosse. Its array of electronic convenience and safety features will include adaptive cruise control, forward-collision mitigation, a backup camera, and lane-departure and rear cross-traffic warning systems. Engine choices include two four-



cylinder versions and a V6. The base 182-hp four will use GM's eAssist mild-hybrid system, with which we got a very good 26 mpg overall in the LaCrosse (see "Large Sedans," on page 53). The 303-hp, 3.6-liter V6 is stronger but far less economical; our V6 LaCrosse got only 20 mpg.

Bottom line. With its spacious cabin and up-to-date technology, the new Impala should finally compete well with its large-car peers.



► Buick Encore early 2013

The Encore, derived from the small Chevrolet Sonic, is a new compact, five-passenger SUV with a small, narrow cabin. Fuel-saving features include low-rolling-resistance tires and an automatic engine start-stop system. Available with front- or all-wheel drive, the Encore will use a 140-hp, 1.4-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine and six-speed automatic transmission that works well in other GM models. The Encore offers a variety of safety and infotainment features. A noise-canceling system uses microphones to detect cabin noise, then emits counteracting sound waves through the car's audio system.

Bottom line. The Encore is about fuel-efficiency and comfort, but it lacks the spirited exuberance of, say, a Nissan Juke.

2013 cheat sheet

What's new or redesigned among 2013 and early-2014 models, and what's being discontinued.

EV=electric vehicle

► New

Acura ILX
Audi A4 Allroad
Audi Q3
BMW ActiveHybrid 3
BMW X1
BMW 6 Series
Gran Coupe
Buick Encore
Cadillac ATS
Cadillac XTS
Chevrolet Spark
Dodge Dart
Ford C-Max
Honda Fit EV
Infiniti JX



Dodge Dart

Kia Cadenza
Mercedes-Benz B-Class
Scion FR-S
Subaru BRZ
Subaru XV Crosstrek
Tesla Model S (EV)
Toyota RAV4 EV



Cadillac ATS



Honda Fit EV

▣ Hyundai Santa Fe January 2013

A five-passenger version of the redesigned Santa Fe SUV, called the Sport, is already in showrooms. But a longer, seven-passenger model with more rear-seat and cargo room will follow early next year. Even the Sport has generous rear leg room, but the curvier styling, reminiscent of the Elantra and Sonata sedans, compromises rear visibility. The Sport offers

two four-cylinder engines, and the stretched Santa Fe gets a stronger, 290-hp V6, an engine we liked in the Hyundai Azera sedan.

Bottom line. Hyundai packs in a lot of features for the money. The Sport is about the same size as the outgoing Santa Fe, and the longer, seven-passenger version replaces the Veracruz in Hyundai's lineup.



▣ Acura RLX early 2013

Acura's redesigned flagship sedan will be a little wider and will have a slightly longer wheelbase than the outgoing model, which helps distinguish it from the less-expensive Acura TL. The RLX is loaded with upscale comfort and safety features. The standard RLX will sport a 310-hp, V6 engine and front-wheel drive. The uplevel version is an all-wheel-drive hybrid that will use electric motors to power the rear wheels and deliver 370 hp and a claimed overall fuel economy of 30 mpg.

Bottom line. Past RL models have been refined and competent but unexciting to drive. We don't expect that to change, but 30 mpg would be impressive for a car that's this big and powerful.



▣ Toyota Avalon late 2012

This large sedan, with limolike rear-seat room, has always been one of our higher-rated sedans. But its styling has been as bland as boiled rice. The redesigned 2013 model looks sleeker inside and out and retains its roomy, plush cabin. New features include a charging area for electronic devices and Toyota's Entune infotainment system, which can stream content through a smart phone. A hybrid version will also be available, promising an inviting blend of space, luxury, and excellent fuel economy of 40 mpg (Environmental Protection Agency combined rating).

Bottom line. Toyota claims the Avalon will have sportier handling. If it does, the big, comfy sedan should be a more complete overall package.



▣ Redesigned

Acura RLX
Acura RDX
Audi A3
Chevrolet Malibu
Ford Escape
Ford Fusion
Honda Accord
Hyundai Santa Fe
Lexus ES
Lexus GS
Lincoln MKZ
Mercedes-Benz CL-Class

Ford Escape



Mercedes-Benz GL-Class
Mercedes-Benz SL-Class
Nissan Altima
Nissan Sentra
Nissan Pathfinder
Porsche Boxster
Scion xD
Land Rover Range Rover
Toyota Avalon
Toyota RAV4



Chevrolet Malibu



Nissan Altima



Lexus HS

▣ Discontinued

Hyundai Veracruz
Kia Sedona
Lexus HS
Mazda CX-7
Mitsubishi Galant
Mercedes-Benz R-Class

Hits & misses 2012

How do the new models really measure up?

EVERY YEAR, a few dozen new and redesigned models hit the streets. They're unveiled to great fanfare at auto shows. Ads and TV commercials build the hype. And car watchers fill the social sphere with growing anticipation and buzz. But when the rubber meets the pavement at our track, some new models measure up to the expectations and others fall well short. Here are new or redesigned 2012 models that either pulled away from the pack in our testing or, well, stalled at the starting line.

Hyundai Veloster

This has been a good year for new, fun-to-drive cars. In addition to the Scion FR-S and Subaru BRZ (see page 58), the Hyundai Veloster is a welcome entry in the sporty-car class. Its edgy styling stands out on the road. And its asymmetrical design—with a single rear door on the passenger side—helps make it surprisingly livable. The Veloster's nimble handling, slick shifter, and quick, well-weighted steering add to the fun factor. Its 31 mpg overall helps at the pump. And a low, \$20,000 sticker price makes it easy on your wallet.



Scan for video.



Subaru Impreza (right)

Subaru's 2012 redesign breathed new life into the all-wheel-drive Impreza sedan and hatchback. They are now more well-rounded, enjoyable cars, with nimble handling, roomy interiors, and absorbent rides that rival some luxury sedans. Fuel economy improved to 27 and 26 mpg overall, respectively, impressive for AWD cars. All of that helped the sedan's test score jump 10 points to 82, enough to make it the top small sedan in our Ratings and earn it a Top Pick designation in our April Issue.



Scan for video.





Audi A6

The redesigned A6 is a joy to drive. In our Ratings, it leapfrogged over competitors from BMW and Mercedes-Benz and tied the Infiniti M37 as our top-scoring midsize luxury car. The A6 succeeds in many areas: It's agile, quiet, and quick. Its supercharged V6 engine delivers potent power and a commendable 22 mpg overall, even with all-wheel drive. The ride is absorbent, and the sumptuous, impeccably finished cabin is outfitted with the latest high-tech electronic features.



Scan for video.



Toyota Camry

At a time when some high-profile models have dropped in our Ratings after a reworking, the Camry's 2012 redesign has made it more competitive. Each version we tested—four-cylinder, V6, and Hybrid—earned a higher test score than the model it replaced. The Hybrid is especially impressive, squeezing out a best-in-class 38 mpg overall and providing a well-equipped package for less than \$30,000. As a result, it now tops our family-sedan Ratings and was a Top Pick. The Camry might lack pizzazz, but this thoroughly modern sedan has few faults.



Scan for video.

Toyota Prius V (below)

2012 saw the release of two new models in the growing Prius hybrid line. The subcompact C was unimpressive. But the larger V wagon rates among the top models in its class. Compared with the familiar Prius hatchback, the V has been stretched in all dimensions to provide notably more cargo space and a roomier rear seat. Yet it still achieved an excellent 41 mpg overall in our testing. That combination gives the Prius V a blend of versatility and fuel economy that no other car can match.



Scan for video.



Not so buzzworthy

Scion iQ

The new iQ is a tiny city car that's about the size of a Smart ForTwo. It's super-easy to park and maneuver, and it gets a decent 34 mpg overall. But that's the only good news. The iQ's labored acceleration, uncomfortable seats, raucous cabin, twitchy steering, and buckboard ride strip any fun out of driving it. We also expect better gas mileage from such a small car. Overall, the iQ is one of the lowest-scoring cars we've tested in years.

Toyota Yaris

The original Yaris hatchback scored a dismal 52 out of 100 points in our road tests. Still, that looks good compared with the redesigned 2012 model, which dropped to 41. This spartan hatchback subjects you to a noisy cabin, uncomfortable seats, and a cheap-looking interior. It's also slow to accelerate and has a choppy, uncomfortable ride. One

redeeming quality is its excellent fuel economy of 32 mpg overall.

Range Rover Evoque

With its cool, eye-catching styling, this new crossover SUV has created a lot of buzz. We liked its quick acceleration, decent fuel economy, and nicely finished cabin. But those high points can't mask its many weaknesses, including a cramped cabin, a choppy ride, and artificial-feeling steering. In our emergency handling tests, it scored poorly. And that sleek styling takes its toll on practical considerations, resulting in compromised visibility, driving position, and controls.

Nissan Versa sedan

Relatively plush and comfortable-riding for a small car, the previous-generation Versa was our top-rated subcompact sedan. But its 2012 redesign sent the Versa's test score plummeting to the

bottom of the class. Its gets better fuel economy of 32 mpg overall and has a roomy rear seat. But the Versa's new cut-rate interior feels really cheap, the engine is extremely loud, acceleration is slow, and the ride is jumpy. The Versa hatchback, which wasn't part of the latest redesign, is a different—and better—car.

Volvo XC90

The latest freshening of the XC90 can be summed up as too little, too late. This SUV has remained mostly unchanged for the past 10 years while its competitors have been getting steadily better. The inline six-cylinder engine is anemic and thirsty for fuel, managing only 17 mpg overall. Handling lacks agility, the ride is stiff, and the in-car electronic features are antiquated. The bottom line: The XC90 now ranks at the bottom of our luxury-SUV Ratings.



Scion iQ



Toyota Yaris



Range Rover Evoque



Nissan Versa sedan



Volvo XC90



Risky drivers

Young and old drivers share a dubious distinction

THEY STAND at opposite ends of the demographic spectrum. And both groups include many good drivers. But statistics show that overall, teenagers and older drivers are involved in far more crashes and high-way fatalities than any other age group.

Mile for mile, the crash rate for drivers ages 16 and 17, for example, is almost nine times as high as that for middle-aged drivers. People 80 and older are involved in 5.5 times as many fatal crashes per mile driven as middle-aged drivers.

Total deaths for teens and seniors have declined in recent years, as have all passenger-vehicle fatalities. But their risk level remains high and the challenge could become greater in coming years.

The Pew Research Center says that 10,000 baby boomers will turn 65 every day for the next 18 years. By 2030, they'll represent almost one in five drivers. In the population overall they'll outnumber 16- to 19-year-olds more than three to one. Some experts call that trend the silver tsunami.

That could increase the safety risk as drivers begin to lose their abilities. "Unfortunately I think most states are woefully

unprepared for the coming wave of baby boomers," says David W. Eby, Ph.D., research scientist at the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute.

For young and old drivers, the reasons behind the risk are as different as the people themselves. Teens struggle with inexperience behind the wheel and developing brains that might not accurately assess risks. Older drivers have plenty of experience and even tend to drive less. But age-

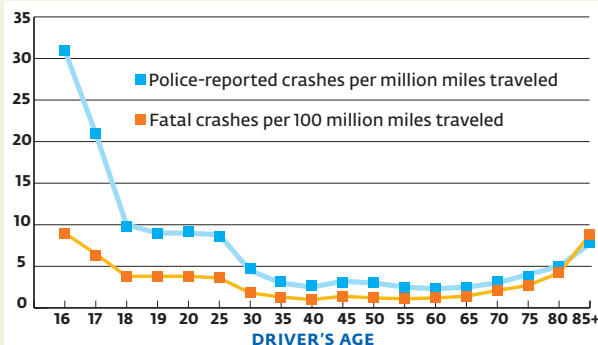
related conditions can impede their driving ability. And when a crash happens, their fragility leads to more severe outcomes.

"If we're ever going to solve the aging mobility problem, we need to have better alternatives for people," Eby says. "It can't always fall to the personal vehicle."

Effective steps are being taken by the government, automakers, and families to reduce accidents and deaths among teens and seniors. But more needs to be done.

Dangerous curves: Plotting the problem

The youngest and oldest drivers have much higher rates of highway crashes and deaths than any other age group, according to 2008 government mileage data, the latest available. Drivers ages 16 and 17 are involved in more crashes, and fatality rates rise steeply for those older than 65, with drivers older than 80 being most vulnerable.



Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Teens at the wheel

"There is nothing worse than the first time you see your teenager drive away in a car by themselves," says Arthur Haskins, whose 18-year-old daughter, Katie, is a recent high-school graduate from Hillsdale, N.J. Parents have reason to worry. Car crashes are the No. 1 killer of teens. And the youngest drivers are the riskiest.

"Teen brains are not fully matured," says Orly Avitzur, M.D., a board-certified neurologist and Consumer Reports medical adviser. "They tend to be more impulsive and have poor judgment." That could be one reason unbuckled safety belts and drunk and distracted driving are factors in many teen deaths. What can be done?

Graduated licensing. Teen traffic deaths have dropped 62 percent since 1975. A big reason is the graduated driver-licensing laws implemented by many states. "GDL hasn't eliminated the problem with teens, but it has been a really effective countermeasure," says Anne McCartt, vice president for research at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS).

Graduated licensing allows teens to gain driving experience in a controlled environment while working to get their full driver's license. Laws vary by state, but they generally mandate a minimum number of hours of supervised driving with parents and place restrictions on night driving and the number of passengers.

Studies show a clear link between such programs and lower crash rates. Among states with the strongest laws is New Jersey, where teens must be at least 17 to obtain a license. For most states the minimum age is 16, although some states allow 14- or 15-year-olds to get a license. Pennsylvania requires at least 65 supervised practice hours, compared with 50 or fewer for most other states. And South Carolina restricts intermediate drivers from being on the road after a relatively early 6 or 8 p.m., depending on the season; by contrast, night restrictions for some states don't begin until 1 a.m.

Noting the higher risk of younger drivers, most European countries will require teens to be at least 18 to get a full license once rules go into effect in January 2013.

To encourage states, the IIHS website has a calculator, at iihs.org/gdl, that estimates how many lives could be saved if they strengthened their graduated licensing laws. And the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) offers incentives such as added highway safety

funds to states that improve their laws.

Of course, parents don't need to rely on their state. They can create a family contract that allows a teen to gain increasingly more experience and driving freedom.

"Research has shown that teens actually listen to their parents' opinions," says Erin Sauber-Schatz, Ph.D., M.P.H., epidemiologist at the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Talk with your teen about driving, and make an agreement that outlines the risk factors, rules, and penalties if they're broken. "Parents need to follow through and be willing to take those keys away," says David Strickland, NHTSA administrator.

New technology, such as Ford's MyKey, can also help. That feature allows parents to set limitations that are electronically stored in the vehicle's ignition key. They can set

a top speed, limit the volume of the radio, and prevent the radio from coming on until the driver's safety belt is fastened. "In a manner, it puts Mom and Dad virtually in the passenger seat even when they're not there," says Andy Sarkisian, manager of global safety planning and strategy at Ford.

Driver education. Practice is the best way to make teens more comfortable behind the wheel, but a traditional driver-ed program is often not enough. A recent report jointly sponsored by the government, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, and Manitoba Public Insurance shows that not only is there no evidence that the programs reduce crashes, but the programs can also encourage teens to get licenses earlier.

Consumer Reports' auto experts say that advanced driver training can help. "Drivers need to learn what to do in an emer-

When to ask for the keys of older drivers

Many seniors reduce their driving voluntarily as their abilities decline. But at some point, they might become unsafe to themselves and other motorists.

They can use a self-rating tool on the AAA website (seniordriving.aaa.com) to help assess their skills and get advice on how to maximize their safety on the road.

If you need to assess a senior's driving ability, watch for these red flags:

- Slow response times.
- Inability to fully turn to check blind spots.
- Running stop signs.
- Motorists honking at them frequently.

- A hesitation or reluctance to drive.
- Cognitive dysfunction, such as getting lost or calling for help.
- Repeat fender benders, dings, or paint scrapes on the car.

You can also get advice through a free online seminar on the AARP website (aarp.org; search for "We need to talk").

If you think the situation is serious, consult the person's doctor. Keep in mind that medications and physical conditions, such as reduced vision, a stroke, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease, can affect driving performance in dramatic or subtle ways.



A HELPING HAND After giving up driving because of diminishing skills, Evelyn and Cliff Orman, 83 and 87, of Westbrook, Maine, use a car service for seniors, operated by ITN America. Alan Kinney, right, is one of their regular drivers.

gency before they're actually faced with one," says David Champion, director of Consumer Reports' Auto Test Center. "Being prepared can be the difference between an accident and a close call."

Free and paid car-control clinics, which teach skills in a safe, controlled environment, are sponsored by automakers such as BMW, Ford, and Toyota, as well as private organizations. Last year, Consumer Reports partnered with the Tire Rack Street Survival School to host a defensive driving course and found that teens were able to improve their skills, gain confidence, and learn the limits of their cars.

"At first, I was angry at my dad for making me go," Katie Haskins says about attending a defensive-driving course. "But I think everyone should do something like that, to be put in a situation in which they don't necessarily know what to do."

Together, graduated licensing programs, parental involvement, advanced driver training, and safer cars can have an impact on reducing teen accidents and fatalities. But more can be done. With the goal of cutting in half the number of road fatalities, for example, the European Union is targeting restrictions for young drivers that include zero alcohol tolerance and lower speed limits, as well as bans on passengers and nighttime driving.

A touchy issue: older drivers

When Steven Gnepp and his wife, Paula, got a call from his 87-year-old mother,

Claire, asking him what she was supposed to do with the license-renewal form she received in the mail, they were concerned. If she couldn't understand that, they thought, they couldn't trust her driving. So they signed her up for a driving assessment test at a local hospital. Claire failed the cognitive-abilities test. "It never even crossed her mind that she might not pass. It was a big shock to her," says Steven Gnepp, a retired NASA computer scientist.

Problems arise when seniors begin losing their cognitive or physical abilities. "The challenge is coming up with a system for identifying those drivers who are no longer safe," says Eby of the University of Michigan. "It's far too expensive and potentially biased to set an age limit and say everyone must get tested."

Currently, 28 states plus the District of Columbia have special provisions for renewing the licenses of older drivers. Provisions can include more frequent renewals, restricting online or mailed renewals, and vision or road tests. Adult driver education can be helpful in brushing up on skills.

Extending the driving years. Many seniors begin having problems long before they lose their driving ability. Some have basic challenges in simply getting in and out of their vehicles and being able to see out properly. CarFit, a program sponsored by AAA, AARP, and the American Occupational Therapy Association, holds events around the country to help older drivers assess such things as their seat position,

mirrors, head restraints, and controls. "Many people buy a new car, just jump in it, and drive, and don't adjust all the safety features to their maximum effectiveness," says Julie Lee, vice president and national director of AARP Driver Safety.

Automakers have been somewhat hit or miss in designing cars that are friendlier for seniors. Some are designing controls with larger buttons and more readable labeling. For drivers who find it difficult to turn their heads, features such as rear-backup cameras, blind-spot-detection systems, small convex mirrors added to a car's regular side mirrors, and cross-traffic alerts that detect passing cars in the rear when backing up help increase visibility and awareness of surrounding cars.

Lane-departure warning systems can alert a driver who begins drifting from his lane, and some can even make minor steering corrections to deter that. Ford has developed an inflatable rear safety belt for passengers vulnerable to breaking bones in crashes. And small SUVs usually make it easy to get in and out by providing big doors and chair-height access.

Unfortunately, some designs make driving more difficult. Thicker windshield and roof pillars and smaller windows in many vehicles limit outward visibility. Complicated control systems can be difficult to use and distracting. And some modern infotainment systems encourage drivers to take their eyes off of the road.

To make traffic signs more visible and

Best cars for teens

Buying a car for a new driver can be a balancing act between getting one you can afford and finding one that's safe and reliable. Look for a vehicle with advanced safety features such as electronic stability control (ESC) and side-curtain air bags, and one that performed well in independent crash tests. Avoid a large pickup or SUV; its high center of gravity makes it more prone to roll over. Large vehicles can also have unwieldy handling and poor fuel economy, and they allow teens to carry more passengers, which increases the crash risk. Sports cars beg to be driven too fast and have a higher rate of accidents than other cars. The models in this list provided balanced performance in our tests, have had average or better reliability, come with standard ESC, and did well in independent crash tests.



Hyundai Sonata

Acura TSX
Chevrolet Equinox
 (V6, 2010-2012)
Chevrolet Malibu
 (4-cyl., 2008 or later)
Ford Focus sedan
 (2009-2011)
Ford Fusion (4-cyl.
 and hybrid, 2010 or later)
Honda Accord
 (4-cyl., 2008 or later)
Honda Fit (2011 or later)
Hyundai Elantra
 (2011 or later)
Hyundai Elantra SE
 (2008-2010)

Hyundai Elantra Touring
Hyundai Santa Fe
 (V6, 2007-2009,
 no third-row seat)
Hyundai Sonata (4-cyl.,
 nonturbo, 2006 or later)
Hyundai Tucson (2010 or later)
Infiniti G25
Kia Forte (2010 or later)
Kia Optima (nonturbo,
 2010 or later)



Nissan Rogue

Kia Soul
Kia Sportage (4-cyl.,
 nonturbo, 2011 or later)
Mazda 3i Touring
 (2009 or later)
Mazda 3s Touring or Grand
Touring (2007 or later)
Mazda 6i (4-cyl.,
 2009 or later)
Mitsubishi Outlander
 (2007 or later,
 no third-row seat)
Nissan Altima
 (4-cyl., 2010 or later)
Nissan Rogue
Nissan Sentra (2010 or later)
Scion xB (2008 or later)
Subaru Forester
 (nonturbo, 2009 or later)
Subaru Impreza
 (nonturbo, 2009 or later)



GETTING PREPARED Attending a defensive-driving class helped Katie Haskins, 18, of Hillsdale, N.J., shown with her father, Arthur, learn how to control her car if forced to suddenly brake or swerve. That can help her be ready for an on-the-road emergency.

easily understood, the Federal Highway Administration has developed guidelines for improvements. Changes include making signs more reflective, using upper- and lowercase letters for readability, and increasing the distance between signs and exits or interchanges to give drivers more time to react.

A lack of options. If their skills decline to the point where they can't drive safely, many seniors face a difficult situation because of limited alternatives. "Driving cessation is an ugly topic, and there is not a public transportation system in this country that can really support seniors as they

age out of the car," says Bryan Reimer, a research scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's AgeLab.

Sandra Rosenbloom, Ph.D., a director at the Urban Institute, an economic and social policy research organization, notes that about three-quarters of people 65 or older live in suburban or rural areas, where there are few alternatives to the car. "We know that nine out of 10 people want to stay in the homes where they raised their families," says Lee of the AARP, "but the communities aren't necessarily set up to help older people do that."

Some people are working on solutions.

After her 3-year-old son was hit and injured by an 84-year-old driver, Katherine Freund of Portland, Maine, said she didn't blame the driver. Rather, she blamed the lack of a transportation system that could meet his needs. In 1995, she founded ITN America (Independent Transportation Network), which provides door-to-door driving services for seniors. The program has since expanded to 20 communities around the country.

Evelyn and Cliff Orman of Westbrook, Maine, who decided to stop driving in their mid-80s, are ITN America customers. "For us, giving up the car was sad. It was just another step in the aging process," Evelyn Orman says. Still, "We felt it was time."

Families will need to help out as much as possible. "Much like we plan for finances and health insurance, we need to do transportation planning as we age," Reimer says. He suggests figuring out specific ways that the senior can get around.

Introduce the concept gradually. "People need time to adjust because growing older is not for wimps," Freund says. Get information on public transportation and services for seniors. Then help plot ways to get to common destinations. Write down instructions if necessary.

Ann Dellinger, Ph.D., M.P.H., leader of the Transportation Safety Team at the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, adds, "It will end up that we will all play a part in maximizing mobility in the community."

Best cars for older drivers

This list includes new and used vehicles that scored well in Consumer Reports tests for access, visibility, front-seat comfort, driving position, and controls. All vehicles have average or better reliability, and most have standard electronic stability control. (It's optional on the Ford Taurus, Mercury Sable, and Toyota Camry prior to 2010.)



Ford Fusion

Subaru Impreza Outback Sport (2008 or later)
Subaru Legacy 2.5i (2009 or later)
Toyota Camry (2010 or later)
Toyota Corolla (2010 or later)
Toyota Matrix (2010 or later)
Toyota Prius (2010 or later)
Toyota Prius V
Toyota RAV4 (2004 or later, no third-row seat)
Volkswagen Jetta (2009-2010)
Volkswagen Golf (2010 or later)
Volkswagen Rabbit (2009)



Hyundai Genesis



Subaru Forester

Acura RDX (2013)
Ford Taurus (2008-2009)
Honda Accord V6 (2006-2007)
Honda Accord (2008-2012)
Hyundai Azera (2006-2011)
Hyundai Genesis (2009-2012)
Infiniti M (2006-2010)
Lexus RX (2006-2009)
Mercury Sable (2008-2009)
Nissan Altima (2010-2012)

Subaru Impreza (2012)
Subaru Legacy (2010-2013)
Subaru Outback (2010-2013)
Subaru Forester (2009-2012)
Toyota Avalon (2005-2012)
Toyota Camry (2007-2012)
Toyota Highlander (2004-2012)
Toyota RAV4 (2006-2012)
Volkswagen Tiguan (2009-2012)



Ford Taurus

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Large sedans

The Chrysler 300 continues its comeback



UNPREDICTABLE SPIKES in gasoline prices have steered many buyers toward smaller, fuel-efficient cars. But if you're willing to trade some gas mileage for a vehicle with a roomier, more upscale cabin and a more refined driving experience, several well-crafted large sedans might better suit your lifestyle.

The biggest news in this group is the ongoing regeneration of Chrysler's flagship 300. When we tested the V8-powered 300C last year, we found it to be a huge improvement over the mediocre original. For 2012, the 300's V6 engine was paired with a smooth-shifting eight-speed automatic transmission, which improved driveability and helped the large sedan get a decent 22 mpg in our fuel-economy tests. Its 83 test score now puts the 300 V6 near the top of this class, below the Hyundai Genesis.

We also tested the redesigned Hyundai Azera; a Buick LaCrosse equipped with GM's eAssist mild-hybrid system, which achieved a best-in-class 26 mpg overall; and the freshened Ford Taurus, which suffers from a cramped interior, limited visibility, and complex controls.

None of the four sedans in this month's group are recommended. We don't have enough reliability data for the redesigned 300; the Azera and LaCrosse eAssist are too new; and the Taurus scored too low.

Overview

The best large sedans provide a quiet and plush cabin, a comfortable ride, and plenty of room for five people and their luggage. Expect to trade off fuel economy and maneuverability when stepping up from a midsize family sedan.

Recommended These models did well in our road tests, had average or better reliability in our subscriber survey, and performed at least adequately if they were included in government or insurance-industry safety tests.

Ratings

All tested models In performance order.

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

	Make & model	Price as tested	In this issue	Overall road-test score	Predicted reliability	Overall mpg
Recommended	Rank			0 100 P F G V E		

LARGE SEDANS

✓	1	Hyundai Genesis 3.8	\$39,850	92	○	22
	2	Chrysler 300 Limited (V6)	38,335	83	NA	22
✓	3	Nissan Maxima 3.5 SV	33,700	83	○	22
✓	4	Acura TL (base)	36,465	82	●	24
	5	Chrysler 300C	44,730	82	NA	18
	6	Hyundai Azera 3.3L	37,185	81	new	23
	7	Buick LaCrosse (Leather, eAssist)	34,935	78	new	26
	8	Dodge Charger SXT Plus (V6)	34,510	75	NA	22
	9	Buick LaCrosse Touring (V6)	37,555	74	●	20
	10	Ford Taurus Limited (3.5 V6)	37,885	64	NA	21

Why some vehicles are not recommended The Hyundai Azera and Buick LaCrosse eAssist are too new for us to have reliability data. We don't have sufficient reliability data for the Chrysler 300 and Dodge Charger. The LaCrosse Touring has had below-average reliability. The Ford Taurus scored too low.



Chrysler 300

ROAD-TEST
SCORE
83

A 2011 redesign of the 300 put Chrysler's flagship back on the map in the large-sedan category. It provides a comfortable ride, responsive handling, and a roomy, quiet, and nicely appointed cabin that's packed with features. Though the muscular V8-powered 300C delivers more oomph, most buyers will probably be quite happy with the 3.6-liter V6 engine, which combines strong acceleration with a commendable 22 mpg overall, 4 more than the 300C. An eight-speed automatic transmission, which was coupled with the V6 for 2012, provides smooth shifting but suffers from a hard-to-use electronic shifter.

The 300 is based on the same platform as the Dodge Charger, but the Chrysler scored higher in our testing.

Polished, efficient drivetrain

The 292-hp V6 and new eight-speed transmission contribute to the 300's refined character. The transmission shifts often but performs the gear changes smoothly, much better than the previous five-speed. The fussy electronic shifter requires a firm tug and holding a button, and finding reverse can be hard. Chrysler is working on improving that.

Unlike the rest of this group, the 300 is rear-wheel drive, with all-wheel drive optional.

Handling is sound, and the steering is reasonably quick and appropriately weighted. At our track, the 300 was steady and secure, posting a modest speed through our avoidance maneuver with no surprises.

The cabin is hushed, with very little road noise, but the engine can sound raspy at lower speeds. A high point is the steady and compliant

ride. Our V6 Limited, equipped with 18-inch wheels, is particularly absorbent, giving the car a stately feel. The optional 20-inch wheels and lower-profile tires make the ride somewhat stiffer.

Plush and comfortable

The interior is nicely trimmed with padded surfaces, well-finished leather, faux wood, and quality carpeting. Drivers have plenty of room behind the optional power-adjustable steering wheel, which tilts and telescopes.

The front seats are firm and well shaped, with supportive padding, and have a power lumbar adjustment. But some drivers may find the seat cushions to be too long, and shorter drivers may have a hard time reaching the power-adjustable pedals.

Two adults can sit very comfortably in the rear with plenty of room. But the center seat, which sits over a wide driveshaft tunnel, is a hard perch with little room for legs or feet.

The optional touch screen, which controls audio, navigation, and climate functions, is easy to use. But some adjustments, such as airflow direction and radio presets, may require changing screens. We like that there are also knobs and buttons for basic radio and climate functions. The Garmin navigation system is simple to use, and a voice-command system can handle phone, navigation, and audio functions.

The thick steering wheel is nice to grasp but partly blocks the view of the gauges. Shiny trim and reflections cause glare on readouts.

The trunk is well finished and spacious. And you can create more room by folding the 60/40-split rear seatbacks.



Tested vehicle

HIGHS	Acceleration, ride, quietness, transmission, seat comfort, fit and finish
LOWS	Fussy shifter, headlights
TRIM LINE	Limited
DRIVETRAIN	292-hp, 3.6-liter V6 engine; eight-speed automatic transmission; rear-wheel drive
MAJOR OPTIONS	Power-adjustable, heated steering wheel; heated rear seats; heated and ventilated front seats; panoramic sunroof; Garmin navigation
TESTED PRICE	\$38,335

The 300 line

OTHER TRIM LINES	Base, S, Luxury, C, SRT8
OTHER DRIVETRAINS	363-hp, 5.7-liter V8 engine; 465-hp, 6.4-liter V8 engine; all-wheel drive
BASE PRICES	\$29,845-\$47,820

More test findings

BRAKING	Impressive on dry pavement, good in wet conditions.
HEADLIGHTS	The halogen low beams shine a very short distance. High beams provide very good forward visibility and improve intensity. Optional HID lights perform much better.
ACCESS	Easy overall, but it's a high step over the rear doorsills.
VISIBILITY	A low roofline, high rear deck, and long hood impede the view. The rear-camera and optional blind-spot-warning systems work well. A cross-traffic alert system helps when in reverse.
CABIN STORAGE	Moderate, with several well-finished cubbies.
HEAD RESTRAINTS	The center-rear restraint is too low to protect an adult even when it's raised.
CHILD SEATS	It may be tough to secure a rear-facing child seat in the outboard rear seats using belts. All rear seats have LATCH anchors, but they are hard to access.



Scan for video.

Hyundai Azera

ROAD-TEST
SCORE
81

The Azera, which was redesigned for 2012, is more stylish and refined than its predecessor and is now more competitive among large sedans. Like many Hyundais, it provides a lot of features for the money.

A spacious, nicely finished cabin has comfortable, roomy seating for five people. Under the hood, a smooth, powerful 3.3-liter V6 engine returns 23 mpg overall, which is among the best in this class.

Handling has improved too, but the Azera is still not as agile as some of its competitors. It also suffers from a stiff, unrefined ride, which detracts from the car's luxury intentions.

Ride and handling shortcomings

In general, the ride is controlled and compliant, but it's marred by short, frequent motions on the highway that compromise comfort. Although the Azera is very quiet overall, its engine gets a bit raspy at high revs and while idling it emits a diesel-like clatter from the direct fuel-injection system.

Steering is vague and feels artificially heavy. When pushed to its limits at our track, the Azera plowed its nose very early on, which made the car feel ungainly. Still, it posted a decent speed in our avoidance maneuver.

The Azera's 293-hp V6 is responsive and thrifty. An economy mode helps improve gas mileage by blunting engine and transmission response. The six-speed automatic transmission shifts smoothly and is normally responsive, but some downshifts can require a firm nudge of the throttle.

Comfortable cockpit

The interior is nicely finished and well assembled but not over-the-top. Dash and door tops are padded, and all the storage compartments are flopped.

The Azera's cabin feels very spacious, with plenty of foot and leg room. But taller drivers found head room to be a touch snug under the optional sunroof, and some wished the power tilt-and-telescopic steering wheel extended further toward them. Shorter drivers were able to get within easy reach of the wheel.

The roomy front seats are well padded and comfortable. Opting for the Technology package adds a welcome power thigh support adjustment. The rear has plenty of leg and foot room. It's wide enough for three, but the way the seats are contoured tips people toward each other, which reduces comfort.

The driver's seat and steering wheel power out of the way to make more room when you're getting in. The sloping roofline is a bit of an impediment when getting into the rear.

Brightly backlit gauges are easy to read, and most controls are simple and well labeled. But the radio lacks a tuning knob and has a lot of similar buttons crammed tightly together. The center touch screen is simple to navigate, with large onscreen fonts and buttons, but it's a long reach away from the driver. Hyundai's Bluelink infotainment system uses a smart-phone connection to bring weather, traffic, and other features to the car's navigation screen. Voice commands can control some functions.

The trunk is large, and the rear seat folds 60/40 to expand the cargo space.

Tested vehicle

HIGHS	Spacious, quiet interior; fit and finish; standard features; front-seat comfort
LOWS	Stiff ride, agility
TRIM LINE	—
DRIVETRAIN	293-hp, 3.3-liter V6 engine; six-speed automatic transmission; front-wheel drive
MAJOR OPTIONS	19-inch wheels, sunroof, HID headlights, power wheel and thigh support, ventilated front seats, window sunshades
TESTED PRICE	\$37,185
BASE PRICE	\$32,000

More test findings

BRAKING	Short stops overall.
HEADLIGHTS	The HID low beams provide good intensity but shine only a fair distance. High beams make a modest improvement.
ACCESS	Easy, but there are wide doorsills and a sloping rear roofline.
VISIBILITY	A high rear shelf and a short rear window impede the rear view, and wide pillars hinder corner sight lines. A backup camera is standard.
CABIN STORAGE	Generous, with large console bins and pockets.
HEAD RESTRAINTS	The center-rear restraint may be too low to protect taller occupants in a rear collision.
CHILD SEATS	Most seats should secure easily using safety belts. LATCH anchors can be difficult to use.



Scan for video.



OUT OF TUNE The Azera has a giant volume knob, but unfortunately it lacks a knob for selecting radio stations.



Buick LaCrosse

**ROAD-TEST
SCORE**
78

The quiet, luxurious, and economical LaCrosse is a sophisticated, modern sedan. It delivers a steady ride and responsive handling, qualities that haven't usually been associated with the Buick nameplate.

Although the LaCrosse's base drivetrain still uses a 2.4-liter four-cylinder engine, for 2012 it's supplemented by GM's eAssist light hybrid system, for a total of 182 hp. That improves acceleration and fuel economy, resulting in a category-leading 26 mpg overall.

But several faults keep the LaCrosse from reaching the top of the class, including a narrow cockpit, a busy dashboard, obscured sight lines, and trunk storage that's compromised by the hybrid battery.

Power boost

The electrically aided four-cylinder engine is mated to a smooth, six-speed automatic transmission. That combo delivers adequate power and responsive performance. If you want more power, you can get a 303-hp, 3.6-liter V6 that provides stronger acceleration but only 20 mpg overall.

The LaCrosse's ride is serene, and pavement flaws are soaked up with only muted kicks. Motions are steady and controlled. The highway ride is very smooth and relaxed. V6-powered models usually come with larger wheels that create a busier ride. The cabin is quiet overall, but the four-cylinder engine can sound somewhat raspy.

In everyday driving, the LaCrosse corners well and feels responsive, with restrained body lean. The steering feels light at low speeds but firms up as speed increases. When pushed to

its handling limits at our track, the LaCrosse felt secure; it posted a commendable speed through our avoidance maneuver.

Nicely detailed cabin

The interior is luxurious, with high-quality materials, many soft-touch panels, generous wood trim, and stitched detailing. Most trim pieces fit together well, and fit and finish has improved since our 2010 test.

Drivers are helped by a tilt-and-telescoping steering wheel and a sliding armrest on the center console. But the driver's space is narrow for a big sedan. A wide center console intrudes from the right, and the kick panel pushes into the foot room on the left.

The LaCrosse's biggest flaw is impaired driver visibility. The windshield pillars are very thick, blocking the view in the corners. And the other windows are small.

We found the optional leather seats to be much more supportive than the standard cloth ones. Front seats are well padded and shaped, with generous lower-back support aided by a power adjustment. Some drivers felt that the head restraint was too close. The spacious rear seats are well shaped and comfortable, but the low roof robs some head room.

Controls are straightforward, but picking the one you want from the sea of buttons isn't always easy. Some gauges are hard to read, and the chrome trim can create annoying reflections on them. The dual-zone climate system works very well.

The hybrid battery pack eats up cargo space, resulting in a relatively small trunk for this size car. The rear seatback folds, but the battery placement allows for only a tiny pass-through.



TIGHT QUARTERS The hybrid system's battery eats up some of the trunk's cargo area.

Tested vehicle

HIGHS	Ride, quietness, fit and finish, front-seat comfort, fuel economy
LOWS	Visibility, narrow driving position, cluttered dashboard, small trunk with eAssist
TRIM LINE	Leather
DRIVETRAIN	182-hp, 2.4-liter four-cylinder hybrid engine; six-speed automatic transmission; front-wheel drive
MAJOR OPTIONS	Heated leather seats, power passenger seat, sunroof, rear-seat side air bags.
TESTED PRICE	\$34,935

The LaCrosse line

OTHER TRIM LINES	Base, Premium, Touring
OTHER DRIVETRAINS	303-hp, 3.6-liter V6; all-wheel drive
BASE PRICES	\$31,600-\$39,240

More test findings

BRAKING	Very short distances on dry pavement, longer on wet.
HEADLIGHTS	Low-beam halogens illuminate well. High beams reach a very good distance.
ACCESS	Wide doorsills and the sloped roof slightly inhibit access.
VISIBILITY	Small windows and very thick pillars create blind spots. The optional backup camera is a big help while reversing.
CABIN STORAGE	Sparse, with small door pockets and console storage.
HEAD RESTRAINTS	The center-rear restraint is not adjustable and is too low to protect an adult.
CHILD SEATS	It can be hard to secure a child seat using the safety belts. The lower LATCH anchors allow installation in any rear seat, but they are hard to reach.



Scan for video.

Ford Taurus

**ROAD-TEST
SCORE**
64

Updated for 2013, the Taurus is quiet and rides smoothly, traits buyers expect in a large car. Tweaks to the 3.5-liter V6 brought more power and a decent 21 mpg overall, a 2-mpg improvement. And like other Fords, the Taurus is jam-packed with features.

But the car's interior is cramped, and it's not easy to see out. Plus most Tauruses now come with the complicated, cumbersome MyFord Touch control system. That dragged the Taurus' overall test score down to just below our threshold for recommendation and makes the Taurus the lowest-rated model in this category. Reliability has been average.

Well-balanced performance

The Taurus has a steady ride, especially on the highway. Bumps are well absorbed. The quiet cabin is largely free from road and wind noise, with only some engine noise evident during acceleration.

Agility isn't a strong suit. Body lean is controlled in corners and the steering has decent response, but it's devoid of feedback. In our avoidance maneuver, the Taurus reached an adequate speed, relying on stability control to keep it in line. And the wide, 42-foot turning circle makes parking difficult.

The 288-hp V6 can sound harsh when pushed. It's mated to a six-speed automatic transmission that comes up short on shift refinement and response. Other engine choices include a smooth and efficient 240-hp, 2.0-liter turbocharged four-cylinder (which wasn't available in time for this month's test) and a 365-hp, turbocharged V6 in the high-performance Taurus SHO. All-wheel drive is

available with the V6 engine and is standard on the Taurus SHO.

Overwhelming controls

The MyFord Touch system offers a variety of ways to enter commands: a touch screen, steering-wheel controls, flush switches, and voice commands. But the screen's many buttons and small fonts make it hard to use, and you wind up toggling through different menus to perform many functions. The flush buttons are fussy and hard to tell apart. Voice commands work well for navigation and music players but can be cumbersome for climate control and radio tuning. Pairing a phone and connecting a music player are easy.

The interior has thickly padded and wood-trimmed panels. But fit and finish falls short; rough edges and wide gaps are evident.

You'll find a cramped driving position with a big center console hogging space on the right and little foot room on the left, though head and leg room are sufficient. The seats and pedals have power adjustments, but taller drivers wished they could pull the tilt-and-telescoping steering wheel closer to them.

Front seats are supportive and well padded, but they're narrow and there's not enough thigh support for some tall drivers. The rear seat is comfortable, but head and leg room are less than in some smaller family sedans.

Other than the analog speedometer, all the gauges are digital. It takes a stiff push to fully activate the turn signals, and a lot of controls, including wipers, share that single stalk.

The trunk is huge and nicely finished. But its exterior release is low, where it gets dirty. The rear seat folds down in 60/40 sections.

Tested vehicle	
HIGHS	Ride, quietness, trunk space
LOWS	MyFord Touch controls, visibility, driving position
TRIM LINE	Limited
DRIVETRAIN	288-hp, 3.5-liter V6; six-speed automatic; front-wheel drive
MAJOR OPTIONS	Adjustable pedals, blind-spot detection, heated and cooled front seats, power steering-wheel adjustment, moonroof
TESTED PRICE	\$37,885
The Taurus line	
OTHER TRIM LINES	SE, SEL, SHO
OTHER DRIVETRAINS	240-hp, 2.0-liter turbocharged four-cylinder; 365-hp, 3.5-liter turbocharged V6; all-wheel drive
BASE PRICES	\$26,600 - \$39,200
More test findings	
BRAKING	Short stops on dry pavement, somewhat long when it's wet.
HEADLIGHTS	Low beams provide very good visibility. High beams offer some improvement but aren't on par with better performers.
ACCESS	Impeded by tall sills, raked pillars, and doors that don't open very wide. Assist grips on all doors.
VISIBILITY	Thick pillars, small windows, and a high beltline block vision. Inset blind-spot mirrors are standard. A backup camera and blind-spot warning system is optional.
CABIN STORAGE	Moderate.
HEAD RESTRAINTS	The center-rear restraint can't be raised high enough to provide adequate protection for adults.
CHILD SEATS	Four lower LATCH anchors can be used to fit seats in any rear position but are awkward to reach.



Scan for video.



OUT OF TOUCH
The MyFord Touch screen is a long reach, and many buttons and fonts are too small.





Subaru BRZ

SPORTS CARS

Scion FR-S and Subaru BRZ

New coupes are fun and affordable

SCION AND SUBARU have hit the spot for driving enthusiasts with two almost identical sports coupes, the FR-S and BRZ. Co-developed by Subaru and Toyota, which builds Scion vehicles, the only differences between the cars are nuances in styling, exhaust note, and suspension tuning.

Both are exhilarating to drive. Each is powered by the same 200-hp, 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine, mated to a slick-shifting six-speed manual transmission. That combo delivers ample acceleration, thanks to well-chosen gear ratios, and fuel economy is still an impressive 30 mpg overall.

But the rear-wheel-drive coupes aren't about raw power or scrimping at the pump. Their magic comes from the super-sharp, agile

handling and excellent braking that makes them so enticing to drive, whether on our track or down a twisty backcountry road.

Their appeal also extends to the window stickers. Both are priced in the mid-\$20,000 range, with our feature-laden Subaru costing \$27,117, about \$2,000 more than the \$25,025 basic Scion.

Their trade-offs are typical for sports cars: a jittery ride, noisy cabin, and vestigial rear seats that are better for holding gear than people. And getting in and out of the low-slung cars requires a bit of ducking.

We expect them to have above-average reliability, based on the impressive track records of Scion and Subaru. And with strong road-test scores of 83 for the FR-S and 82 for the BRZ, we recommend both cars.

Thrills on the road

Neither the FR-S nor the BRZ is the fastest sports car on the road, but they provide an enjoyable balance of performance and everyday usability. Handling is agile, with little body lean and quick, well-weighted steering. The Scion is a bit more responsive than the Subaru, with slightly better on-center steering feel. But most drivers probably wouldn't notice the difference. Only a handful of sports cars provide better steering feedback.

Both cars were balanced and predictable when pushed to their handling limits, although the BRZ had slightly more understeer. They posted an impressive 56 mph in our avoidance maneuver, and drivers felt confident while threading the course. Turning off the stability control in the safe confines of a track rewards skilled drivers with playful handling at approachable limits.

The FR-S provides a slightly more compliant ride, but overall both cars are busy, with short, quick body motions that make them feel choppy on any surface. There is also notable





Scion FR-S

ROAD-TEST SCORE
83 **Scion FR-S** Recommended



TIGHT SQUEEZE
The rear seat is difficult to access and best left for pets and packages.

ROAD-TEST SCORE
82 **Subaru BRZ** Recommended



WINGING IT Our BRZ came outfitted with an optional \$567 rear spoiler.

road and engine noise in the cabins.

In addition to responsive performance, the flat-four engine emits a sporty, deep-throated growl when revved, with the BRZ sounding slightly gruffer than the FR-S. Both cars require premium fuel. A six-speed automatic transmission is available in place of the stick.

No frills in the cabins

The interiors are pretty basic; there's no pampering here, but padded surfaces on the dash and doors help dress them up.

The cabin is snug but well set up for driving, with good leg and head room; the shifter, pedals, and tilt-and-telescoping steering wheel are perfectly placed. There's a wide footwell, but the center console intrudes from the right.

You sit low in these cars. Firm, aggressively bolstered front seats provide good lateral support, but some larger drivers found the seats confining. The seat's height and backrest angle are adjustable, but there is no lumbar adjustment. The rear seat is hardly usable, with a low cushion and very limited head and leg room.

The gauges have a large tachometer, with an inset digital speedometer. An analog speedometer on its left is hard to read. Most controls are simple. But the standard radio in the FR-S has small buttons that are hard to use and no tuning knob. Our BRZ's radio is even worse; it's operated almost entirely

through a touch screen with tiny keys. Only the Subaru offers satellite radio capability and GPS navigation, but we found the navigation system second-rate.

The trunks are small, but the one-piece rear seat folds forward to make more room. And weekend racers take note: Four tires fit nicely in the back for track days.

Tested vehicles	
HIGHS	Driving fun, handling, braking, fuel economy
LOWS	Ride, noise, access, radio controls, vestigial rear seating
TRIM LINE	— (FR-S), Premium (BRZ)
DRIVETRAIN	200-hp, 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine; six-speed manual transmission; rear-wheel drive
MAJOR OPTIONS	None (FR-S), rear spoiler (BRZ)
TESTED PRICE	\$25,025 (FR-S), \$27,117 (BRZ)

More test findings	
BRAKING	Excellent, with very short stopping distances overall.
HEADLIGHTS	The FR-S has halogen lamps, the BRZ has HID lights. Both provide very good forward visibility. FR-S high beams improve intensity. Sharp upper cutoffs can reduce range when traveling over undulations.
ACCESS	The low roof and high sill impede front-seat access; adults shouldn't bother trying to climb in the back.
VISIBILITY	Good, with a low dashboard, good-sized windows, and large side mirrors. No backup camera is available.
CABIN STORAGE	Modest, with no enclosed console storage compartment.
HEAD RESTRAINTS	Rear seat has no head restraints to protect adults.
CHILD SEATS	Deep contoured seats, limited room, and forward-mounted safety-belt buckles make it difficult to secure child seats.

How they compare

Rec.	SPORTS CARS (manual transmission)	0	100
		P	F G V E
	Mazda MX-5 Miata Grand Touring	89	
	Volkswagen GTI (4-door)	85	
	MazdaSpeed 3 Sport	83	
	Scion FR-S	83	
	Subaru BRZ Premium	82	
	Ford Mustang Premium (V6)	76	
	Mini Cooper S	74	

Mazda MX-5 Miata



Ford Mustang



Compare



VERSION	Chrysler 300	Hyundai Azera	Buick LaCrosse	Ford Taurus	Scion FR-S	Subaru BRZ
TRIM LINE	Limited	3.3L	Base	Limited	—	Premium
PRICE: BASE/TESTED ⁽¹⁾	\$32,170/\$38,335	\$32,000/\$37,185	\$31,895/\$34,935	\$33,000/\$37,885	\$24,200/\$25,025	\$25,495/\$27,117
DRIVETRAIN						
Engine	3.6-liter V6 (292 hp)	3.3-liter V6 (293 hp)	2.4-liter 4-cyl. (182 hp)	3.5-liter V6 (288 hp)	2.0-liter 4-cyl. (200 hp)	2.0-liter 4-cyl. (200 hp)
Transmission	8-speed automatic	6-speed automatic	6-speed automatic	6-speed automatic	6-speed manual	6-speed manual
Drive wheels	Rear	Front	Front	Front	Rear	Rear
TIRES TESTED						
Model & size	Firestone FR710, size P225/60R18 99T	Hankook Optimo H426, size P245/40R19 94V	Michelin Energy Saver A/S, size P235/50R17 95T	Michelin Primacy MXM4, size 255/45R19 100V	Michelin Primacy HP, size 215/45R17 87W	Michelin Primacy HP, size 215/45R17 87W
RATINGS						
PERFORMANCE						
Acceleration	⊖	⊖	○	⊖	●	●
0 to 60 mph, sec.	7.4	7.2	9.2	7.2	7.2	7.2
45 to 65 mph, sec.	4.6	4.5	6.2	5.0	5.5	5.4
Quarter-mile, sec.	15.8	15.7	17.2	15.6	15.5	15.6
Transmission	●	●	⊖	⊖	●	●
Routine handling	⊖	○	⊖	○	●	●
Emergency handling	○	○	○	○	●	●
Avoid. maneuver, speed, mph	50.0	51.5	52.0	50.0	56.5	56.0
Braking	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	●	●
From 60 mph, dry/wet, ft.	137/142	132/139	130/145	135/142	126/127	126/126
Headlights	●	●	○	○	⊖	○
COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE						
Ride	⊖	⊖	●	⊖	○	○
Noise	●	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖
Driving position	⊖	⊖	○	○	⊖	⊖
Front-seat comfort	●	●	●	⊖	⊖	⊖
Rear-seat comfort	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	●	●
Access	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖	⊖
Controls and displays	⊖	⊖	⊖	●	⊖	⊖
Interior fit and finish	●	●	●	⊖	⊖	⊖
Trunk	○	⊖	●	●	⊖	⊖
PREDICTED RELIABILITY	NA	New	New	○	⊖	⊖
FUEL						
Overall mpg	22	23	26	21	30	30
City/highway mpg	15/32	15/34	18/39	14/31	23/37	23/37
Type	regular	regular	regular	regular	premium	premium
Capacity, gal./Cruising range, mi.	19.1/425	18.5/420	15.8/415	19.0/405	13.2/400	13.2/400
Annual cost, 12K mi. at \$3.60/gal.	\$1,945	\$1,895	\$1,640	\$2,035	\$1,505 @ \$3.80/gal.	\$1,505 @ \$3.80/gal.
SAFETY						
CRASH TESTS						
IIHS frontal offset	Good	Good	Good	Good	NA	NA
IIHS side	Good	Good	Good	Good	NA	NA
IIHS rear	Good	Good	Good	Good	NA	NA
IIHS roof strength	Good	Good	Good	Good	NA	NA
NHTSA front, driver/pass.	●/⊖	NA/NA	●/●	●/●	NA/NA	NA/NA
NHTSA side, driver/rear	○/●	NA/NA	●/⊖	●/⊖	NA/NA	NA/NA
NHTSA rollover 2WD/4WD	⊖/⊖	NA/NA	⊖/⊖	⊖/⊖	NA/NA	NA/NA
AIR BAGS						
Side, front/rear	std./no	std./std.	std./opt.	std./no	std./no	std./no
Head protection	standard	standard	std. w/rollover	std. w/rollover	standard	standard
SPECIFICATIONS						
DIMENSIONS AND WEIGHT						
Length/width/height, in.	199/75/58	193/73/58	197/73/59	203/76/61	167/70/51	167/70/51
Wheelbase, in.	120	112	112	113	101	101
Turning circle, ft.	40	39	39	42	38	38
Ground clearance, in.	5.0	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.0	4.0
Curb weight, lb. (% front/rear)	4,095 (52/48)	3,795 (59/41)	3,815 (59/41)	4,090 (60/40)	2,770 (55/45)	2,770 (55/45)
Maximum load, lb.	865	905	905	950	700	700
Luggage, suitcases+duffels	3+1	3+2	2+1	4+2	1+2	1+2
Towing capacity, lb.	1,000	NR	NR	1,000	NR	NR
INTERIOR ROOM						
Front shoulder room, in.	57.5	57.0	57.0	57.5	54.5	54.5
Front leg room, in.	43.0	42.0	44.0	41.5	41.5	41.5
Front head room, in. ⁽²⁾	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Rear shoulder room, in.	54.5	54.0	55.5	56.0	50.0	50.0
Rear leg room, in.	29.5	32.0	31.0	28.5	21.5	21.5
Rear head room, in. ⁽²⁾	2.5	3.0	3.5	3.5	0.0	0.0

⁽¹⁾ Based on sticker price at time of purchase. ⁽²⁾ Above a person 5'9" tall.

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Consumer Reports' staff operates under contract between Consumer Reports and The Newspaper Guild of New York, Local 3, 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.

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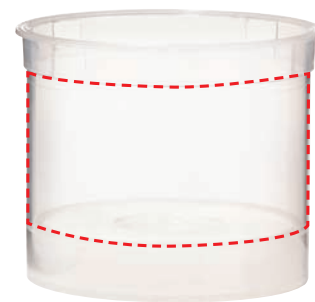
Crushed, as claimed

And on sale at a reader's supermarket.



Show me the Shoupie

"I thought I had come across a pretty good deal on a multi-pack of name-brand markers," a Maine reader wrote. Upon closer inspection, he realized he was wrong. You'll spot the difference—if you have a sharp eye.



Black Hole Award

This one goes to Kirkland Signature Borghese Replenishing Night Cream, which surprised a woman who found she'd have to replenish it sooner than planned. As she removed the last of the product, the insert above right came out, revealing how much cream was really inside.



Gender bender

The Zazzle website may be right, but isn't he too young to be a grandmother?



What's in a name?

Some Breyers flavors have morphed from ice cream into frozen dairy dessert. "These products do not fall within the current FDA definition of standardized Ice Cream," the Breyers website explained, then praised frozen dairy dessert's smoother texture and high-quality ingredients.

But there can be more additives in the new stuff. Ingredients for the late lamented Butter Pecan ice cream, as recited by a Breyers rep: milk, cream, sugar, pecans, whey butter, salt, cottonseed oil, tara gum, natural flavor, lactase enzyme. The dairy dessert? Milk, sugar, corn syrup, butter pecans, cream, whey, mono and diglycerides, salt, carob bean gum, guar gum, natural flavors, carrageenan, lactase enzyme, annatto, vitamin A palmitate, tara gum.

Tussin Long-Acting Cough

Dextromethorphan HBr Cough

Cough for up to 8 hours

- For ages 12 & over
- Alcohol 1.4%
- Non-drowsy

Syrup to make you sick

"An 8-hour cough," wrote a Nevada reader, "was not what I had in mind when I purchased this product!"

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Canada Extra

Information from CONSUMER REPORTS® for Canadian readers

In this special section

Space heaters	32A
Generators	32B
Leaf blowers	32B
Lightbulbs	32C
Compact refrigerators	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 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.

Space heaters

Report, page 30; Ratings, page 31

Seven of the small and large room space heaters are available, including 3 of the recommended models.



Rec. Rank	Brand & model	Price	Weight (lb.)	Overall score
				0 100 P F G V E

A SMALL ROOM HEATERS These compact electric models all have a fan for faster heating.

	1	Dyson AM04	\$450	5	73
	8	Whirlpool WHTR360K	70	5	53

Rec. Rank	Brand & model	Price	Weight (lb.)	Overall score
				0 100 P F G V E

B LARGE ROOM HEATERS Some of these larger electric models are styled like furniture; most have fans.

	1	Duraflame 10HM4126-0107	\$250	37	68
	2	Heat Surge HT-XL	400	52	67
	3	Soleus Air HM2-15R-32 ²	90	11	58
	4	Edenpure GEN4	447	26	57
	7	Eco-Heater C400S ² ³	100	11	37

² Lacks a fan. ³ Not applicable; wall-mounted.

Generators

Report, page 40; Ratings, page 41

Eight of the portable and stationary generators are available, including 4 of the recommended models.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Specifications	Overall score
				Claimed output (watts) Weight with fuel (lb.) Run time (hr.) ^[1]	
					0 100 P F G VG E

PORTABLE All run on gasoline unless footnoted and can be stored away when they aren't needed.

✓	2	Generac GP5500 5738	\$ 750	5,500 212 11	67
✓	4	Honda EM6500S2C	3,300	5,500 298 9	64
	5	Yamaha EF6600DE ^[3]	3,500	6,000 291 10	62
	9	Generac XG7000E 5845	1,450	7,000 262 15	49
	11	Briggs & Stratton 30468	950	5,500 199 9	45

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Specifications	Overall score
				Claimed output (watts) Weight with fuel (lb.) Run time (hr.) ^[1]	
					0 100 P F G VG E

STATIONARY These install outdoors, run on propane or natural gas, and start automatically.

✓	1	Kohler 8.5 RES-QS7	\$3,200	7,000 ^[6] NA 224 ^[7]	92
✓	2	Generac CorePower 5837	2,000	6,000 ^[6] NA 296 ^[7]	77
	3	Briggs & Stratton EmPower 040301	1,800	6,000 ^[6] NA 277 ^[7]	69

^[1] The average we measured over various loads. ^[3] Price includes optional wheel kit, \$150.

^[6] Claimed output is with natural gas; output with propane is 1,000 to 1,500 watts higher (as tested). ^[7] With 250-gallon liquid-propane tank; runs indefinitely with natural gas. NA—not

applicable; stationary unit.

Leaf blowers

Report and Ratings, page 38

Eleven of the leaf blowers are available, including 5 of the recommended models.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Weight (lb.)	Overall score
					0 100 P F G VG E

CORDED-ELECTRIC HANDHELD The best blend performance and value for small yards.

✓	1	Toro Ultra Blower Vac 51599	\$ 90	8	79
✓	2	Toro Super Blower Vac 51592	80	8	78
✓	3	Stihl BGE 61	NA	7	75
✓	4	Toro Rake and Vac 51574	70	7	74
	6	Black & Decker LH500-CA	110	8	69
	9	Weed Eater WEB160	50	5	54
	10	Homelite UT42100	40	5	53
	11	Black & Decker BV2500	90	9	50

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Weight (lb.)	Overall score
					0 100 P F G VG E

GASOLINE HANDHELD The best are more powerful than electrics but cost more.

✓	3	Stihl BG55	\$150	9	79
	8	Weed Eater FB25	100	8	65

GASOLINE BACKPACK This shifts weight off your arms, a plus for larger jobs.

	5	Troy-Bilt TB4BP*	280	17.4	71
--	---	------------------	-----	------	----

*Four-stroke engine; other gas models are two-stroke.

Lightbulbs

Report, page 32; Ratings, pages 33-34

Fourteen of the 50 lightbulbs are available, including 7 of the recommended models.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P F G VG E

A 60-WATT REPLACEMENTS GENERAL PURPOSE

Most have a Color Rendering Index (CRI) between 81 and 83. CFLs are spiral unless noted.

✓	2	Philips 12.5W LED "A" Dimmable Soft White	\$30.00	98
✓	4	EcoSmart 60 Watt Soft White	14.00	84
✓	5	Feit Electric Ecobulb Plus 60W [1] [2]	NA	81
	7	Philips Energy Saver 60W Soft White Mini	NA	73
	8	GE Energy Smart 13W Soft White	NA	70

B 40- TO 50-WATT REPLACEMENTS GENERAL PURPOSE

Most have a CRI between 81 and 85.

✓	1	GE 9W A19 LED	50.00	97
	2	LG A19 7.5 40W [1] [2]	NA	67

D 100-WATT REPLACEMENTS GENERAL PURPOSE

CFLs are spiral. Most have a CRI between 79 and 82.

✓	2	Feit Electric Ecobulb Plus 100W	NA	68
	5	GE Energy Smart 100W	NA	57

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P F G VG E

E 65-WATT REPLACEMENTS FLOOD/REFLECTOR

Commonly used in recessed or track lights. Most have a CRI between 81 and 84.

✓	3	Feit Electric Ecobulb Plus Soft White R30 65W [1] [2]	NA	75
	6	EcoSmart R30 Soft White 65W	\$14.00	67
	7	Philips Energy Saver R30 Dimmable Reflector Flood	NA	55

G 90- TO 110-WATT PAR38 REPLACEMENT FLOOD/REFLECTOR

Mostly used in accent or security lights. Most have a CRI between 82 and 84.

	4	Philips Energy Saver Reflector Flood PAR38	NA	57
--	---	--	----	----

H 40- TO 60-WATT REPLACEMENT PORCH/POST

Used in outdoor fixtures. Most have a CRI between 83 and 84.

✓	1	Philips 14W Automatic Postlight Soft White [1]	NA	76
---	---	--	----	----

[1] Works with photocell. [2] Works with motion sensor.

Compact refrigerators

Report and Ratings, page 39

Nine of the tall and two-door compact refrigerators are available, including the recommended model.

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P F G VG E

A TALL

✓	1	Frigidaire CFPH44M4L[M]	\$270	65
	3	Emerson CR519B	180	32
	6	Danby DCR122BSLDD	200	25
	7	Frigidaire CFPH25M4L[B]	160	22
	9	Haier HN5E045[BB]	200	20
	12	Haier ESRN046[BB]	200	18

Rec.	Rank	Brand & model	Price	Overall score
				0 100 P F G VG E

B TWO-DOOR

	2	Frigidaire CFPH31M6L[M]	\$320	38
	3	Danby DCR326BSL	250	30
	4	Haier HNDE03V[S]	200	29

Autos

Report, page 53; Ratings, page 54

All of the tested vehicles except the Hyundai Azera 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
LARGE SEDANS								
Chrysler 300	\$32,995-\$49,905	3.3	7.7	3.3	18.1	16.2	7.3	10.6
Buick LaCrosse	34,935-45,675	3.6	9.7	4.3	19.7	13.2	6.1	8.9
Ford Taurus	28,799-49,199	3.1	7.6	3.8	17.8	17.1	7.5	11.1
SPORTS CARS								
Scion FR-S	25,990-27,170	2.7	7.6	4.0	17.7	10.2	6.3	7.8
Subaru BRZ	27,295-30,495	2.7	7.7	3.9	17.8	10.2	6.3	7.8

Contact info

How to reach manufacturers in Canada.

Black & Decker
800-544-6986
blackanddecker.com

Danby
800-263-2629
danby.com

Duraflame
866-661-1218
twinstarhome.com/duraflame

Dyson
877-397-6622
english.dysoncanada.ca/fans

Eco-Heater
ecoheat.com

EcoSmart
Contact local Home Depot
homedepot.ca

Edenpure
800-372-2513
edenpurecanada.com

Emerson
emersonradio.com

Feit
800-543-3348
feitelectric.ca

Frigidaire
800-668-4606
frigidaire.ca

GE
800-435-4448
gelighting.com

Haier
866-779-5154
haieramerica.com

Heat Surge
800-924-7964
custserv@heatsurge.com

Honda
888-946-6329
honda.ca

LG
888-542-2623
lg.ca

Philips
Contact local Home Depot
homedepot.ca

Soleus Air
800-445-6937
lowes.ca

Stihl
519-681-3000
stihl.ca

Toro
519-618-3000
toro.ca

Troy-Bilt
800-668-1238
mtdcanada.com

Weed Eater
800-554-6723
weed eater.ca

Whirlpool
866-990-7365
whirlpool.com

Yamaha
416-498-1911
yamaha-motor.ca

**GOOGLE NEXUS
vs. APPLE iPad**
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**2013 NEW CAR
PREVIEW**
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**SPECIAL 32-PAGE SECTION
MINNESOTA DOCTOR RATINGS**

**How Does
Your Doctor
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PLUS Store brands that save you money PAGE 16

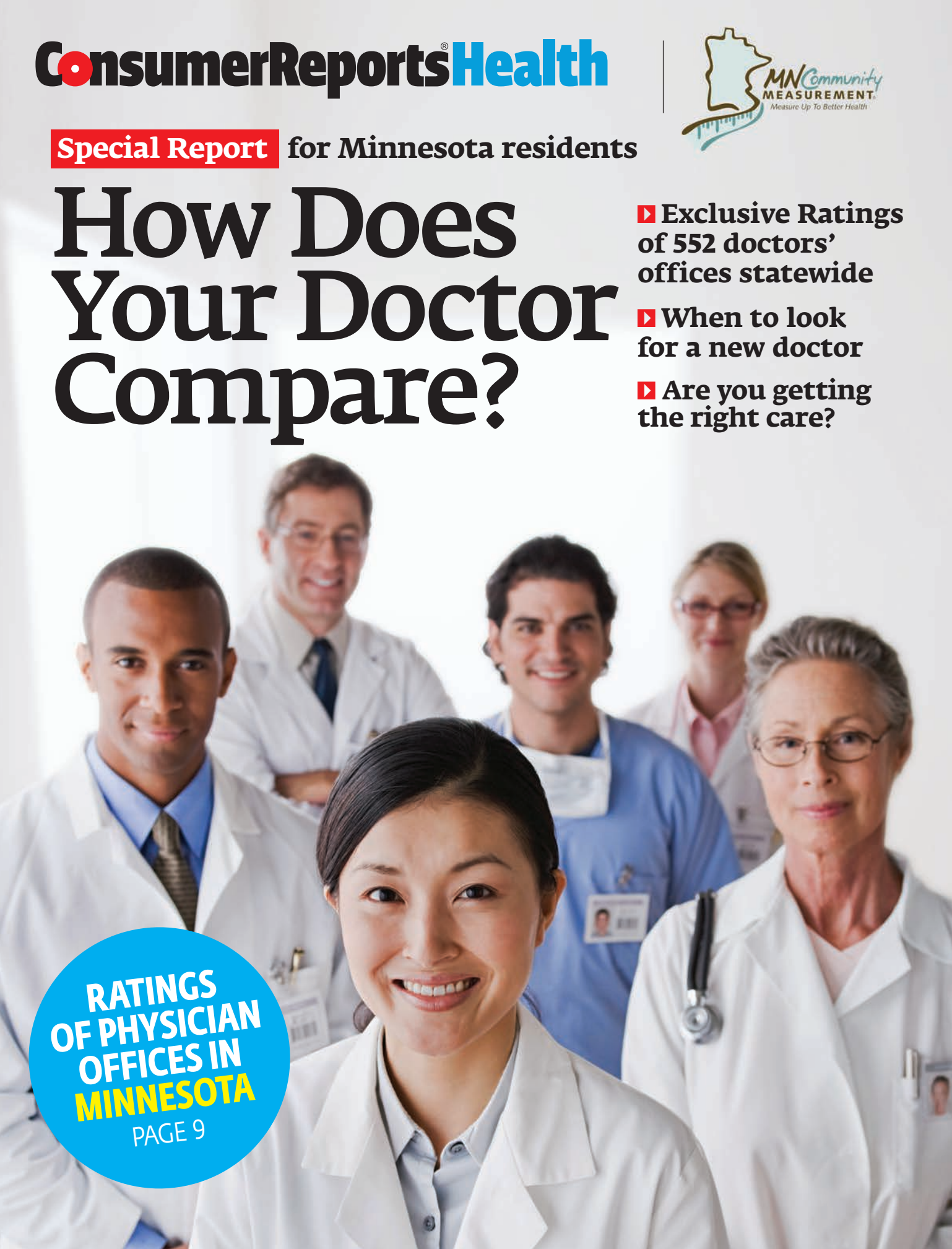
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**RATINGS
OF PHYSICIAN
OFFICES IN
MINNESOTA**
PAGE 9

ConsumerReports[®]Health

July 31, 2012

Dear CONSUMER REPORTS readers,



We are pleased to present a special insert on Minnesota physician practices in the October 2012 edition of CONSUMER REPORTS. The Ratings shown in the following pages come from data provided by MN Community Measurement. That nonprofit organization has worked with physicians, hospitals, health plans, employers, and consumers since 2004 to improve health care and reduce cost, in part by collecting, validating, and publicly reporting data on physician performance.

The Ratings we present here focus on the quality of care provided to patients with diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or both. Getting a good score is hard work, since it depends on physicians meeting multiple targets in treating those diseases, such as lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and requires that patients participate, by, for example, taking medication as directed and stopping smoking. Minnesota doctors deserve applause for their willingness to collect the data, make it public, and collaborate with Consumer Reports and MN Community Measurement to make it widely available to consumers. They are among the first in the nation to do so. You can learn more about the quality of physician care by going to the organization's website, at myhealthscores.org.

Sharing performance data about providers is important for several reasons. First, it generates conversations among doctors about changes they can make in their practices to lift the quality of care they provide to patients. And making this information available to patients leads to one of the most powerful forces driving improvement—educated health-care consumers.

We are able to do this project in part because of a generous grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation related to a unique program called Aligning Forces for Quality. That program is the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's signature effort to lift the overall quality of health care in 16 targeted communities (including Minnesota), reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and provide models for national reform. We think this effort is a good example of the foundation's unprecedented commitment of resources, expertise, and training focused on turning proven practices for improving quality into real results.

We hope you find this information useful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John Santa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

John Santa, M.D.
Director
Consumer Reports Health Ratings Center



How does your doctor compare?

We rated 552 Minnesota practices on two important measures

FINDING INFORMATION about doctors isn't easy. The top-doctor lists found in magazines and on websites are usually based on little more than reputation or anecdotal reports. But now, through a unique collaboration, we've rated 552 Minnesota physician practices to help you learn about the doctors and nurses who are key partners in managing your family's health.

These Ratings are based on data collected by the practices themselves on how well their patients control two of the most common and deadliest chronic diseases: diabetes and cardiovascular disease, which includes heart disease, stroke, and peripheral artery disease.

How do Minnesota practices stack up? Pretty well. We found clinics delivering high-quality care for diabetes and cardiovascular disease throughout the state, and 37 practices earned our highest rating in

both categories. That shouldn't be surprising: Minnesota has the best performing health-care system in the country, just edging out Wisconsin, according to a recent report from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The same analysis showed that the state was rated above average in all but one measure of diabetes care, and average or above average for heart disease measures.

The news isn't all good: 66 practices earned our lowest score for diabetes care, 50 got our lowest score for cardiovascular care, and 24 for both.

37 clinics earned our highest score for diabetes and vascular care.

While this report is most important if you already have diabetes or cardiovascular disease, it's relevant for other people, too. Heart disease remains the leading killer of Americans and contributes to about one in five deaths in Minnesota. Similarly, diabetes is reaching epidemic proportions, affecting about 25 million adults nationwide and about 20 percent of Minnesotans. Even more troubling is the rising incidence of type 2 diabetes among children: Some 215,000 Americans under age 20 now have diabetes. So it pays to make sure that you and your doctor are doing all you should to protect yourself against both diseases.

Measuring medical care

To rate the practices, we teamed up with Minnesota Community Measurement (MNCM), a non-profit group that works with health plans, medical groups, physi-

North Star State success stories

The 37 physician practices listed below are the only ones in the state to earn our highest score for caring for both diabetes patients and cardiovascular disease patients. Eleven of them belong to the Park Nicollet group, eight to the Allina Medical group, six to Entira Family Clinics, and three to HealthPartners.

Most of those practices are in or around the Twin Cities. But clinics from other regions are represented, too. The Mankato Clinic in this list, for example, is in Mapleton, in the Southeast region of the state. And two clinics—the Allina Medical Clinic in Prescott and Ellsworth Medical Clinic—are in Wisconsin, but serve patients who live or work in Minnesota.

Entira Family Clinic's practice on Bellaire Avenue in White Bear Lake, which until recently was called Family Health Services Minnesota, had the highest percentage of patients meeting all the targets for both vascular disease and diabetes. Bruce Leppink, M.D., a quality representative at the clinic, says that success came after he, his colleagues, and the staff decided that "mediocrity was no longer acceptable."



They identified patients who weren't meeting their goals for high blood pressure, cholesterol, and other measures, and developed plans, with patients, detailing the specific changes they needed to make. "My patients are now much more interested in their numbers and how they can work towards their goals," says Leppink.

"Some of my elderly patients have even put the sheet on the refrigerator so their grandkids can see that Grandma got an A," says Leppink. Christopher Tashjian, M.D., a physician at the Ellsworth clinic, says improvement in his practice came when the whole staff—including other caregivers and administrative staff, not just doctors—were involved in quality-improvement initiatives. "We realized disease management is a team sport. We provide measurably better care when we include the diabetes educator and care coordinator," he says.

The staff at the Ellsworth clinic saw another big improvement after the clinic started using electronic medical records, which enabled the staff to more carefully track their patients. "We are a small practice," Tashjian says. "We don't have an IT department. Our feeling is that if we can do it with the limited resources, anyone can."

cians, hospitals, employers, and consumers to improve health care and reduce cost. MNMCM has measured and reported health-care quality data since 2004, and is at the forefront of health-care ratings in Minnesota and nationally.

These Ratings include medical practices that treat diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Among them are primary-care doctors as well as specialists in geriatrics, cardiology, and endocrinology. The Ratings criteria are rigorous; a practice's score is based on the percentage of its patients who achieve all of the targets for the best management of the two conditions. That means controlling blood pressure and cholesterol levels and, in the case of diabetes, their blood sugar level, too. It also means that these patients are not smoking or using other tobacco products, and are taking low-dose aspirin when appropriate to prevent heart attacks.

Meeting all of those goals is difficult, but possible. Overall, 68 practices earned our top score for diabetes care, indicating that at least half of their patients reached all five treatment goals for the condition. The statewide average is 38 percent. The Fairview Clinic in Rosemount and Entira Family Clinic on Bellaire Avenue in White Bear Lake set the standard with 60 percent of patients reaching the targets, and several other practices were nearly as high.

For cardiovascular care, 75 practices earned the highest rating. Mankato Clinic in Lake Crystal set the benchmark, with 72 percent of its patients meeting the four optimum treatment targets in that category. The statewide average is 49 percent.

Of course, doctors can't get high scores on their own. They can't force patients to eat better, exercise more, quit smoking, and take their medications. In addition, low-income patients may have limited resources to manage their care, so doctors who treat a lot of low-income patients may face greater challenges in helping their patients to meet all five goals. But research suggests that doctors do play a major role in encouraging patients to make lifestyle changes and stick with treatment plans.

Our guide on the following pages can help you evaluate the care you receive, get the best diabetes and cardiovascular care from your doctor and, if necessary, identify a clinic that might be a better fit for you. But don't stop there. You can also see how well your practice rates in 14 other important measures at myhealthscores.org.

Top-scoring practices

(Listed by their performance.)

Entira Family Clinics – White Bear Lake, Bellaire Ave.

Fairview Clinics – Bloomington

Park Nicollet Clinic – Golden Valley

Park Nicollet Clinic – Prairie Center

Western Wisconsin Medical Associates – Ellsworth Medical Clinic

Edina Sports Health & Wellness

Park Nicollet Clinic – Maple Grove

Park Nicollet Clinic – St. Louis Park Internal Medicine

Mankato Clinic – Mapleton

Entira Family Clinics – Gorman Clinic

Allina Medical Clinic – Buffalo

Entira Family Clinics – White Bear Lake, Banning Avenue

Park Nicollet Clinic – Wayzata

Park Nicollet Clinic – Burnsville

Allina Medical Clinic – Ramsey

HealthPartners – Roseville

Allina Medical Clinic – Champlin

Quello Clinic – Edina

North Memorial Clinic – Camden Physicians, Plymouth

Allina Medical Clinic – West Health Campus

Park Nicollet Clinic – Plymouth

Allina Medical Clinic – Prescott

Aspen Medical Group – Highland

Park Nicollet Clinic – Eagan

Allina Medical Clinic – Blaine

Allina Medical Clinic – Shoreview

Entira Family Clinics – Inver Grove Heights

Park Nicollet Clinic – St. Louis Park Family Medicine

Park Nicollet Clinic – Chanhassen

Park Nicollet Clinic – Carlson

Allina Medical Clinic – Northfield

Entira Family Clinics – Shoreview

HealthPartners – Arden Hills

HealthEast – Cottage Grove

Fairview Clinics – Eagan

Entira Family Clinics – Highland Family Physicians

HealthPartners – Elk River

Control blood pressure

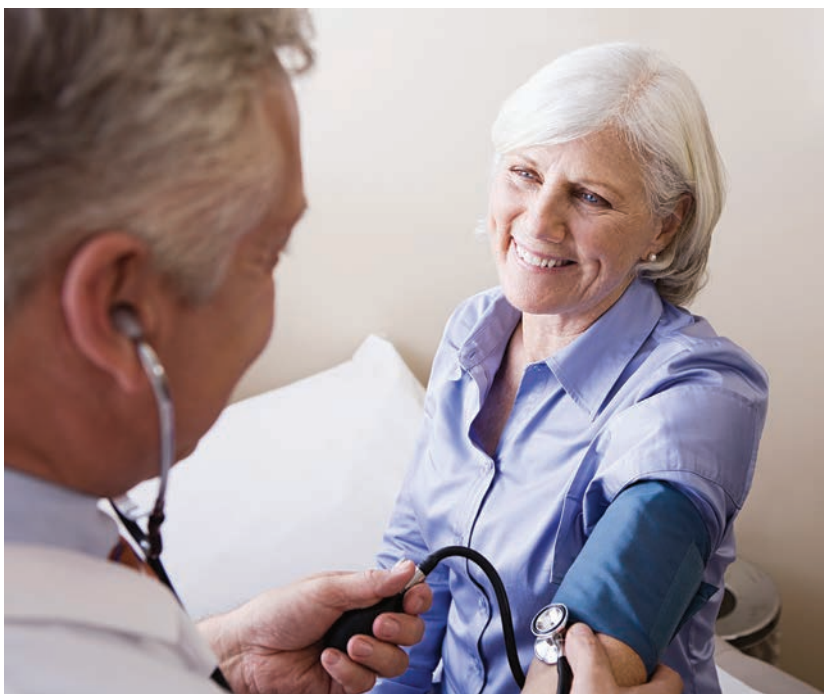
Goal: Patients with either diabetes or cardiovascular disease should aim for blood pressure levels below 140 over 90. (The first number shows your systolic pressure, which is the pressure in the arteries when your heart contracts. The second number is the diastolic pressure, or the pressure when the heart is at rest.)

Why it matters: High blood pressure usually has no obvious symptoms, but it triggers more heart attacks and strokes in the U.S. than any other cause. Increased blood pressure can damage blood vessels throughout the body, which can also increase the risk of kidney damage, vision loss, arterial blockages in the legs, and sexual dysfunction. It can also force the heart to work harder and increase the risk of heart failure. One in five Americans with high blood pressure don't know they have it, and 65 percent aren't adequately treated. So it's important for your doctor to detect high blood pressure early, before too much damage is done.

What you can do: People with high blood pressure should have a doctor check their levels frequently, and consider using a home blood-pressure monitor, too. Other people should get checked at least every two years, and more often if you're 50 or older or have other risk factors. In fact, it's a good idea to have it done during every visit to a health-care provider.

If you are diagnosed with high or borderline-high blood pressure, several lifestyle changes can help you lower it:

- **Eat better.** A diet low in sodium and high in fruit, whole grains, and vegetables can reduce systolic blood pressure by as much as 8 to 14 mmHg. Just cutting back on dietary sodium to no more than 2,400 milligrams a day, might be worth 2 to 8 mmHg off your blood pressure.
- **Lose weight.** Every 11 pounds you take off may reduce your systolic blood pressure by as much as 2.5 to 10 mmHg.
- **Exercise.** Engaging in a regular aerobic physical activity, such as brisk walking at least 30 minutes a day, most days of the



PRESSURE TO SUCCEED Minnesota clinics, on average, helped 84 percent of patients with diabetes or vascular disease achieve optimum blood pressure control.

week, may shave 4 to 9 mmHg off your systolic pressure.

- **Drink moderately, if at all.** Limiting consumption to no more than two drinks a day for men, and no more than one drink a day for women, might help reduce blood pressure by 2 to 4 mmHg.
- **Consider medication.** If healthy lifestyle changes alone don't adequately lower your blood pressure, or if your levels are very high, drugs are often necessary. The best first choice for many people is a diuretic, particularly a thiazide diuretic. They're effective, safe, and available as low-cost generics. Other drugs, such as beta-blockers or ACE inhibitors, can also be good choices, either alone or with a diuretic.

Lower your bad cholesterol

Goal: Patients with diabetes or cardiovascular disease should get their LDL (bad) cholesterol below 100 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL).

Why it matters: High cholesterol levels contribute to about 420,000 heart attacks and strokes in the U.S. each year. Yet most people don't know their level of LDL cholesterol—the kind that contributes to heart disease by dumping cholesterol in the artery walls. Of those who do, many don't lower their level to recommended targets, in part because they fail to make the lifestyle changes that have been found

to help or, when necessary, take the right medication. High LDL levels are especially worrisome for people with diabetes, since they face a greater risk of heart attacks.

What you can do: People with diabetes or cardiovascular disease should have their cholesterol checked at least every year. Men 35 and older without those conditions should get a complete lipid profile—which measures LDL and HDL (good) cholesterol levels, as well as triglycerides, an artery clogging fat—at least every five years. Women 45 and older who are at risk for heart disease often should, too. Younger people could also consider testing, especially if they have risk factors.

Those with high or borderline cholesterol should consider these steps:

- **Eat a heart-healthy diet.** Reduce saturated fats, found mainly in red meat and full-fat dairy products, and eliminate trans fats or partially hydrogenated oils, found in margarine, many fast foods, and store-bought pastries and other baked sweets. Limit dietary cholesterol to less than 200 milligrams per day. Get plenty of fiber, mainly from whole grains, fruit, vegetables, and beans.
- **Control your weight and stay active.** That can raise your HDL and might lower your LDL, too.
- **Consider medication.** If you have high cholesterol and can't control it with life-

■ FOR MORE ABOUT THESE RATINGS

Scan the code at right with your smart phone QR code reader to access MN Community Measurement's website, which has more information about Minnesota health care ratings.



style changes, you will probably need a prescription drug, usually a statin such as lovastatin, pravastatin, or simvastatin or, if you have had a heart attack and your LDL is highly elevated, atorvastatin (all of which are available as low-cost generics).

Consider low-dose aspirin

Goal: People with heart disease, including those who also have diabetes, should

take low-dose aspirin unless they are at high risk of stomach bleeding or other side effects, or are allergic to it.

Why it matters: Aspirin can prevent artery-blocking blood clots and ward off heart attacks and strokes. But research suggests that only 20 percent of the women and 14 percent of the men who should be taking it are doing so.

What you can do: Most people with car-

diovascular disease or diabetes should be on aspirin therapy. But because aspirin can pose serious risks, notably gastrointestinal bleeding, don't start it without talking to a doctor first. If you do take aspirin, make sure you take it safely:

- Stick with low-dose, 81-mg (baby) aspirin. Research generally suggests it is as effective as standard adult tablets (325 mg) and is less likely to harm the gut and cause

Three Minnesota health-care myths

Our Ratings of physician practices in Minnesota challenge some common assumptions about health care in the state.

Myth 1. Practices in the Twin Cities are better than those in the rest of the state.

Most of the top-scoring practices statewide were in indeed in the Twin Cities or surrounding suburbs, perhaps because practices there have collected the data used in the Ratings longer than others in the state and used the results to improve their care. But the difference between the average score for the Twin Cities and the rest of the state was minor. Moreover, several of the lowest-scoring groups were also in the area, and Minneapolis itself was one of the lower-performing regions in the state, on average. That might be because the city has a greater proportion of the state's uninsured and poorer patients, and research suggests that people who live in those areas tend to have more, and more severe, health problems. Finally, some of our top-scoring groups were as far away as Mapleton, south of Mankato, and Ellsworth, Wis.

Myth 2. Well-known medical groups, such as the Mayo Clinic, provide better care than less familiar ones.

Again, there is some truth to this idea, as practices associated with groups such as Allina, Entira, and Park Nicollet did score better, on average, than some other Minnesota practices. But even within well-known groups there is a wide range of performance. For example, among the 39 practices in the state associated with the Mayo Clinic in 2011, the percentage of patients receiving optimal diabetes care ranged from a low of 17 percent for its practice in New Prague, to a high of 52 percent for its practices in Mankato, North Mankato, and La Crescent. For cardiovascular care, the scores ranged from a low of 19 percent of patients in New Prague receiving optimal care, to a high of 69 percent of those

in Rochester's Northwest Clinic. Clinics affiliated with Allina and Park Nicollet also showed variability, though not as wide as Mayo's. Of the medical groups with more than one clinic, the top-performing group for both cardiovascular and diabetes care was Entira Family Clinics (formerly Family HealthServices Minnesota), which has 12 practices in the East Metro region. It had a range of just 20 percentage points between its highest- and lowest-scoring practices for optimal diabetes care.

Mark Nyman, M.D., a member of the Mayo Clinic's Clinical Practice Quality Committee, says several factors can explain the different scores for clinics in the same group. That can include differences in the quality of care provided, but also some issues outside of the practice's control. For example, Mayo's Specialty Clinic in Rochester might get lower scores than others because it tends to see very sick patients who have traveled to the clinic from elsewhere in the state or country, and then return home where treatment recommendations are implemented.

Myth 3. Community health centers can't provide good care.

Fifteen of these clinics—which provide much needed medical care mainly to low-income patients, the uninsured, recent immigrants, or those who live in underserved areas—are included in our Ratings. On average, they did score lower than other Minnesota practices. But, as with the well-known medical groups and Twin Cities practices, there was wide variation among them. Moreover, the lowest-scoring practices in the state weren't community health centers, and some of the centers outperformed many other clinics. "That's actually quite impressive," says John Santa, M.D., director of the Consumer

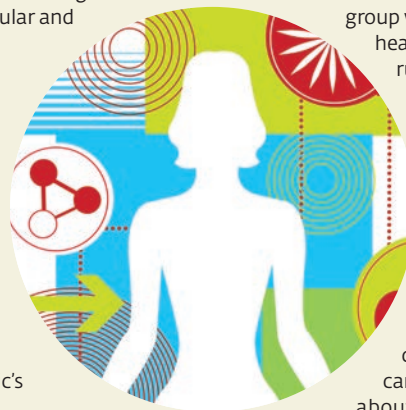
Reports Health Ratings Center, "when you consider that they take all patients regardless of their ability to pay, 70 percent of whom are below the poverty line."

Scenic Rivers Health Services, a group with five community health centers across the rural Northeastern region of the state, exemplifies the variation. Its clinics at Bigfork and Big Falls (they are rated together because they share the same staff) are among our top-scoring community health centers in diabetes and cardiovascular care, and about average for all

practices in the state for both measures. But the group's Cook community health center was among the lowest scoring community health center in both measures.

Jeffery Scrivner, M.D., medical director for Scenic Rivers, says that early on Bigfork adopted practices, such as preappointment planning and maintaining regular telephone contact between visits, that provide a consistent and comprehensive approach to chronic care. Cook, on the other hand, has a long-standing physician shortage and sees many vacationing patients who aren't around the full year for chronic disease management. But Cook is improving, he says, and will begin to implement some of the quality initiatives that have been successful at Bigfork.

Bottom line. Our analysis suggests that when it comes to quality health care in Minnesota, don't put too much stock in location or name. High-scoring practices can be found in both rural and urban areas, and among those affiliated with famous groups, as well as those with less famous names. The highest-scoring community medical centers outscore 60 percent of practices for optimal diabetes care, showing that high-quality care can occur anywhere.



other complications. The one exception is if you think you're having a heart attack. In that case, call 911, then chew and swallow a 325 mg tablet.

- **Protect your gut.** If you have a history of stomach bleeding but your doctor says you need low-dose aspirin anyway, ask about adding a stomach-protecting drug.
- **Don't stop on your own.** Stopping abruptly eliminates the protective benefits of aspirin and might elevate risk beyond original levels by making the platelets in the blood more likely to form clots. If you do need to stop, possibly before surgery, for example, talk with a doctor first.
- **Don't combine aspirin with related pain relievers.** Drugs such as ibuprofen (Advil and generic) or naproxen (Aleve and generic) are chemically related to aspirin, so taken together, they multiply the risk of stomach problems. So if you need pain relief, try acetaminophen (Tylenol and generic) or creams such as Zostrix that contain the topical anesthetic capsaicin.

Stop smoking

Goal: Don't smoke. That's important for everyone, but especially for people with cardiovascular disease or diabetes.

Why it matters: Smoking increases the risk of blood clots, which can cause heart attacks and strokes. It also elevates blood pressure and damages the lungs. Smokers are two to four times as likely to develop heart disease; as many as 30 percent of all heart-disease deaths in the U.S. each year stem from cigarette smoking. Smoking is especially dangerous for people with diabetes. Kicking the habit cuts your heart-disease risk dramatically. The longer you've quit, the lower that risk is likely to become.

What you can do: While it's hard to stop, it's not impossible: About half of all Americans who ever smoked have managed to quit permanently—though they often need help from counseling, medication, or both. Your doctor should offer you support. If he or she doesn't, ask. Nicotine-replacement products—including over-the-counter patches, chewing gums, and lozenges, and prescription nasal sprays or inhalers—help most during the first few months, when the risk of relapse is highest. People who continue to experience intense cravings may need to use the products longer, but they should do so under a doctor's supervision because of the risk of addiction to the replacements.

Manage your blood sugar

Goal: People with diabetes should have an A1C level, which reflects the average blood sugar level over the previous three months, of less than 8.

Why it matters: As the number of people with type 2 diabetes has multiplied in recent decades, so has the number of heart attacks among those with the disease. And roughly a quarter of the U.S. population has prediabetes. They usually have no symptoms, and most don't even know that their blood sugar is a bit high. But most of them go on to develop full-blown type 2 diabetes. Even if they don't, they face an increased risk of a heart attack or stroke, possibly cognitive decline, and certain cancers.

What you can do: People with diabetes should check their blood sugar levels frequently. Adults who are at high risk for the disease should have levels measured at least every three to five years.

The same steps that can help you ward off high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels—weight control, staying active, and consuming a heart-healthy diet—can help you avert diabetes. Losing weight might be the most important. Researchers estimate that about 70 percent of type 2 diabetes cases are largely due to excess body fat.

Medication designed to control blood sugar levels can help people who have diabetes prevent certain complications of the disease, such as vision problems and nerve damage, but they have not been found to help prevent heart attacks. A good first choice for most people is metformin, which is available as a low-cost generic and has a proven record for safety and effectiveness. But many people need more than one medication to control blood sugar. And your choice of diabetes drugs does have implications for heart health, so consider them carefully with your doctor.

What to do if your doctor gets a low score

Of the 552 physician practices in our Ratings, 66 earned our lowest score for diabetes care, 50 got our lowest score for cardiovascular care, and 24 our lowest score for both. What should you do if your doctor's practice is one of them?

First, don't panic and fire your doctor—at least not until you've discussed the results. For one thing, Minnesota ranks first in the country in many measures of health care and is above average in most aspects of diabetes and cardiovascular disease care, so a practice that scores below average in Minnesota might still be average or better compared with practices elsewhere in the country.

In addition, it's important to understand why your physician's practice score is low; in some cases there are good explanations. For example, Bluestone Physician Services, in Stillwater, got our lowest score on both Rating measures. But they mainly care for frail, older people, who often choose comfort over interventions. In those patients, strict adherence to blood pressure or cholesterol goals by, for example, prescribing drugs that can cause side effects might not be as appropriate as it is for younger people—and it's often harmful. In some other cases, low scores might indicate that a practice treats lots of patients who are uninsured or live in poverty and have fewer resources to manage their health.

Most important, what really matters is the care you get from your doctor, not the

practice's overall score. Are your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels under control? Did your doctor talk with you about taking low-dose aspirin and giving up tobacco (if you use it)? If so, you and your doctor might be a good fit regardless of the practice's score. That's especially important to keep in mind if you have a good relationship with your doctor, as well as the nurses, receptionists, and other staff members in the office.

But you shouldn't necessarily start looking for a new doctor even you aren't satisfied with your care. After all, finding a new doctor can be hard, and there are real benefits of sticking with a primary-care doctor who is familiar with you and your medical history.

Instead, use our Ratings as an opportunity to talk with your doctor about how you can work together more effectively to manage your health. Ask what the practice is doing to improve its performance, and whether its scores are moving in the right direction. And remember that your participation is key, too. Your doctor can only make recommendations; you have to follow through on them.

Bottom line. If your doctor is unwilling to have that conversation with you, or if things don't improve, then it might indeed be time to seek care elsewhere. And in that case, our Ratings can be a good starting point for finding a new one.

What's behind the Ratings?

These Ratings of physician practices are published in conjunction with Minnesota Community Measurement. That nonprofit organization works with physicians, hospitals, health plans, employers, consumers, and the Minnesota Department of Health to improve health by sharing information on health-care quality, patient experience, and cost. Physician practices in Minnesota are required by the state to report data to MNMCM, which then validates and publicly reports the information.

The data shown here are from 2011, and they come from medical records submitted by the practices to MNMCM. The results are for physician practices, not individual doctors, and include 552 primary-care practices in 11 geographic regions, including 20 practices in North Dakota and 15 practices in Wisconsin that are near the Minnesota border.

How are practices rated?

Practices are rated based on their success at helping patients achieve key targets in managing diabetes and cardiovascular

disease, which includes heart attacks and strokes. Those targets are: not using tobacco products; taking low-dose aspirin when appropriate; and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol levels and, in the case of diabetes, blood sugar levels. We show the percentage of patients with diabetes or cardiovascular disease who achieve all of those goals for each condition. Those percentages are then translated into a 1 through 5 scale, which are distinct for each condition. The higher the number, the better the care.

What do the scores mean?

Practices within regions are ranked in order of their performance statewide, based on the percentage of diabetes and cardiovascular disease patients combined who achieve optimal care. If a practice treats more of one kind of patient than another, that percentage counts more in the rank order. If a practice does not have a score for either diabetes or cardiovascular disease, it did not have enough patients with that condition to be included or did not submit data for that measure. The rank order is based on both diabetes and vascular care, even if one of those measures did not have enough data to earn a score. If a practice is not included at all, it did not have enough data or submit data for either measure.

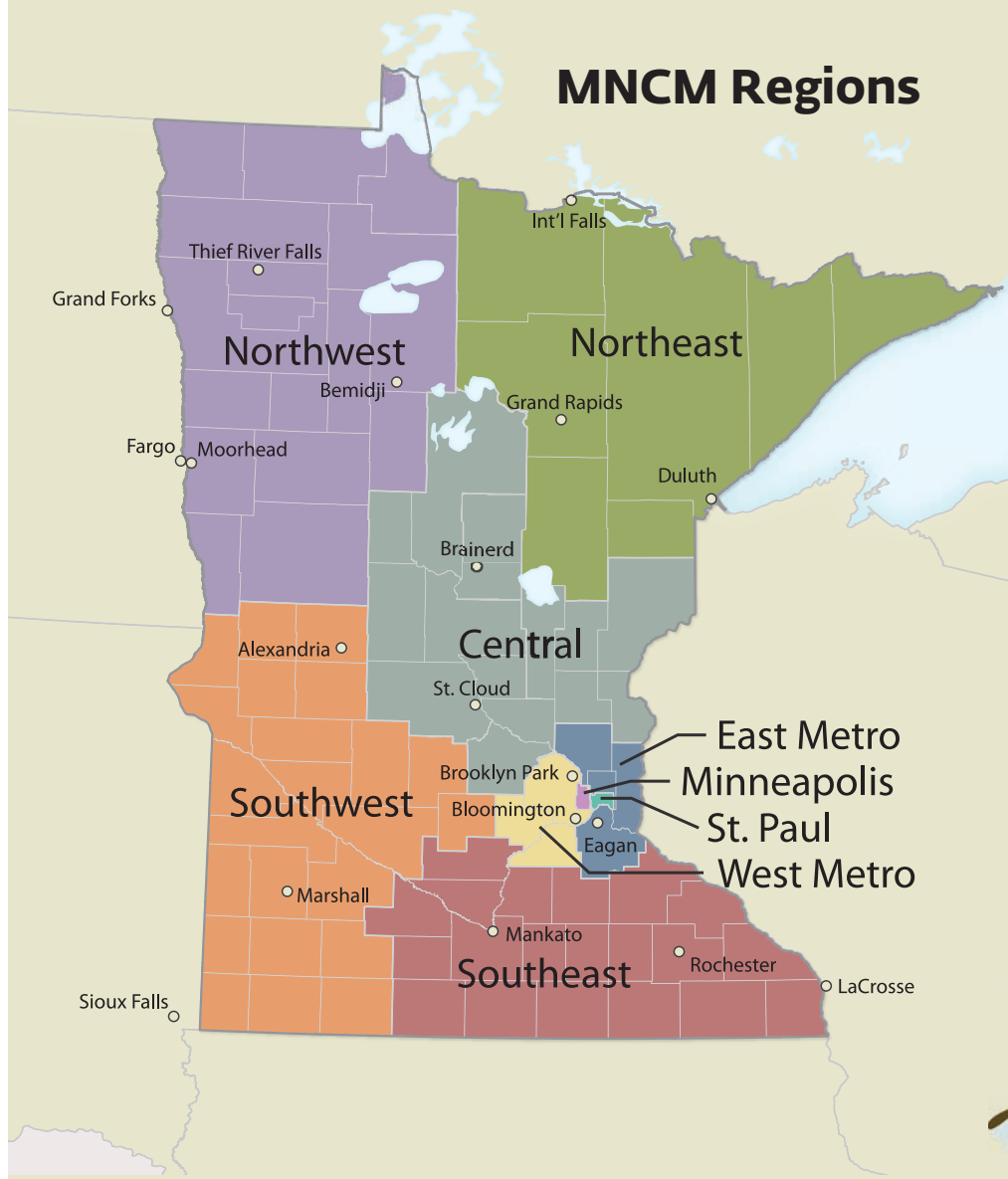
Small differences in score don't mean much; look for large differences, and talk with your doctor if you have concerns.

These Ratings provide information about certain important aspects of patient care, but they don't tell you everything you need to know. A practice may sometimes receive a low score but still provide quality health care in other ways.

Where can I find more details?

Go to MNMCM's website, myhealthscores.org. There you can find data and technical details about these Ratings, as well as information on how practices perform on other measures, such as patient experience; the care of asthma, colorectal cancer, and depression; and the use of health-information technology. Use your smart phone to scan the code on page 5 and access MNMCM's website.

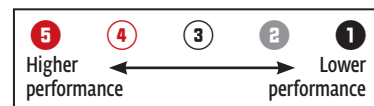
MNCM Regions



Ratings of medical practices

In collaboration with MNMCM

In order of performance within regions.



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div>Diabetes</div> <div>Heart & vascular disease</div> </div> <div>0% 20 40 60 80 100%</div>

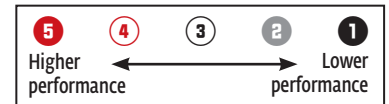
EAST METRO

Entira Family Clinics - White Bear Lake, Bellaire Ave. (Formerly FHSM - White Bear Office)	3220 Bellaire Ave., White Bear Lake	5	60
		5	70
Western Wisconsin Medical Associates - Ellsworth Medical Clinic	144 Plum St., Ellsworth, Wisc.	5	56
		5	68
Entira Family Clinics - West St. Paul (Formerly FHSM - Gorman Clinic)	234 E. Wentworth Ave., West St. Paul	5	54
		5	69
Entira Family Clinics - White Bear Lake, Banning Ave. (Formerly FHSM Banning Clinic)	4786 Banning Ave., White Bear Lake	5	53
		5	65
Park Nicollet Clinic - Burnsville	14000 Fairview Drive, Burnsville	5	56
		5	60
Allina Medical Clinic - Ramsey	5300 Alpine Drive NW, Ramsey	5	55
		5	60
HealthPartners - Roseville	2831 N. Snelling Ave., Roseville	5	51
		5	71
Park Nicollet Clinic - Eagan	1885 Plaza Drive, Eagan	5	52
		5	67
Allina Medical Clinic - Blaine	10705 Town Square Drive NE 100, Blaine	5	52
		5	62
Richard Schoewe M.D.	2381 N. Rice St., Roseville	5	59
Allina Medical Clinic - Shoreview	4194 N. Lexington Ave., Shoreview	5	52
		5	63
Entira Family Clinics - Inver Grove Heights (Formerly FHSM - Inver Grove Heights)	2980 Buckley Way, Inver Grove Heights	5	51
		5	63
HealthPartners - Cottage Grove	7500 80th St. S., Cottage Grove	5	54
Entira Family Clinics - Shoreview (Formerly FHSM - Shoreview)	404 W. Highway 96, Shoreview	5	51
		5	61
HealthPartners - Arden Hills	3930 Northwoods Drive, Arden Hills	5	50
		5	67
HealthEast - Cottage Grove	6936 Pine Arbor Drive S., Cottage Grove	5	50
		5	63
Fairview Clinics - Eagan	1440 Duckwood Drive, Eagan	5	50
		5	65
Western Wisconsin Medical Associates - Spring Valley Medical Clinic	130 S. McKay St., Spring Valley, Wisc.	5	51
Fairview Clinics - Rosemount Clinic	15075 Cimarron Ave., Rosemount	5	60
		4	60
Allina Medical Clinic - Eagan	1110 Yankee Doodle Road, Eagan	5	55
		4	56
Allina Medical Clinic - Coon Rapids	9055 Springbrook Drive, Coon Rapids	5	51
		4	59
Allina Medical Clinic - West St. Paul	150 E. Emerson Ave., West St. Paul	5	51
		4	58
Allina Medical Clinic - Hastings (Nininger)	1285 Nininger Road, Hastings	4	48
		5	62

Ratings of medical practices In collaboration with MNMCM

In order of performance within regions.

Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>Diabetes</div> <div>Heart & vascular disease</div> </div> <div>0%20406080100%</div>
EAST METRO continued			
Entira Family Clinics - Maplewood/Battle Creek (Formerly FHSM - Afton)	2716 Upper Afton Road, Maplewood	49	67
Allina Medical Clinic - Forest Lake	1540 S. Lake St., Forest Lake	50	59
Aspen Medical Group - White Bear Lake	2555 E. County Road E., White Bear Lake	48	65
Entira Family Clinics - Vadnais Heights (Formerly FHSM - Vadnais Heights)	3550 Labore Road, Suite 7, Vadnais Heights	52	56
Quello Clinic - Burnsville	14000 Nicollet Ave. S., Burnsville	50	58
Allina Medical Clinic - Woodbury	8675 Valley Creek Road, Woodbury	47	64
HealthPartners - White Bear Lake	1430 Highway 96, White Bear Lake	47	63
Entira Family Clinics - Woodbury (Formerly FHSM - Woodbury)	8325 City Centre Drive, Woodbury	48	61
Western Wisconsin Medical Associates - River Falls Medical Clinic	1687 E. Division St., River Falls, Wisc.	46	61
HealthEast - Hugo	14688 Everton Ave., Hugo	45	68
Fairview Clinics - Burnsville	303 Nicollet Blvd., Suite 200, Burnsville	45	61
University of Minnesota Heart - Burnsville Clinic	305 E. Nicollet Blvd., Suite 372, Burnsville	55	
Multicare Associates - Fridley Medical Center	480 Osborne Road, Suite 100, Fridley	48	55
HealthEast - Woodbury	1875 Woodwinds Drive, Woodbury	47	59
Allina Medical Clinic - Farmington	3500 213th St. W., Farmington	48	58
Allina Medical Clinic - Hastings (W. First St.)	1210 W. First St., Hastings	47	55
HealthPartners - Coon Rapids	11475 Robinson Drive NW, Coon Rapids	47	58
Burnsville Family Physicians	625 E. Nicollet Blvd., Suite 100, Burnsville	47	54
Allina Medical Clinic - Cottage Grove	8611 W. Pt. Douglas Road, Cottage Grove	48	50
Apple Valley Medical Clinic - Family Practice	14655 Galaxie Ave., Apple Valley	47	53
Fairview Clinics - Lakeville	18580 Joplin Ave., Lakeville	46	54
HealthPartners - Andover	15245 Bluebird St. NW, Andover	47	51
Entira Family Clinics - North St. Paul (Formerly FHSM - North St. Paul Clinic)	2601 Centennial Drive, Suite 100, North St. Paul	46	54



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div>Diabetes</div> <div>Heart & vascular disease</div> </div> <div>0%20406080100%</div>
EAST METRO continued			
HealthPartners - Woodbury	8450 Seasons Parkway, Woodbury	4	44
		4	58
Quello Clinic - Lakeville	17599 Kenwood Drive, Lakeville	4	43
		4	55
Fairview Clinics - Andover	13819 Hanson Blvd. NW, Andover	4	44
		4	55
Stillwater Medical Group - Curve Crest Clinic	1500 Curve Crest Blvd., Stillwater	4	44
		4	52
HealthPartners - Maplewood	2165 White Bear Ave. N., Maplewood	4	42
		4	58
HealthPartners - Anoka	1833 Second Ave. S., Anoka	4	43
		4	52
Fairview Clinics - Apple Valley	15650 Cedar Ave. S., Apple Valley	4	41
		4	57
HealthPartners - Apple Valley	15290 Pennock Lane, Apple Valley	4	43
		4	51
Multicare Associates - Roseville Medical Center	1835 County Road C W., Roseville	4	42
		4	57
HealthPartners - Lino Lakes	576 Apollo Drive, Lino Lakes	3	39
		5	63
HealthPartners - Inver Grove Heights	5625 Cenex Drive, Inver Grove Heights	4	42
		4	53
North Memorial - Silver Lake, Blaine	1420 109th Ave. NE, Suite 100, Blaine	3	38
		4	56
HealthEast - Vadnais Heights	1055 Centerville Circle, Vadnais Heights	4	40
		3	49
Aspen Medical Group - Inver Grove Heights	5565 Blaine Ave., Inver Grove Heights	3	36
		4	56
HealthEast - Oakdale	1099 Helmo Ave. N., Suite 100, Oakdale	4	40
		3	44
Western Wisconsin Medical Associates - Hudson Physicians	403 Stageline Road, Hudson, Wisc.	3	36
		4	51
Multicare Associates - Blaine Medical Center	11855 Ulysses St. NE, Blaine	3	35
		4	50
AALFA Family Clinic	4465 White Bear Parkway, White Bear Lake	3	30
		4	60
Allina Health System - Metropolitan Heart & Vascular Institute, Fridley	500 Osborne Road, Suite 365, Fridley	3	47
Allina Health System - Metropolitan Heart & Vascular Institute, Coon Rapids	4040 Coon Rapids Blvd., Suite 120, Coon Rapids	3	47
HealthEast - Eagan	1215 Town Centre Drive, Eagan	3	39
HealthEast - Maplewood	3100 Kennard St., Suite 100, Maplewood	3	38
		3	48
Fairview Clinics - Fridley	6341 University Ave. NE, Fridley	3	38
		3	48

Ratings of medical practices In collaboration with MNMCM

In order of performance within regions.

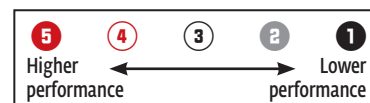
Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease </div> <div> 0%20406080100% </div>

EAST METRO continued

Fairview Clinics - Blaine	10961 Club West Parkway NE, Blaine	38	44
Aspen Medical Group - Maplewood	1850 Beam Ave., Maplewood	37	46
North Memorial - Silver Lake, St. Anthony	2600 39th Ave. NE, St. Anthony	36	47
Fairview Clinics - Lino Lakes	7455 Village Drive, Lino Lakes	38	42
Western Wisconsin Medical Associates - New Richmond Clinic	551 Hospital Road, New Richmond, Wisc.	38	46
Fairview Clinics - Columbia Heights	4000 Central Ave. NE, Columbia Heights	33	45
Fairview Clinics - Hugo	14663 Mercantile Drive, Hugo	34	44
HealthPartners - Eagan	1654 Diffley Road, Suite 100, Eagan	33	
Fairview Clinics - Farmington Clinic	19685 Pilot Knob Road, Suite 100, Farmington	25	
Attending Physicians	1560 Beam Ave., Suite F, Maplewood	20	
FamilyHealth Medical Clinic - Northfield	2000 North Ave., Northfield	16	34
HealthEast Roseville Clinic	2680 N. Snelling Ave., Roseville	19	
FamilyHealth Medical Clinic - Farmington	4645 Knutsen Drive, Farmington	15	
St. Croix Family Medical Clinic	5640 Memorial Ave. N., Suite B, Stillwater	13	
Scandia Clinic	21150 Ozark Ave., Scandia	6	17
Bluestone Physician Services	270 N. Main St., Stillwater	3	11

ST. PAUL

Aspen Medical Group - Highland	2004 Ford Parkway, St. Paul	53	61
Entira Family Clinics - Highland (Formerly FHSM - Highland Family Physicians)	1540 Randolph Ave., St. Paul	51	61
HealthEast - Midway	1690 University Ave. W., Suite 570, St. Paul	51	56
HealthEast - Downtown St. Paul	17 W. Exchange St., Suite 500, St. Paul	46	61
HealthPartners - Como	2500 Como Ave., St. Paul	45	65
HealthPartners - Health Center for Women	2635 University Ave., Suite 160, St. Paul	47	65
Allina Medical Clinic - United Medical Specialties	255 N. Smith Ave., Suite 100, St. Paul	47	62
HealthPartners - Regions Specialty Center	401 Phalen Blvd., St. Paul	57	
Allina Health System - United Heart and Vascular Clinic	225 N. Smith Ave., Suite 400, St. Paul	53	



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div>Diabetes</div> <div>Heart & vascular disease</div> </div> 0% 20 40 60 80 100%

ST. PAUL continued

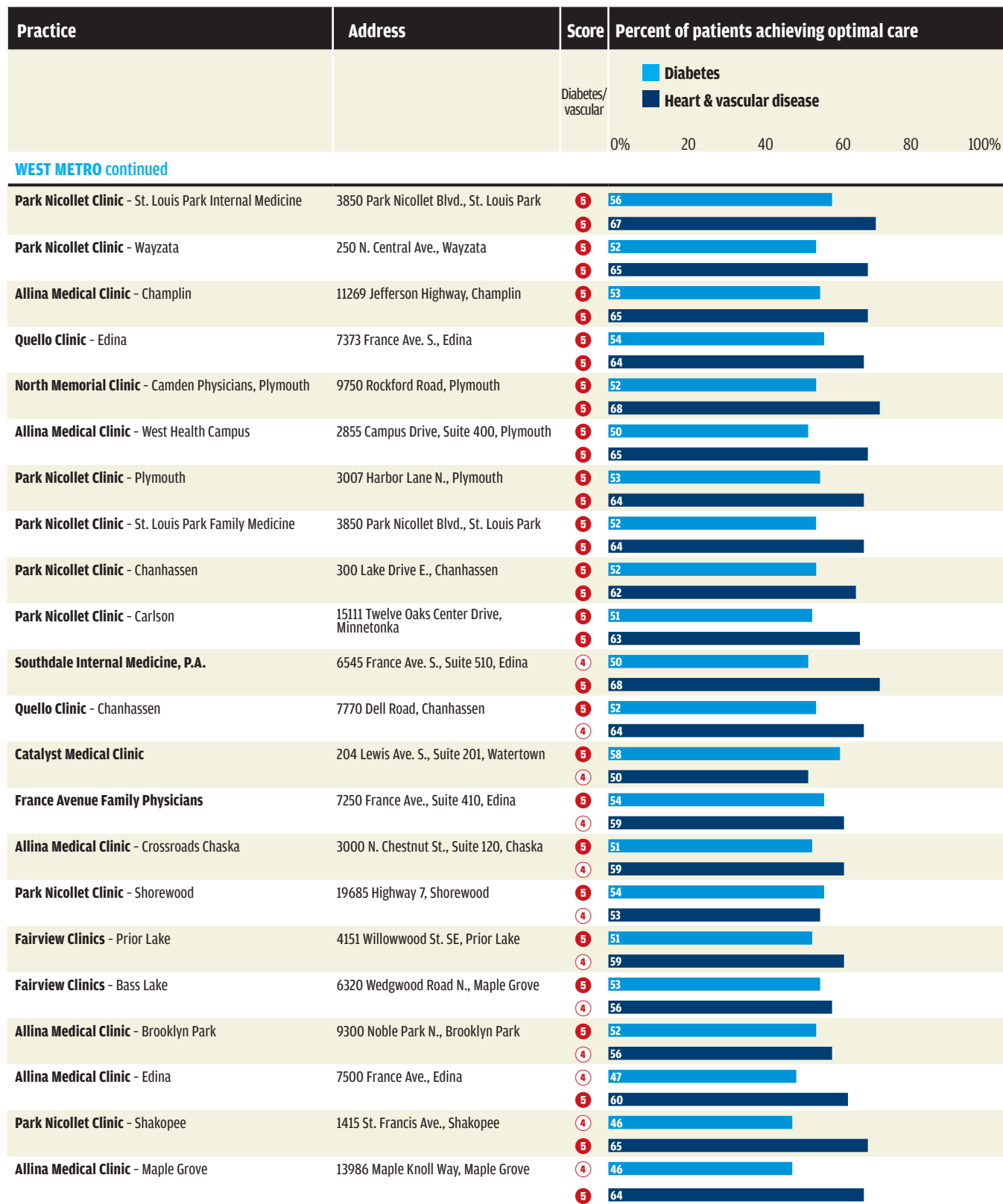
Entira Family Clinics - East Side (Formerly FHSM - Maryland Clinic)	911 E. Maryland Ave., St. Paul	4	48
		4	54
Fairview Clinics - Highland Park	2155 Ford Parkway, Suite A, St. Paul	4	45
		4	56
Aspen Medical Group - Bandana Square	1020 Bandana Blvd. W., St. Paul	4	42
		4	58
Entira Family Clinics - Como/Roseville (Formerly FHSM - Larpenteur Clinic)	1050 W. Larpenteur Ave., St. Paul	4	40
		4	60
HealthPartners - St. Paul	205 S. Wabasha St., St. Paul	3	36
		4	50
HealthEast - Rice Street	980 Rice St., St. Paul	3	35
		4	50
HealthEast - Roselawn	1983 Sloan Place, Suite 1, St. Paul	3	31
		4	51
HealthPartners - Adult & Seniors Health	401 Phalen Blvd., St. Paul	3	37
		3	46
HealthPartners - Center for International Health	451 N. Dunlap St., St. Paul	3	38
		3	41
HealthPartners - Specialty Center 401	401 Phalen Blvd., St. Paul	3	35
HealthPartners - Midway	451 N. Dunlap St., St. Paul	3	35
		2	39
HealthEast - Grand Avenue	870 Grand Ave., St. Paul	3	33
		2	33
University of Minnesota Physicians - Bethesda Clinic	580 Rice St., St. Paul	2	26
		2	37
University of Minnesota Physicians - Phalen Clinic	1414 Maryland Ave. E., St. Paul	2	25
		2	35
Parkway Family Physicians	721 Snelling Ave. S., St. Paul	1	18
		2	38
United Family Medicine	1026 W. Seventh St., St. Paul	1	15
		2	36

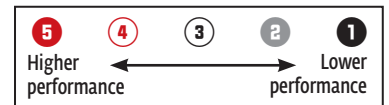
WEST METRO

University of Minnesota Heart - Edina Clinic	6405 France Ave. S., Suite W200, Edina	5	67
Fairview Clinics - Bloomington	600 W. 98th St., Bloomington	5	58
		5	71
Park Nicollet Clinic - Golden Valley	8240 Golden Valley Drive, Golden Valley	5	59
		5	64
Park Nicollet Clinic - Prairie Center	8455 Flying Cloud Drive, Eden Prairie	5	59
		5	65
Edina Sports Health & Wellness	6363 France Ave. S., Suite 525, Edina	5	57
		5	67
Park Nicollet Clinic - Maple Grove	15800 95th Ave. N., Maple Grove	5	58
		5	65

Ratings of medical practices In collaboration with MNMCM

In order of performance within regions.





Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease 0% 20 40 60 80 100%
WEST METRO continued			
Fairview Clinics - Eden Center	830 Prairie Center Drive, Eden Prairie	4	46
Fairview Clinics - Edina	6545 France Ave. S., Suite 150, Edina	4	45
Park Nicollet Clinic - Bloomington	5320 Hyland Greens Drive, Bloomington	4	45
Fairview Maple Grove Medical Center	14500 99th Ave., Maple Grove	4	45
Northwest Family Physicians - Crystal	5700 Bottineau Blvd., Crystal	4	46
Park Nicollet Clinic - Heart and Vascular Center - Cardiology	6500 Excelsior Blvd., St. Louis Park	4	59
Allina Health System - Minneapolis Heart Institute Shakopee	1601 St. Francis Ave., Suite 100, Shakopee	4	56
Allina Health System - Abbott Northwestern General Medicine Associates, Edina	8100 W. 78th St., Suite 100, Edina	4	49
Ridgeview Chaska Clinic	111 Hundertmark Road, Suite 240, Chaska	4	48
Northwest Family Physicians - Rogers	21395 John Milless Drive, Rogers	4	47
Allina Medical Clinic - Woodlake	407 W. 66th St., Richfield	4	46
Northwest Family Physicians - Plymouth	1495 County Road 101 N., Plymouth	4	49
North Memorial Clinic - Maple Grove	9855 Hospital Drive, Suite 102B, Maple Grove	4	45
Aspen Medical Group - Hopkins	715 Second Ave. S., Hopkins	4	46
Allina Medical Clinic - Shakopee	1515 St. Francis Ave., Suite 100, Shakopee	4	44
Park Nicollet Clinic - Prior Lake	4670 Park Nicollet Ave. SE, Prior Lake	4	46
Allina Medical Clinic - Crossroads Shakopee Dean Lakes	1335 10th Ave. E., Shakopee	4	45
Park Nicollet Clinic - Brookdale	6000 Earle Brown Drive, Brooklyn Center	4	46
HealthPartners - Brooklyn Center	6845 Lee Ave. N., Brooklyn Center	4	44
HealthPartners - Bloomington	8600 Nicollet Ave. S., Bloomington	4	44
HealthPartners - West	5100 Gamble Drive, Suite 100, St. Louis Park	3	39
Fairview Clinics - Brooklyn Park	10000 Zane Ave. N., Brooklyn Park	4	40
Steven Saliterman, M.D.	Meadowbrook Medical Bldg. W-110, 3931 Louisiana Ave., St. Louis Park	3	37

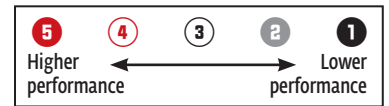
Ratings of medical practices In collaboration with MNMCM

In order of performance within regions.

Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease </div> <div> 0%20406080100% </div>

WEST METRO continued

Ridgeview Chanhassen Clinic	7907 Powers Blvd., Chanhassen	43	43
Ridgeview Westonka Clinic	4695 Shoreline Drive, Spring Park	39	51
Quello Clinic - Savage	6350 143rd St., Savage Medical Building Suite 102, Savage	40	47
North Memorial Clinic - Camden Physicians, Maple Grove	12000 Elm Creek Blvd., Suite 120, Maple Grove	40	48
Aspen Medical Group - Bloomington	7920 Cedar Ave. S., Bloomington	37	55
North Memorial Clinic - Golden Valley Physicians	8301 Golden Valley Road, Suite 100, Golden Valley	37	52
Richfield Medical Group	6440 Nicollet Ave. S., Richfield	35	57
Allina Health System - Minneapolis Heart Institute, Edina	7373 France Ave. S., Suite 204, Edina	45	
Allina Health System - Minneapolis Heart Institute, Plymouth	2805 Campus Drive, WestHealth Campus Suite 305, Plymouth	42	
Park Nicollet Clinic - Creekside	6600 Excelsior Blvd., St. Louis Park	39	48
Allina Health System - Metropolitan Heart & Vascular Institute Maple Grove	7840 Vinewood Lane, Maple Grove	40	
Lakeview Clinic - Norwood	406 Faxon Road, Norwood	38	
North Memorial Clinic - Minnetonka Physicians	13560 Wayzata Blvd., Minnetonka	33	48
Fairview Clinics - Rogers Clinic	14040 Northdale Blvd., Suite 10, Rogers	34	
North Memorial Clinic - Brooklyn Park Physicians	8559 Edinbrook Parkway, Suite 100, Brooklyn Park	35	46
Fairview Clinics - Jonathan	1580 White Oak Drive, Chaska	33	49
Mark P. Stesin, M.D., P.A. Robbinsdale	3366 Oakdale Ave. N., Suite 408, Robbinsdale	37	
North Clinic - Maple Grove Office	9825 Hospital Drive, Suite 300, Maple Grove	36	40
North Memorial Clinic - Brooklyn Center Physicians	5415 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center	33	46
Park Nicollet Clinic - St. Louis Park Endocrinology	3800 Park Nicollet Blvd., St. Louis Park	35	
Edina Family Physicians, P.A.	5301 Vernon Ave. S., Edina	34	40
North Clinic - WestHealth Office in Plymouth	2855 Campus Drive, Suite 300, Plymouth	29	56
Endocrinology Clinic of Minneapolis	7701 York Ave. S., Suite 180, Edina	30	
Life Medical	4201 Excelsior Blvd., St. Louis Park	35	32
Ridgeview Excelsior Clinic	675 Water St., Excelsior	32	36
Bloomington Lake Clinic - Xerxes	7901 Xerxes Ave. S., Suite 116, Bloomington	33	31



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease
			0% 20 40 60 80 100%

WEST METRO continued

North Clinic - Oakdale Office in Robbinsdale	3366 Oakdale Ave. N., Suite 215, Robbinsdale	3	30
		2	34
North Clinic - Osseo Office	50 Central Ave., Osseo	3	30
		2	34
Lakeview Clinic - Waconia	424 State Highway 5 W., Waconia	2	23
		3	43
Lakeview Clinic - Watertown	309 Jefferson Ave. SW, Watertown	2	25
		2	39
Lakeview Clinic - Chaska	3000 Hundertmark Road, Chaska	2	27
		2	37
Valley Family Practice	822 Yellow Brick Road, Chaska	3	31
		1	16
New Hope Crystal Medical Clinic	3501 Douglas Drive N., 2nd Floor, Crystal	2	27
Mayo Clinic Health System Belle Plaine	700 W. Prairie St., Belle Plaine	2	25
Parkview Medical Clinic	1400 First St. NE, New Prague	1	17
		3	47
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Brooklyn Center Clinic	6601 Shingle Creek Parkway, Suite 400, Brooklyn Center	2	20
		2	33
Consultants Internal Medicine	3400 W. 66th St., Suite 385, Edina	2	23
		1	29
Mayo Clinic Health System New Prague	301 E. Main St., New Prague	1	17
		1	19
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Brooklyn Park Clinic	7650 Zane Ave. N., Brooklyn Park	1	12

MINNEAPOLIS

University of Minnesota Physicians - Mill City Clinic	901 Second St. S., Minneapolis	5	51
Allina Medical Clinic - The Doctors Uptown	1221 W. Lake St., Suite 201, Minneapolis	5	55
		4	52
Allina Medical Clinic - Isles	2800 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis	5	50
		4	58
HealthPartners - Riverside	2220 Riverside Ave., Minneapolis	4	42
		5	70
North Memorial Heart & Vascular Institute	3300 Oakdale Ave. N., Suite 200, Minneapolis	4	56
Allina Medical Clinic - Nicollet Mall	825 Nicollet Mall, Suite 300, Minneapolis	4	47
		4	57
Fairview Clinics - Northeast	2849 Johnson St. NE, Minneapolis	3	38
		5	60
North Memorial Clinic - Northeast Family Physicians	1229 Second St. NE, Minneapolis	4	40
		4	50
Fairview Clinics - Hiawatha	3809 42nd Ave. S., Minneapolis	3	38
		4	56
Fairview Clinics - Uptown	3303 Excelsior Blvd., Suite 275, Minneapolis	3	37
		4	55
Allina Health System - Minneapolis Heart Institute ANW	800 E. 28th St, Suite H2100, Minneapolis	3	45
North Memorial Clinic - Camden Physicians, Mpls	4209 Webber Parkway, Minneapolis	3	36
		3	48

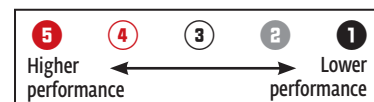
Ratings of medical practices In collaboration with MNMCM

In order of performance within regions.

Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease </div> <div> 0%20406080100% </div>

MINNEAPOLIS continued

Park Nicollet Clinic - Minneapolis	2001 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis	3	38
		3	44
Aspen Medical Group - East Lake Street	3024 Snelling Ave., Minneapolis	3	35
		3	42
University of Minnesota Physicians - Smiley's Clinic	2020 E. 28th St., Minneapolis	3	36
Neighborhood Healthsource - Sheridan	342 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis	3	36
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Internal Medicine Clinic at Parkside	825 S. Eighth St., Parkside Professional Building, Suite 206, Minneapolis	2	26
		3	45
University of Minnesota Physicians - Primary Care Center	420 Delaware St. SE, Minneapolis	2	29
		3	40
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Richfield Clinic	44 W. 66th St., in the Hub Shopping Center, Minneapolis	2	20
		3	43
University of Minnesota Heart - University Clinic	420 Delaware St. SE, MMC 88, Minneapolis	2	38
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Hennepin Heart Center	900 S. Eighth St., Orange Building, Level 5, Minneapolis	2	31
Boydton Health Service	410 Church St. SE, Minneapolis	2	28
Fairview Clinics - Riverside	606 24th Ave. S., Suite 700, Minneapolis	2	26
University of Minnesota Physicians - Medicine Specialties Clinic 6A	420 Delaware St. SE, Clinic 6A, Minneapolis	2	26
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Hennepin Center for Senior Care	914 S. Eighth St., Shapiro Building, Suite 140, Minneapolis	2	21
Neighborhood Healthsource - Central Clinic	2610 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis	2	20
Community-University Health Care Center	2001 Bloomington Ave. S., Minneapolis	2	22
		1	14
University of Minnesota Physicians - Broadway Family Medicine	1020 W. Broadway, Minneapolis	1	13
		2	31
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - East Lake Clinic	2700 E. Lake St., Minneapolis	1	17
		1	23
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Whittier Clinic	2810 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis	1	17
		1	26
NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center	1313 Penn Ave. N., Minneapolis	1	17
		1	21
Native American Community Clinic	1213 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis	1	17
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Hennepin Center for Diabetes & Endocrinology	914 S. Eighth St., Shapiro Building, Suite 140, Minneapolis	1	17
Neighborhood Healthsource - Fremont Clinic	3300 Fremont Ave. N., Minneapolis	1	15
		1	19
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Downtown Medicine Clinic	716 S. Seventh St., Purple Building, Level 7, Minneapolis	1	12
		1	24
Southside Medical Clinic	324 E. 35th St., Minneapolis	1	13
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Positive Care Clinic	913 S. Seventh St., Blue Building, Level 1, Minneapolis	1	11
Fairview Clinics - Riverside Primary Care	2450 Riverside Ave., West Building Suite F105, Minneapolis	1	8
Johnson Street Medical Clinic	2904 Johnson St. NE, Minneapolis	1	10
Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) Clinics - Coordinated Care Clinic	914 S. Eighth St., Shapiro 1, Minneapolis	1	10



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div>Diabetes</div> <div>Heart & vascular disease</div> </div>
			0% 20 40 60 80 100%

CENTRAL

Allina Medical Clinic - Buffalo	303 Catlin St., Buffalo	5	54	63
HealthPartners - Elk River	530 Third St. NW, Elk River	5	50	60
Allina Medical Clinic - Cokato	110 Olsen Blvd., Cokato	5	50	58
CentraCare Health Plaza - Internal Medicine	1900 CentraCare Circle, Suite 2425, St. Cloud	4	43	60
University of Minnesota Heart - Wyoming Clinic	5200 Fairview Blvd., Level 2, Wyoming	4	53	
Allina Medical Clinic - St. Michael	4300 Edgewood Drive NE, St. Michael	4	48	59
Allina Medical Clinic - Annandale	440 Elm St. E., Annandale	4	47	61
CentraCare - St. Joseph	106 Second Ave. NW, St. Joseph	4	48	54
St. Cloud Medical Group - Cold Spring - Integrity Health	402 N. Red River Ave., Suite 2, Cold Spring	4	47	54
Fairview Clinics - Chisago Lakes	11725 Stinson Ave., Chisago City	4	44	59
Allina Medical Clinic - Elk River	14181 Business Center Drive NW, Elk River	4	44	57
Fairview Clinics - North Branch	6413 Oak St., North Branch	4	43	59
CentraCare River Campus-Internal Medicine	1200 Sixth Ave. N., St. Cloud	4	45	52
HealthPartners Central Minnesota Clinics	2251 Connecticut Ave. S., Sartell	4	45	55
CentraCare - Becker	12800 Rolling Ridge Road, Becker	4	43	53
Allina Medical Clinic - Cambridge Medical Center	701 S. Dellwood, Cambridge	4	42	55
FirstLight Health System - Mora	331 S. Highway 65, Mora	4	44	50
Allina Medical Clinic - North Branch	38986 14th Ave., North Branch	4	41	52
Fairview Clinics - Milaca	150 10th St. NW, Milaca	4	43	52
CentraCare Health System - Melrose	525 W. Main, Melrose	4	42	53
FirstLight Health System - Pine City	1425 N. Main St., Pine City	4	44	
FirstLight Health System - Hinckley	620 Sandy Lane, Hinckley	3	39	53
Fairview Northland Regional Medical Center	919 Northland Drive, Princeton	3	39	50
Gateway Family Health Clinic - Hinckley	206 Main St. E., Hinckley	3	38	

Ratings of medical practices

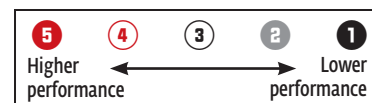
In collaboration with MNMCM

In order of performance within regions.

Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease </div> <div>0%20406080100%</div>

CENTRAL continued

Fairview Lakes Regional Medical Center	5200 Fairview Blvd., Wyoming	3	39	48
Allina Health System - Metropolitan Heart & Vascular Institute Buffalo	1700 Highway 25 N., Buffalo	3	41	
Allina Health System - Metropolitan Heart & Vascular Institute Elk River	14181 Business Center Drive NW, Elk River	3	41	
Fairview Clinics - Zimmerman	25945 Gateway Drive, Zimmerman	3	39	46
Essentia Health - Heart and Vascular Center (Brainerd)	523 N. Third St., Brainerd	3	40	
St. Cloud Medical Group - South - Integrity Health	1301 33rd St. S., St. Cloud	3	37	49
St. Cloud Medical Group - Clearwater - Integrity Health	615 Nelson Drive, Clearwater	4	40	36
Ridgeview Delano Clinic	916 St. Peter Ave., Delano	3	39	40
CentraCare - Heartland	1520 Whitney Court, St. Cloud	3	38	41
Essentia Health St. Joseph's - Brainerd Clinic	2024 S. Sixth St., Brainerd	3	37	43
North Memorial Clinic - Elk River Physicians	800 Freeport Ave. NW, Suite 100A, Elk River	3	36	49
Fairview Clinics - Rush City	760 W. Fourth St., Rush City	3	32	46
Fairview Clinics - Elk River	290 Main St. NW, Elk River	3	35	41
Brooten Medical Center	111 Pleasant Ave., Brooten	3	34	
CentraCare Health Plaza - Family Medicine	1900 CentraCare Circle, St. Cloud	3	33	45
St. Cloud Medical Group - NW - Integrity Health	251 County Road 120, St. Cloud	3	31	44
CentraCare Health System - Long Prairie	24 Ninth St. SE, Long Prairie	3	31	42
Essentia Health St. Joseph's - Pillager	680 Pillsbury St. N., Pillager	3	30	
Essentia Health St. Joseph's - Crosslake Clinic	35205 County Road 3, Crosslake	3	30	
Gateway Family Health Clinic - Sandstone	204 Lunderoff Drive, Sandstone	3	36	33
Buffalo Clinic P.A. - Buffalo Clinic	1700 Highway 25 N., Buffalo	2	29	44
Family Medical Center	811 SE Second St., Suite A, Little Falls	2	29	43
Buffalo Clinic P.A. - Albertville/St. Michael Clinic	11091 Jason Ave. NE, Albertville	2	24	43
Mid Minnesota Family Medicine Center	1520 Whitney Court, Suite 200, St. Cloud	2	21	43



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease
			0% 20 40 60 80 100%

CENTRAL continued

Allina Health System - Minneapolis Heart Institute Crosby	314 E. Main St., Crosby	2 32	
Cuyuna Regional Medical Center - Clinic Services	320 E. Main St., Crosby	2 28	
		2 33	
Buffalo Clinic P.A. - Monticello Clinic	1001 Hart Blvd., Suite 100, Monticello	2 26	
		2 38	
Fairview Clinics - Pine City	510 Second St. SE, Pine City	2 27	
		2 33	
Lakewood Health System - Staples Clinic	49725 County 83, Staples	2 27	
		2 33	
Ridgeview Howard Lake Clinic	900 Sixth St., Howard Lake	2 27	
CentraCare Health Plaza - Endocrinology	1900 CentraCare Circle, St. Cloud	2 27	
Lakewood Health System - Pillager Clinic	653 Pillsbury St. N., Suite 1, Pillager	2 23	
Sanford Cass Lake Clinic	219 Grant Utley Ave., Cass Lake	2 28	
Paynesville Eastside Medical Clinic	505 Nelson Ave., Belgrade	2 20	
Healing Spirit Clinic	714 Rum River Drive S., Princeton	2 25	
Paynesville Chain of Lakes Medical Clinic	308 Fifth Ave. S., Cold Spring	2 23	
Longville Lakes Clinic - Integrity Health	180 Jordan Lane, Longville	2 28	
		1 28	
Sanford Walker Clinic	614 Michigan Ave., Walker	2 29	
		1 25	
Essentia Health St. Joseph's - Pine River Clinic	415 Barclay Ave., Pine River	1 18	
		2 35	
Paynesville Medical Clinic	200 W. First St., Paynesville	2 21	
		1 22	
Albany Medical Center	320 Third Ave., Albany	1 13	
		2 30	
Allina Health System - Metropolitan Heart & Vascular Institute	303 Catlin St., Buffalo	1 29	
CentraCare Clinic - Sauk Centre	433 Elm St. N., Sauk Centre	1 17	
CentraCare River Campus - CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center	1406 Sixth Ave. N., St. Cloud	1 23	
Paynesville Richmond Medical Clinic	130 First St. NE, Richmond	1 19	
		1 20	
Big Lake Clinic	16830 198th Ave. NW, Big Lake	1 7	
Foley Medical Center	471 Highway 23, Foley	1 14	
Paynesville Eden Valley/Watkins Medical Clinic	405 Meeker Ave., Eden Valley	1 11	
		1 25	
Lakewood Health System - Browerville Clinic	30535 241st Ave., Browerville	1 9	
Essentia Health St. Joseph's - Pequot Lakes Clinic	4317 W. Woodman St., Pequot Lakes	1 15	
Lakewood Health System - Motley Clinic	1233 S. Highway 10, Motley	1 12	
Essentia Health St. Joseph's - Pierz Clinic	220 N. Main St., Pierz	1 9	
Mille Lacs Health System - Onamia	200 N. Elm St., Onamia	1 7	
		1 28	
New River Medical Center Physician Clinic	1107 Hart Blvd., Monticello	1 11	

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Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease </div> <div>0%20406080100%</div>

CENTRAL continued

Allina Health System - Minneapolis Heart Institute - Baxter	13367 Isle Drive, Baxter	1	12
Integracare Ltd dba Williams Clinic	100 S. Second St., Sartell	1	14
		1	3
Riverwood Garrison Clinic	27278 State Highway 18, Garrison	1	5
		1	11

NORTHEAST

Cromwell Medical Clinic - Integrity Health	5565 Highway 210, Cromwell	5	52
Essentia Health - Ely Clinic	300 W. Conan St., Ely	5	50
		4	52
Northland Family Physicians - Integrity Health	1000 E. First St., Suite 108, Duluth	4	47
		4	57
Essentia Health - West Duluth Clinic	4212 Grand Ave., Duluth	4	46
		4	57
Essentia Health - Duluth Clinic 1st St.	400 E. Third St., Duluth	4	45
		4	55
Essentia Health - Deer River Clinic	115 10th Ave. NE, Deer River	4	45
		4	53
Sanford Bemidji Blackduck Clinic	81 First St. NW, Blackduck	4	42
		4	58
Essentia Health - Aurora Clinic	405 W. Third Ave. N., Aurora	4	43
		4	55
Essentia Health - Lakeside Clinic	420 E. 1st St., Duluth	4	41
		4	54
Rainy Lake Medical Center	2501 Keenan Drive, International Falls	4	41
		4	50
Scenic Rivers Health Services - Northome	12052 Main St., Northome	4	40
Raiter Clinic - Integrity Health	417 Skyline Blvd., Cloquet	4	48
		3	42
Essentia Health - Hibbing Clinic	730 E. 34th St., Hibbing	4	44
		3	49
Essentia Health - Hermantown Clinic	4855 W. Arrowhead Road, Hermantown	4	44
		3	44
Range Regional Health Services dba Fairview Mesaba Clinic - Mountain Iron	8496 Enterprise Drive S., Mountain Iron	4	40
		3	45
Essentia Health - Virginia Clinic	1101 9th St. N., Virginia	3	34
		3	48
Essentia Health - Lakewalk Clinic	1502 London Road, Duluth	3	36
Scenic Rivers Health Services - Bigfork/Big Falls	135 Pine Tree Drive, Bigfork	3	34
		3	41
Essentia Health - Proctor Clinic	211 S. Boundary Ave., Proctor	3	34
		3	45
St. Luke's Clinics - Internal Medicine Associates	1001 E. Superior St., L401, Duluth	2	27
		4	50



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease
			0% 20 40 60 80 100%

NORTHEAST continued

St. Luke's Clinics - P.S. Rudie Medical Clinic	324 W. Superior St., Suite 302, Duluth	3	31	
		3	40	
Gateway Family Health Clinic - Moose Lake	4570 County Highway 61, Moose Lake	2	26	
		3	43	
St. Luke's Clinics - Cardiology Associates	1001 E. Superior St., Suite L201, Duluth	2	39	
Essentia Health - Duluth Clinic Main	400 E. Third St., Duluth	2	38	
Essentia Health - Chisholm Clinic	400 NW First St., Chisholm	2	29	
Range Regional Health Services dba Fairview Mesaba Clinic - Hibbing	3605 Mayfair Ave., Hibbing	3	30	
		1	27	
St. Luke's Clinics - Denfeld	4702 Grand Ave., Duluth	2	26	
		2	37	
Essentia Health - Duluth Clinic	502 E. 2nd St., Duluth	2	29	
Range Regional Health Services dba Fairview Mesaba Clinic - Nashauk	402 Platt Ave. E., Nashauk	2	27	
		2	31	
St. Luke's Clinics - Miller Creek	4884 Miller Trunk Highway, Hermantown	2	29	
St. Luke's Clinics - Lester River	6351 E. Superior St., Duluth	2	26	
St. Luke's Clinics - Mount Royal	1400 Woodland Ave., Duluth	2	22	
Grand Itasca Clinic	1601 Golf Course Road, Grand Rapids	2	20	
		2	36	
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, Inc.	513 Fifth Ave. W., Grand Marais	2	21	
		2	34	
St. Luke's Clinics - Laurentian	901 9th St. N., Suite 115, Virginia	2	21	
		2	32	
St. Luke's Clinics - Endocrinology Associates	1011 E. First St., Duluth	2	23	
Range Medical Services, Ltd.	604 Ninth St. N., Virginia	2	24	
		1	27	
Lake Superior Community Health Center - Duluth	4325 Grand Ave., Duluth	1	19	
		2	33	
St. Luke's Clinics - Hibbing Family Medical Clinic	1124 E. 34th St., Hibbing	1	19	
		2	33	
Duluth Family Practice Center - Integrity Health	330 N. Eighth Ave. E., Duluth	2	20	
		1	24	
Riverwood Aitkin Clinic	200 Bunker Hill Drive, Aitkin	1	18	
		1	29	
St. Luke's Clinics - Duluth Internal Medicine Associates	324 W. Superior, Suite 220, Duluth	1	19	
		1	29	
Lake View Clinic - Two Harbors	1010 Fourth St., Two Harbors	1	18	
		1	27	
St. Luke's Clinics - Bay Area	50 Outer Circle, Silver Bay	1	19	
Riverwood McGregor Clinic	2 E. Center Ave., McGregor	1	11	
		1	20	
Scenic Rivers Health Services - Cook	20 S. Fifth St. E., Cook	1	12	
		1	20	

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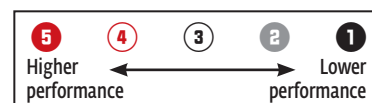
Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> <div>Diabetes</div> <div>Heart & vascular disease</div> </div> <div>0%20406080100%</div>

NORTHEAST continued

VRMC Clinical Services	901 9th St. N., Virginia	1	12
Deer River Meridian Medical Clinic	1542 Golf Course Road, Suite 203, Grand Rapids	1	10
		1	13

NORTHWEST

Sanford South Moorhead Internal Medicine	1301 Eighth St. S., Moorhead	4	43
		4	54
Sanford Bemidji Main Clinic Internal Medicine	1233 34th St. NW, Bemidji	4	40
		4	51
Sanford Mahanomen Clinic	410 Fourth St. NW, Mahanomen	4	40
Sanford South Moorhead Family Medicine	1301 Eighth St. S., Moorhead	3	38
		4	52
Sanford New York Mills Clinic	20 W. Centennial 84 Drive, New York Mills	4	43
		3	40
Sanford Thief River Falls Clinic	1720 Highway 59 S., Thief River Falls	3	39
		3	48
Lake Region Healthcare Clinic Services - Fergus Falls	615 Mill St. S., Fergus Falls	3	32
		3	48
Sanford East Grand Forks Clinic	929 Central Ave. NW, East Grand Forks	3	37
		3	40
Sanford Perham Clinic	665 Third St. SW, Perham	3	32
		3	42
Sanford Twin Valley Clinic	501 Second St. NW, Twin Valley	3	31
Kittson Memorial Clinic - Karlstad	First & Roosevelt St., Karlstad	3	34
Sanford Bemidji 1611 Anne St Clinic	1611 Anne St. NW, Bemidji	3	31
		3	43
Sanford Pelican Rapids Clinic	211 E. Mill St., Pelican Rapids	3	32
		3	41
Essentia Health Fosston	900 Hilligoss Blvd. SE, Fosston	3	30
Sanford Detroit Lakes Clinic	1245 Washington Ave., Detroit Lakes	2	29
		3	40
Sanford Bemidji Main Clinic Family Medicine	1233 34th St. NW, Bemidji	3	31
		2	37
St. Mary's Innovis Health Clinic - Detroit Lakes	125 Frazee St. E., Detroit Lakes	3	35
		1	28
Lake Region Healthcare - Battle Lake Clinic	410 Lake Ave. S., Battle Lake	2	28
Altru Health System - Red Lake Falls	321 International Drive, Red Lake Falls	2	27
Sanford Bagley Clinic	123 Fourth St., Bagley	3	33
		1	22
Altru Health System - Warroad	412 N. Main St., Warroad	3	30
		1	29
Kittson Memorial Clinic - Hallock	1010 S. Birch Ave., Hallock	2	27
RiverView Clinic North	323 S. Minnesota St., Crookston	2	22
Sanford Hawley Clinic	1412 Main St., Hawley	2	23
		1	29



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease
			0% 20 40 60 80 100%

NORTHWEST continued

Altru Health System - Crookston	400 S. Minnesota Ave., Crookston	2	23
		1	27
Altru Health System - Roseau	711 Delmore Drive, Roseau	1	17
		2	33
St. Mary's Innovis Health Clinic - Frazee	114 W. Main, Frazee	1	18
		1	29
Lakewood Health Center Clinic	600 Main Ave. S., Baudette	1	17
		1	24
Essentia Health - Ada	201 Ninth St. W., Ada	1	18
North Valley Health Center	109 S. Minnesota St., Warren	1	15
Altru Health System - Erskine	23076 347 St. SE, Erskine	1	15
St. Mary's Innovis Health - Mahanomen	117 Main St., Mahanomen	1	8

SOUTHWEST

Affiliated Community Medical Centers - Litchfield Clinic (East)	611 S. Sibley Ave., Litchfield	5	53
		4	50
Affiliated Community Medical Centers - New London Clinic	206 Main St. N., New London	5	54
		3	48
Affiliated Community Medical Centers - Granite Falls Clinic	295 10th Ave., Granite Falls	4	43
		4	59
Affiliated Community Medical Centers - Willmar Clinic	101 Willmar Ave. SW, Willmar	4	43
		4	59
Family Practice Medical Center of Willmar	502 Second St. SW, Willmar	4	42
		4	59
Affiliated Community Medical Centers - Redwood Falls Clinic	1100 Broadway, Redwood Falls	4	42
		3	48
Affiliated Community Medical Centers - Marshall Clinic (Market Street)	1420 E. College Drive, Marshall	4	42
		3	48
Affiliated Community Medical Centers - Marshall (Bruce St.)	300 S. Bruce St., Marshall	3	33
		4	57
Sanford Westbrook Clinic	920 Bell Ave., Westbrook	3	39
		3	47
Affiliated Community Medical Centers - Litchfield Clinic (West)	520 S. Sibley Ave., Litchfield	3	37
		3	49
Hutchinson Medical Center	3 Century Ave., Hutchinson	3	35
		3	49
Glencoe Regional Health Services - Lester Prairie	1024 Central Ave., Lester Prairie	3	35
		3	45
Sanford Lakefield Clinic	209 Main St., Lakefield	3	36
Affiliated Community Medical Centers - Benson Clinic	1805 Wisconsin Ave., Benson	3	34
		3	48
Mayo Clinic Health System - Lamberton	310 S. Main St., Lamberton	3	36
Sanford Tracy Clinic	249 Fifth St. E., Tracy	3	34
		3	40

Ratings of medical practices

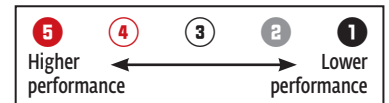
In collaboration with MNMCM

In order of performance within regions.

Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease </div> <div> 0%20406080100% </div>

SOUTHWEST continued

Glencoe Regional Health Services - Stewart	300 Bowman St., Stewart	3	31
Sanford Worthington Clinic	1680 Diagonal Rd., Worthington	3	32
		3	40
Hartberg Medical Clinic	2170 Hospital Dr., Windom	3	30
		3	47
Sanford Mountain Lake Clinic	308 Eighth St. N., Mountain Lake	3	30
Ridgeview Winsted Clinic	551 Fourth St. N., Winsted	3	32
Avera - Pipestone County Medical Center	920 Fourth Ave. SW, Pipestone	3	33
Glencoe Regional Health Services - Glencoe	1805 Hennepin Ave. N., Glencoe	2	23
		4	53
Alexandria Clinic	610 30th Ave. W., Alexandria	2	28
		3	40
Essentia Health - Graceville Clinic	115 W. Second St., Graceville	2	24
		3	44
Chippewa County Montevideo Hospital & Medical Clinic	824 N. 11th St., Montevideo	2	22
		3	43
Avera - United Medical Clinic	820 Second Ave., Windom	2	22
		3	40
Hendricks Clinic	501 E. Lincoln St., Hendricks	3	39
		1	29
Renville County Hospital and Clinics - Hector	131 Birch Ave., Hector	2	28
Ortonville Area Health Services - Northside Medical Clinic	450 Eastvold Ave., Ortonville	2	29
		2	36
Sanford Adrian Clinic	601 Louisiana Ave., Adrian	2	27
		2	32
Glenwood Medical Center	417 S. Franklin St., Glenwood	2	28
Murray County Clinic	2040 Juniper Ave., Slayton	3	33
		1	16
Sanford Canby Clinic	112 St. Olaf Ave. S., Canby	2	26
		2	30
Hutchinson Area Health Care - Dassel Medical Center	460 Fifth St., Dassel	2	23
Sanford Jackson Clinic	1430 N. Highway, Jackson	2	24
Stevens Community Medical Center	400 E. First St., Morris	2	21
		2	37
Tyler Medical Clinic	240 Willow St., Tyler	2	22
		2	32
Appleton Clinic	30 S. Behl St., Appleton	2	22
Sanford Windom Clinic	591 Second Ave. N., Windom	2	20
Renville County Hospital and Clinics - Olivia	600 E. Park Ave., Olivia	2	22
Johnson Memorial Health Services - Dawson Clinic	1282 Walnut St., Dawson	2	20
Sanford Luverne Clinic	1601 Sioux Valley Drive, Luverne	2	28
		1	29



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease
			0% 20 40 60 80 100%

SOUTHWEST continued

Prairie Ridge Hospital & Health Services - Elbow Lake	930 First St. NE, Elbow Lake	2	23
Avera Worthington Specialty Clinic	508 10th St., Worthington	1	20
		1	19
		1	13
Renville County Hospital and Clinics - Renville	420 Main St. N., Renville	1	17
Prairie Ridge Hospital & Health Services - Morris	24 E. Seventh St., Morris	1	14
		1	21
Stevens Community Medical Center - Starbuck Clinic	501 Poler St., Starbuck	1	14
Sacred Heart Mercy Health Care Center	803 Fourth St., Jackson	1	0
		1	15

SOUTHEAST

Mankato Clinic - Mapleton	305 Main NE, Mapleton	5	55
		5	68
Allina Medical Clinic - Northfield	1400 Jefferson Road, Northfield	5	50
		5	62
Mayo Clinic Health System Grand Meadow	113 Main St. N., Grand Meadow	5	50
Mayo Clinic Health System Mankato - Eastridge	101 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Mankato	5	52
		4	58
Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare in La Crescent	524 N. Elm St., La Crescent	5	52
		4	56
Mayo Clinic Health System Mankato - Northridge	1695 Lor Ray Drive, North Mankato	5	52
		4	58
Mankato Clinic - North Mankato	1575 Lookout Drive, North Mankato	4	49
		5	63
Mayo Clinic Health System - Lake City	500 W. Grant St., Lake City	4	49
		5	64
Mayo Clinic - Northwest	4111 Highway 52 N., Rochester	4	48
		5	69
Allina Medical Clinic - Faribault	100 State Ave., Faribault	4	46
		5	62
Allina Health System - New Ulm Medical Center	1217 Eighth St. N., New Ulm	4	42
		5	63
Mayo Clinic Health System - Faribault	924 First St. NE, Faribault	4	45
		5	62
Mayo Clinic - Northeast	3041 Stonehedge Drive NE, Rochester	4	44
		5	65
Mayo Clinic Health System - Plainview	275 First St. SW, Plainview	4	46
Mayo Clinic - Kasson	411 W. Main, Kasson	4	46
		4	55
Olmsted Medical Center - Spring Valley Clinic	302 W. Tracy Road, Spring Valley	4	43
		4	57
Mayo Clinic - Baldwin Building, Family Medicine	221 Fourth Ave. SW, Rochester	4	45
		4	58

Ratings of medical practices

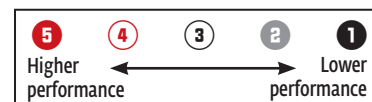
In collaboration with MNMCM

In order of performance within regions.

Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease </div> <div>0%20406080100%</div>

SOUTHEAST continued

Mayo Clinic Health System - Owatonna	2200 26th St. NW, Owatonna	④	46
		④	52
Gundersen Lutheran - La Crescent Clinic	226 N. Second St., La Crescent	④	46
Mankato Clinic - Wickersham Campus	1421 Premier Drive, Mankato	④	42
		④	58
Mankato Clinic - Lake Crystal	221 S. Murphy, Lake Crystal	③	35
		⑤	72
Mayo Clinic Health System - Waseca	501 N. State St., Waseca	④	45
		④	51
Mayo Clinic Health System - Mankato Specialty Clinic	1015 Marsh St., Mankato	④	40
		④	51
Olmsted Medical Center - Pine Island Clinic	111 County Road 11 NW, Pine Island	④	49
Mayo Clinic - Baldwin Building, Primary Care Internal Medicine	221 Fourth Ave. SW, Rochester	④	41
		④	58
Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare in Caledonia	701 N. Sprague St., Caledonia	④	48
		③	45
Mayo Clinic Health System - St. Peter	1900 N. Sunrise Drive, Suite 200, St. Peter	④	45
		③	45
Mayo Clinic Health System - Springfield	625 N. Jackson, Springfield	④	44
		③	48
Olmsted Medical Center - Byron Clinic	846 Highpoint Drive NE, Byron	④	44
		③	42
Mayo Clinic - Specialty Practice	200 First St. SW, Rochester	③	34
		④	55
Mayo Clinic Health System - Wabasha	1202 Fifth Grant Blvd. W., Wabasha	④	42
		③	45
Olmsted Medical Center - Preston Clinic	405 Kansas St. NW, Preston	④	42
		③	42
Mayo Clinic Health System - Le Sueur	625 S. Fourth St., Le Sueur	③	39
		④	58
Mankato Clinic - Main Street	1230 E. Main St., Mankato	③	36
		④	55
Olmsted Medical Center - Rochester Northwest	4303 Highway 52 N., Rochester	③	35
		④	58
Mayo Clinic Health System - Albert Lea	404 W. Fountain St., Albert Lea	③	31
		④	54
Mayo Clinic Health System - Montgomery	501 Fourth St. NW, Montgomery	④	43
		②	37
Mayo Clinic Health System - St. James	1101 Moulton & Parsons Drive, St. James	③	38
Mayo Clinic Health System - Red Wing	701 Fairview Blvd., Red Wing	③	38
		③	45
Mayo Clinic Health System - Alden	192 Washington Ave., Alden	③	33
Mayo Clinic Health System - Cannon Falls	1116 W. Mill St., Cannon Falls	③	39



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease
			0% 20 40 60 80 100%

SOUTHEAST continued

Mankato Clinic - Daniel's Health Center	1901 Old Minnesota Ave., St. Peter	3	37
		3	49
Mayo Clinic Health System - Austin	1000 First Drive NW, Austin	3	35
		3	47
Olmsted Medical Center - St. Charles Clinic	403 W. Fourth St., St. Charles	3	38
Mayo Clinic Health System - Kiester	120 N. Main St., Kiester	3	35
Mayo Clinic Health System - Janesville	312 N. Main St., Janesville	3	39
Mayo Clinic Health System - Fairmont	800 Medical Center Drive, Fairmont	3	35
		3	41
Olmsted Medical Center - Rochester Southeast	210 Ninth St. SE, Rochester	3	32
		3	46
Mayo Clinic Health System - LeRoy	671 E. Main St., LeRoy	3	33
Mayo Clinic Health System - Lake Crystal (formerly Parkview)	200 E. Prince St., Lake Crystal	3	33
Mayo Clinic Health System - Waterville	212 E. Lake St., Waterville	3	32
Mayo Clinic Health System - New Richland	318 First St. SW, New Richland	3	31
Winona Health - Rushford Clinic	109 W. Jessie St., Rushford	3	32
Olmsted Medical Center - Plainview Clinic	20 Second Ave. NE, Plainview	3	39
		2	33
Sleepy Eye Medical Center	400 Fourth Ave. NW, Sleepy Eye	2	22
		3	49
Mayo Clinic Health System - Red Wing in Zumbrota	1350 Jefferson Drive, Zumbrota	2	23
Gundersen Lutheran - Harmony Clinic	805 Main Ave. S., Harmony	2	28
Sibley Medical Center - Gaylord Site	660 Third St., Gaylord	2	26
Sibley Medical Center - Arlington Site	601 W. Chandler St., Arlington	2	25
		2	39
Gundersen Lutheran - Spring Grove Clinic	123 Fifth Ave. SE, Spring Grove	2	25
Olmsted Medical Center - Chatfield Clinic	207 Twiford St. SW, Chatfield	2	27
United Hospital District Clinic	515 S. Moore St., Blue Earth	2	24
		2	36
Mayo Clinic Health System - Adams	908 W. Main, Adams	2	23
FamilyHealth Medical Clinic - Lonsdale	103 15th Ave. SE, Lonsdale	2	21
		2	31
Olmsted Medical Center - Wanamingo Clinic	217 Main St., Wanamingo	2	21
Winona Health - Winona Clinic	859 Mankato Ave., Winona	2	24
		1	15
Winona Health - Family Medicine	855 Mankato Ave., Winona	2	22
		1	18
Olmsted Medical Center - Stewartville Clinic	208 Centertown Plaza, Stewartville	1	14
		2	38
Mayo Clinic Health System - Wells	301 S. Broadway, Wells	1	19
Sibley Medical Center - Winthrop Site	223 N. Carver, Winthrop	1	12
Open Door Health Center	309 Holly Lane, Suite 101, Mankato	1	14

NORTH DAKOTA

Sanford Preventive Cardiology	801 Broadway N., Fargo, N.D.	4	51
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Ratings of medical practices

In collaboration with MNMCM

In order of performance within regions.

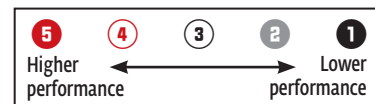
Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div> Diabetes Heart & vascular disease </div> <div> 0%20406080100% </div>

NORTH DAKOTA continued

Sanford Broadway Internal Medicine Clinic	801 Broadway N., Fargo	4	41	50
Sanford Hillsboro Clinic	315 E. Caledonia Ave., Hillsboro	4	40	41
Sanford Mayville Clinic	600 1st St. SE, Mayville	3	39	39
Sanford Southpointe Internal Medicine	2400 32nd Ave. S., Fargo	3	39	49
Sanford North Fargo Clinic	2601 Broadway N., Fargo	4	42	39
Sanford Jamestown Clinic	904 Fifth Ave. NE, Jamestown	3	38	43
Sanford Southpointe Family Medicine	2400 32nd Ave. S., Fargo	3	36	46
Sanford Valley City Clinic	520 Chautauqua Blvd., Valley City	3	37	44
Sanford Oakes Clinic	420 Seventh St. S., Oakes	3	36	44
Sanford Endocrinology	2400 32nd Ave. S., Fargo	3	34	
Altru Health System - Cavalier	201 E. Third Ave. S., Cavalier	3	35	37
Altru Health System - Lake Region	1001 Seventh St., Devils Lake	2	27	47
Sanford West Fargo Clinic	1220 Sheyenne St., West Fargo	2	28	42
Altru Health System - Family Medicine Center	1380 S. Columbia Road, Grand Forks	2	23	43
Sanford Wahpeton Clinic	332 Second Ave. N., Wahpeton	2	29	39
Sanford Lidgerwood Clinic	21 Wiley Ave. S., Lidgerwood	2	25	
Sanford Enderlin Clinic	201 Fourth Ave., Enderlin	2	26	
Altru Health System - Drayton	1003 N. Main, Drayton	2	29	
Altru Health System - Grand Forks Family Medicine Residency	725 Hamline St., Grand Forks	1	18	48
Altru Health System - Main	1000 S. Columbia Road, Grand Forks	2	20	17

WISCONSIN

Western Wisconsin Medical Associates - Ellsworth Medical Clinic	144 Plum St., Ellsworth	5	56	68
Allina Medical Clinic - Prescott	1400 North Acres Road, Prescott	5	50	67
Western Wisconsin Medical Associates - Spring Valley Medical Clinic	130 S. McKay St., Spring Valley	5	51	
Essentia Health - Hayward Clinic	11134 N. Highway 77, Hayward	4	48	61
Western Wisconsin Medical Associates - River Falls Medical Clinic	1687 E. Division St., River Falls	4	46	61



Practice	Address	Score	Percent of patients achieving optimal care
		Diabetes/ vascular	<div> <div>Diabetes</div> <div>Heart & vascular disease</div> </div> <div>0% 20 40 60 80 100%</div>
WISCONSIN continued			
Essentia Health - Spooner Clinic	707 Ash St., Spooner	4	46
		5	60
Essentia Health - Ashland Clinic	1625 Maple Lane, Ashland	4	43
		4	52
Essentia Health - St. Mary's, Superior Clinic	3500 Tower Ave., Superior	4	40
		4	50
Western Wisconsin Medical Associates - Hudson Physicians	403 Stageline Road, Hudson	3	36
		4	51
Western Wisconsin Medical Associates - New Richmond Clinic	551 Hospital Road, New Richmond	3	38
		3	46
St. Luke's Clinics - Mariner Medical Clinic	109 N. 28th St. E., Superior	3	30
		3	40
Mayo Clinic Health System - Red Wing, Ellsworth	230 W. Cairns St., Ellsworth	2	27
Stillwater Medical Group - Somerset Clinic	700 Rivard St., Somerset	2	24
Burnett Medical Center	257 W. St. George Ave., Grantsburg	2	24
		1	29
St. Luke's Clinics - Chequamegon Clinic	415 Ellis Ave., Ashland	2	21
		1	21

This report is based on data from MN Community Measurement, a participant in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Aligning Forces for Quality initiative. Aligning Forces is the Foundation's signature effort to lift the overall quality of health care in targeted communities throughout the country, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and provide models for national reform. One core requirement of the program is that participating communities publicly report the type of data used here.



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