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FOOD IS MEDICINE

How to Get More Cancer Protection From Your Broccoli

Research has shown repeatedly that cruciferous vegetables fight cancer.

In fact, broccoli has been shown to kill the stem cells that make cancer immortal.

While broccoli is a rich source of sulforaphane, sprouting broccoli boosts sulforaphane content to superfood levels.

Three-day-old broccoli sprouts contain 10- to 100-times higher levels of sulforaphane than a mature head of broccoli. Just one ounce of broccoli sprouts contain as much sulforaphane as 11 1/2 pounds of broccoli.

A University of Illinois study published in The British Journal of Nutrition suggests that combining broccoli with broccoli sprouts may make the vegetable's anti-cancer effect almost twice as powerful.

According to Elizabeth Jeffery, a professor of nutrition at the university, it takes only 3 to 5 servings of broccoli per week to obtain cancer prevention benefits.

But it's important that the broccoli you eat still has a live enzyme called myrosinase. This enzyme is needed to form the sulforaphane, its active cancer-fighting substance.

Just one ounce of broccoli sprouts contain as much sulforaphane as 11 1/2 pounds of broccoli.

The problem is that many people overcook their broccoli. Cooking broccoli too long or at too high a heat will destroy the myrosinase. One study showed that two minutes in a microwave or seven minutes of steaming will destroy myrosinase.

Jeffery recommends steaming broccoli for only two to four minutes to protect both the enzyme and the vegetable's other nutrients. Another way to make sure you're getting myrosinase is to eat raw broccoli sprouts. They have an abundant supply.

The researchers noted that some health-conscious consumers use broccoli powder supplements especially if they don't like broccoli. But taking supplements doesn't always work if the supplements don't contain the enzyme. The researchers hypothesized that myrosinase combined with broccoli powder would increase the sulforaphane content.

The study was small. Four healthy men ate broccoli sprouts alone, broccoli powder alone, or a combination of the two. Tests performed three hours after the meals showed an almost twofold increase in sulforaphane absorption when sprouts and powder were eaten together.

According to the researchers, this indicated that myrosinase from the broccoli sprouts produced sulforaphane not only from the sprouts but also from the broccoli powder.

The authors note that other sulforaphane containing foods, such as mustard, radishes, arugula, and wasabi, can be added to broccoli to boost its effects. For example, they suggest sprinkling broccoli sprouts on broccoli. Or you could make a mustard or wasabi sauce to serve with broccoli.

Broccoli sprouts are becoming very popular. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University have developed a line of broccoli sprouts and sprout blends under the brand name BroccoSprouts. You can find them at health foods stores, Whole Foods Markets, and many supermarkets.

Broccoli sprouts should be eaten raw. They are great on sandwiches, in wraps, or as a salad topping.

It takes only 3 to 5 servings of broccoli per week to obtain cancer prevention benefits.

To learn more about the amazing evidence-based benefits of sulforaphane, visit GreenMedinfo's Sulforaphane Research Database, which includes research on its therapeutic application in more than 100 conditions.

The GMI Research Group is dedicated to investigating the most important health and environmental issues of the day. Special emphasis will be placed on environmental health. Our focused and deep research will explore the many ways in which the present condition of the human body directly reflects the true state of the ambient environment. This article was originally published on GreenMedinfo.com

CANCER UP CLOSE

Getting a 2nd Opinion

Cancer is a complex disease with different potential treatments—if you ask

MICHELE GONCALVES

Cancer is one of the most common diseases of our age, and yet those who face it rarely know what's about to happen to them beyond the broadest terms. "Cancer up Close" is an open recount of Michele Gonçalves's cancer journey from pre-diagnosis to life after treatment.

I remember my first contact with the Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA) as if it were yesterday. It was a few days before the Christmas holiday. I was trying to get into the spirit of the season, but I was frightened and overwhelmed as the seriousness of my situation sunk in.

On Dec. 20, 2017, six days after I was diagnosed with cancer, I was alone in my house reading their website at the suggestion of my functional medicine doctor. I decided to start a chat with them via text because I really didn't want to talk to anyone on the phone.

My goal was to learn their protocol for treating stage 3 rectal cancer. I questioned why the New Jersey surgeon whom I met a week earlier wanted to do radiation and chemotherapy before surgery, which didn't sound right to me. I wanted this tumor cut out ASAP.

The person texting me couldn't answer my questions so I ended up on the phone with a sales representative. He asked me about my illness, and I got very emotional and cried while we talked. He offered comforting words that were welcome and sounded genuine.

He then launched into a sales pitch about how CTCA had at least 10 options in radiation treatments and cutting-edge approaches to cancer. He described a three-day new patient orientation, where I'd be given a full protocol as to what they thought I should do and a team of doctors who would be assigned to my case.

I thought he was laying it on a bit thick, but the thought of having so many treat-

ment options and a team of doctors to offer me a treatment plan in three days sounded really good. I gave him my insurance information so he could check my coverage before we continued.

The insurance screening actually took a few days. He told me that my insurance carrier considered CTCA as out of network, but CTCA would offer me financial assistance. I thought they were joking. "Haven't they seen my salary?" I thought. I make a good living and never dreamed of qualifying for any assistance.

But my salary didn't exclude me from financial help at CTCA. I don't remember the particulars of the deal he offered, but I remember thinking it sounded too good to be true. My auditor antennas quickly went up!

I told him I wanted something in writing before committing. While he didn't put it in writing, he convinced me the three-day orientation would not be too pricey since it was only doctor's fees, and that the radiation, chemotherapy, and surgeries that were the costly part of cancer treatment.

Their scheduling department could only get me in for their three-day orientation on Jan. 9 through 11. I had existing appointments for a CT scan on Dec. 28 and an MRI for Jan. 2. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to me.

On Jan. 3, I had a long phone call with the CTCA "nurse navigator" who would manage my case throughout my treatment. She asked for my medical history, cancer diagnosis, names and doses of all the vitamins and supplements I was on, and what tests I had completed thus far. This information would help determine if I needed any other appointments during the orientation. I thought this was proactive and great.

In the week following, I had an absolute roller coaster ride trying to get my CT scan and MRI results before my CTCA visit. Everyone was out for the holiday season and the New Jersey doctor who wrote my prescription for these tests was

on vacation. I was in agony, waiting to know the status of my cancer.

I remember anxiously driving 40 minutes to MRI facility, desperate for the results of my test.

When I finally had the report in my hands, I prayed before I took it out of the envelope and started reading. It was a cold but sunny day as I sat in the parking lot, ready to see my fate.

The MRI showed some concerns about the surrounding tissue. Then, as if God was finally easing my misery, the doctor's office called on my drive home with the results of my CT scan.

The nurse told me in a sweet voice, "You're good. The results look good. There are no signs that it has spread." I was relieved and started to weep. I could barely get the words "thank you" out. She sounded emotional, too, based on my reaction, and wished me well.

With this good news, some of my fear was lifted. Jan. 9 quickly arrived and it was time to visit CTCA.

My brother and I drove to Philadelphia the night before and stayed at a nearby hotel where CTCA clients got a special \$25 per night rate. My brother's room was \$96 per night.

They had sent my schedule in advance so I could see exactly what was planned.

Day 1:
8:45 a.m. – Orientation and tour
9:00 a.m. – Check in, get processed in system
9:45 a.m. – Meet nurse, get vitals taken
10:00 a.m. – Meet general practitioner, review medical history
10:45 a.m. – Meet oncologist
11:30 a.m. – Meet nurse navigator

Day 2:
9:30 a.m. – Meet naturopathic doctor
10:00 a.m. – Mind-body medicine introduction
10:30 a.m. – Pastoral patient care
11:30 a.m. – Blood tests
2:00 p.m. – Sleep screening
3:00 p.m. – Meet gastroenterologist

Day 3:
9:30 a.m. – Free car pick-up
10:15 a.m. – Meet with colorectal surgeon
12:45 p.m. – Vitals taken
1:00 p.m. – Regroup with oncologist
1:30 p.m. – Regroup with nurse navigator
2:00 p.m. – Vitals taken in radiology department
2:30 p.m. – Consultation with radiologist
3:15 p.m. – Talk to financial counselor
3:30 p.m. – Regroup with naturopath
4:00 p.m. – Consultation with a nutritionist

Not all cancer facilities look like hospitals, and not all doctors act like your opinion doesn't matter.

I remember feeling happy to see naturopaths, mind-body medicine, and spiritual care included in my itinerary.

As I recall the orientation, memories and emotions flood back to me. I remember feeling happy to see naturopaths, mind-body medicine, and spiritual care included in my itinerary. This really appealed to me and aligned much more with my way of healing than just getting hooked up to a bag of chemotherapy and being pushed out the door.

I wish I could write 50 pages and take you into each appointment I had during that three-day visit. Suffice to say, my experience was good—really good. Their facility didn't look like a cancer center. It was warm, and reminded me of a hotel. I really liked that.

However, the visit was emotionally and physically draining. I was so freshly diagnosed, and sobbing at almost every appointment, especially on day one. The emotional toll of being labeled a "cancer patient" was hitting me hard.

And the third day was so jam-packed, my brother and I didn't even have time to eat lunch and had a very late dinner. Fortunately, I always carry nuts and water in my purse.

Between appointments, I saw the reality of what was in store for me. In waiting rooms, I saw women with no hair due to chemotherapy, people so weak and thin they were stuck in wheelchairs, and others barely able to walk, their severe pain plain to see. Nobody prepares you for the sights, sounds, and smells that cancer brings. It was so depressing. All I thought was, "How long before I look like this, too?"

Despite the strain and aggressive schedule, I knew that at the end of it I was going to get a full assessment. I was on a mission to get answers, and they were about to be delivered.

So, what was CTCA's assessment you wonder? Come back next week to find out. Until then, breathe deep, be kind, and take it one day at a time.

Michele Gonçalves is a financial compliance and fraud auditor for a Fortune 500 company by day and a passionate pursuer of holistic and functional medicine knowledge by night. She is also the author of the column The Consummate Traveler.

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Google Is Effectively Censoring Health Information

Unorthodox health views, even those backed by research, are getting buried by Google's algorithm.

BARRY BROWNSTEIN

In Ray Bradbury's classic novel "Fahrenheit 451," firemen don't put out fires; they create fires to burn books. The totalitarians claim noble goals for book burning: They want to spare citizens unhappiness caused by having to sort through conflicting theories.

Censorship Is Control

The real aim of censorship, in Bradbury's dystopia, is to control the population.

Captain Beatty explains to the protagonist fireman Montag, "You can't build a house without nails and wood. If you don't want a house built, hide the nails and wood." The "house" Beatty is referring to is opinions in conflict with the "official" one.

"If you don't want a man unhappy politically, don't give him two sides to a question to worry him; give him one. Better yet, give him none. Let him forget there is such a thing as war. If the government is inefficient, top-heavy, and tax-mad, better it be all those than that people worry over it," Bradbury wrote.

Nobel Laureate Copes With Conflicting Opinions

When making decisions, we often face conflicting theories. Daily, we face choices about what to eat. Although the government issues ever-changing dietary guidelines, thankfully, the marketplace supports personal dietary decisions ranging from carnivore to vegan. We are free to choose our diet based on our evaluation of the available evidence and the needs of our bodies.

When we face health issues, decisions become tougher. There is an orthodox opinion, and there are always dissenting opinions. For example, the orthodoxy recommends statins to reduce high cholesterol. Others believe high cholesterol isn't a health risk and that statins are harmful.

Nobel laureate in economics Vernon Smith was taking a prescribed statin and recently observed the impact it was having on him:

"In the last week, I had a very clear (now) experience of temporary memory loss. I did a little searching and found this article summarizing and documenting the evidence over many years," he wrote on Facebook. "Such incidents have been widely reported, but the problem did not arise in any of the clinical trials, but neither were they designed to detect it," he continued. Smith had to weigh the purported benefits against the side effects.

"Statin effectiveness in reducing heart/stroke events needs to be weighed against this important negative. Since I am actively writing, this is a primal concern for me, and I have stopped taking it."

A free person understands that there is no one "best" pathway. Although experts have the knowledge, a free person takes responsibility, makes a choice, and bears the consequences. We never know what the consequences would have been had we made a different choice.

Health Care 451

Some people don't like to take responsibility for health choices. They

prefer to do what they're told by the doctor.

"Do you understand now why books are hated and feared?" asks Bradbury's character professor Faber in "Fahrenheit 451." Faber responds to his own rhetorical question:

"Because they reveal the pores on the face of life. The comfortable people want only wax moon faces, poreless, hairless, expressionless." Bradbury is reminding us that life is messy. Often, there is no comfortable one-size-fits-all solution to the challenges we face.

Despite the evidence against statins, the medical orthodoxy would like you to believe that those who question statins are being hoodwinked by fake news. The orthodoxy wants you to believe there is one size for all.

Duke University's Dr. Ann Marie Navar is the associate editor of JAMA Cardiology. In her article, "Fear-Based Medical Misinformation," she rails against the "fake medical news and fearmongering [that] plague the cardiovascular world through relentless attacks on statins."

She writes many patients remain concerned about statin safety. In one study, concerns about statin safety were the leading reason that patients reported declining a statin, with more than 1 in 3 patients (37 percent) citing fears about adverse effects as their reason for not starting a statin after their physician recommended it.

Navar takes the position that concerns about safety are "fake medical news," spread in part by ignorant patients via social media. Don't worry, she counsels, reports are incorrect when they claim "that statins cause memory loss, cataracts, pancreatic dysfunction, Lou Gehrig's disease, and cancer."

Fake news? Dr. David Brownstein (no relation) disagrees:

"The Physicians Desk Reference states that adverse reactions associated with Lipitor include cognitive impairment (memory loss, forgetfulness, amnesia, memory impairment, and confusion associated with statin use). Furthermore, post-marketing studies have found Lipitor use associated with pancreatitis. Other researchers have reported a relationship between statin use and Lou Gehrig's disease. Finally, peer-reviewed research has reported a relationship between statin use and cataracts. Statins being associated with serious adverse

effects has nothing to do with fake news. These are facts," he writes.

To be sure, more physicians would agree with Navar than Brownstein, but should treatments be dictated by those on one side of the argument? After all, due to human variability, statins may both save some lives and impair or kill other people.

Though some doctors question whether to prescribe statins for everyone, there is a large financial incentive to stifle debate.

Can you imagine a future government-controlled health care system, completely captured by the pharmaceutical industry, mandating statins for everyone? I can.

There are good reasons to be concerned that we are losing access to information with which to evaluate opposing sides of health issues, like the statin debate. Already Google is "burning" sites that question the medical orthodoxy about statins.

Google Tips the Scales

Mercola.com, operated by Dr. Joseph Mercola, is one of the most visited websites providing alternative views to medical orthodoxy. If I were researching statins, I would certainly read several of the essays questioning statin use and the cholesterol theory of heart disease. Essays at Mercola.com usually provide references to medical studies. Personally, since Mercola sells supplements and I am a supplement skeptic, I read his essays—like I read all medical essays—with a grain of salt.

Dr. Kelly Brogan is a psychiatrist who has helped thousands of women find alternatives to psychotropic drugs prescribed to treat depression and anxiety. In her book, "A Mind of Your Own: The Truth About Depression and How Women Can Heal Their Bodies to Reclaim Their Lives," Brogan reports that 1 of every 7 women and 25 percent of women in their 40s and 50s are on such drugs.

"Although I was trained to think that antidepressants are to the depressed (and to the anxious, panicked, OCD, IBS, PTSD, bulimic, anorexic, and so on) what eyeglasses are to the poor-sighted, I no longer buy into this bill of goods" she writes.

For their unorthodox views, Brogan, Mercola, and others like them are treated as medical heretics. Brogan and Mercola have documented how a change in Google's search engine algorithm has destroyed

Despite the evidence against statins, the medical orthodoxy would like you to believe that those who question statins are being hoodwinked by fake news.

Some people don't like to take responsibility for health choices. They prefer to do what they're told by the doctor.

Google thinks its intention to 'do the right thing' is enough to prevent abuses.

search traffic to their websites.

From time to time, Google updates algorithms determining how search results are displayed; there is nothing inherently nefarious in such actions. Google has achieved its market position by doing a better job than other search engines.

According to Mercola, before Google's most recent June 19 algorithm update, "Google search results were based on crowdsourced relevance. An article would ascend in rank based on the number of people who clicked on it."

After its June 19 algorithm update, Google is relying more on human "quality" raters. Google instructs raters that the lowest ratings should go to a "YMYL page with inaccurate potentially dangerous medical advice," YMYL stands for "Your Money or Your Life."

"We have very high Page Quality rating standards for YMYL pages because low-quality YMYL pages could potentially negatively impact users' happiness, health, financial stability, or safety," Google writes.

Does that sound reasonable? If a site argues for treatments other than the medical orthodoxy then, by definition, the site can arouse readers' cause for concern and, for some people, unhappiness. Do we really want Google to assume the role of Bradbury's firemen?

Google wants to protect you from conflicting opinions. And if you don't think that's a problem, imagine sometime in the future when searching for information on monetary policy, you only find results for Modern Monetary Theory.

Google thinks its intention to "do the right thing" is enough to prevent abuses; some Google employees would disagree.

Google Plays Happiness Doctor Google isn't eliminating access to alternative health pages; it's making it harder to find them. Typical health searches will still generate plenty of "facts," just not conflicting facts. In "Fahrenheit 451," Beatty explains the government's strategy: "Give the people contests they win by remembering the words to more popular songs or the names of state capitals or how much corn Iowa grew last year."

Instead of "conflicting theory," Beatty explains the strategy is to "cram" the people "full of noncombustible data, chock them so ... full of 'facts' they feel stuffed, but absolutely 'brilliant' with information."

Filled with "facts," Beatty explains, people will "feel they're thinking, they'll get a sense of motion without moving." He assures Montag that his fireman role is noble. Firemen are helping to keep the world happy.

"The important thing for you to remember, Montag, is we're the Happiness Boys, the Dixie Duo, you and I and the others. We stand against the small tide of those who want to make everyone unhappy with conflicting theory and thought. We have our fingers in the dike. Hold steady. Don't let the torrent of melancholy and drear philosophy drown our world. We depend on you. I don't think you realize how important you are, to our happy world as it stands now."

The only way Google will maintain its dominance is to continue to meet the needs of consumers. Whether Google continues to "burn" websites is up to us. Google will continue to sort out unorthodox views as long as "we" the consumer continue to rely on Google's search engine.

Barry Brownstein is professor emeritus of economics and leadership at the University of Baltimore. He is the author of "The Inner-Work of Leadership." To receive Barry's essays subscribe to Mindset Shifts at BarryBrownstein.com. This article was originally published on the Foundation for Economic Education.

Yin and Yang

The essential duality of everything, as understood by the ancient Chinese and modern science

CHRISTINA XU

The concept of Yin and Yang is at the very root of how traditional Chinese society understood everything from wellness to a harmonious society. It's at the heart of Taoism and a fundamental concept in Chinese philosophy and traditional culture.

The concept of Yin and Yang predates Western science by centuries and represents a profound insight into the nature of the body, matter, and energy. This essential duality has been revealed by the later scientific discoveries of Western science, though the terminology is different.

The concept of Yin and Yang predates Western science by centuries and represents a profound insight into the nature of the body, matter, and energy.

It's found everywhere, from matter to the ones and zeroes of computer programming. It can be seen in the balance between matter and energy and our body's metabolic processes of being on and active metabolism, or resting and recovering in the maintenance periods of homeostasis.

But there is a core difference in how many Westerners understand this es-

sential duality and how it is understood in traditional Chinese culture. While physicists understand that the duality of matter, as well as the positive and negative charges of atomic particles, are essential to creation, most people think that opposites are in opposition, a battle due to their very nature. In Chinese culture, these opposites are complementary and interdependent.

Understanding the balance between Yin and Yang is crucial in traditional Chinese medicine and achieving this balance is the foundation of its treatments, treatments that aim to provide health and longevity for the mind or the body.

"The Yellow Emperor's Internal Canon," the first book to record Chinese medicine, describes Yin and Yang as "the general laws of the universe, the fundamental principle of all things, the originators of all the change, the root of growth and destruction, and the storehouse of Shen (the spirit). When treating diseases, we must seek the root of the changes in the medical condition, and the truth is nothing more than the concepts of Yin and Yang."

Yin and Yang are a dynamic and holistic system that delivers balance, equilibrium, and order to achieve happiness, health, and well-being. This extends from atoms, to our bodies, to our society.

At work recently, I overheard my colleague complain about overdue work, work not completed, or work completed incorrectly. He said there were too many bosses and not enough workers.

This is a common experience in the work environment where there are sometimes too many people giving direction and too few undertaking the work. For a team to function, it must move as one. And to do this, you need those who lead and those who follow. Submissiveness gets a nasty rap in Western society, but it is an essential and precious characteristic of

Manifestations of Yin and Yang

The world is rich and colorful, and every thing or phenomenon can be divided into two opposite elements. Neither element is capable of existing without the other. Physical manifestations of Yin and Yang include positive and negative charges, male and female, light and dark, fire and water, rest and work, leading and following, rising and falling, and on and on and on.

To provide a simple example, if you have an imbalance in your body between Yin and Yang, it is likely that you will feel unwell. The Yellow Emperor's Internal Canon notes that "Yang in excess produces heat, Yin in excess produces cold."

If you are sick and have a high fever, it is an indication that your body's Yang is too high and your Yin is too low. When treated by a Chinese medicine practitioner, they may use herbs with a cooling nature to clear out the fire in your body, to lower your Yang to normal standards. Naturally, when Yin and Yang are in balance, your fever will be gone.

But you don't want to simply overpower the body. After all, that heat is an immune response, in the Western paradigm. The body uses an oxidation process to generate that heat and burn out the pathogens. You want to cool the body without compromising the body's immunity.



ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

A Harmonious Balance Essential to Health

harmonious relationships. Without it, teams get mired in debate and nothing gets done, or you have just a few people overwhelmed with the demands of too many bosses and these limited resources lead to strain on the health of the organization.

There needs to be a balance in all our actions and thoughts, both within organizations and for us personally in the way that we live. Yin and Yang is about understanding and recognizing our resource capability and how best to utilize and manage it.

If instead, we simply suppress the fever and then bypass the immune system with antibiotics to combat the illness, there can be side-effects ranging from an immune system that doesn't get tempered in the process of doing its job, to the destruction of our microbiome, those healthy microbes that live inside us are essential to our health.

Of course, sometimes a fever can be life-threatening and needs to be suppressed. And sometimes a bacterial infection must be contained. But here again, there is a need for balance, and such prescriptions must be balanced against their side-effects.

Chinese medicine not only maintains health and cures diseases through Yin and Yang, but the understanding of balancing these forces also dictates the order and structure of how we live. We must work—but also play—to maintain joy and meaning in our lives. We must serve others but also take care of ourselves. We must create things to survive in this world, but doing so requires us to destroy things as well.

The world is rich and colorful, and every thing or phenomenon can be divided into two opposite elements.

Life is a balance of these forces, and when we forget that, we face the inevitable consequences of that imbalance.

Christina Xu obtained her bachelor's degree at the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine. Now living in Australia, she dedicates her time to advocating for and promoting the benefits of TCM to the mainstream Western society. Learn more at PreserveHealth.com.au

How to Limit the Effects of Acid Reflux

DEVON ANDRE

Acid reflux can turn a great meal with loved ones into a nightmare. The burning sensation can suck the joy from the meal and take you away from those memorable summer nights. There are only a few short months to enjoy seasonal cookouts, and you want to make the most of them.

Heartburn can be treated naturally; it just takes a little work. But for the most part, it's pretty easy. Here are some ways you can avoid heartburn and make the most of summer meals with family and friends.

Eat less: One of the easiest and most controllable ways to control heartburn is to slow down. A major cause of heartburn is that people eat too much, too fast. By slowing down, enjoying your food, and allowing the body to adequately respond and adapt to food intake, you can reduce the risk of heartburn.

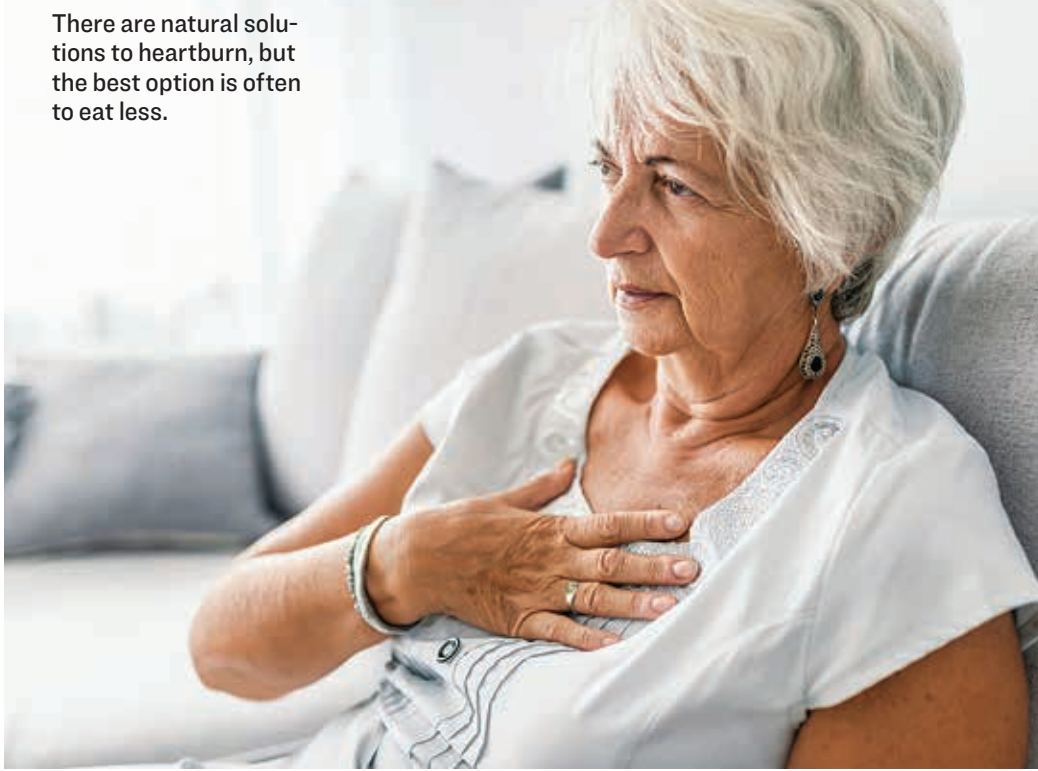
Chew gum: Chewing gum can be a quick

and effective way of relieving a bout of acid reflux. Research indicates that gum can reduce acid in the esophagus, especially when it contains bicarbonate.

Avoid certain foods: Fatty and greasy foods can contribute to acid reflux, as can spice. If you're at a cookout or eating greasy food, be sure to pick at it sparingly. You'd be better off filling your plate with more vegetables and leaner cuts of meat.

Consider your bedtime: There is conflicting evidence on whether or not this works, but eating too close to bedtime may stimulate acid reflux. It could be the position of the body that brings it on. If you experience heartburn when you're in bed, try to avoid eating within three hours of bedtime.

Don't move too fast: Eating a meal right before playing with the grandkids isn't a good idea. Give yourself about 30 to 45 minutes after a meal before moving too quickly to help avoid acid reflux.



There are natural solutions to heartburn, but the best option is often to eat less.

Heartburn can be treated naturally; it just takes a little work.

Ease up on the alcohol: Another culprit for acid reflux is drinking alcohol excessively. Try to cut back and only drink in moderation.

Don't let acid reflux hold you back from enjoying all the great times this summer. Be smart, keep things under control, and have fun.

Devon Andre holds a bachelor's of forensic science from the University of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor from the University of Pittsburgh. This article was first published on Bel Marra Health.



Tips for Women Who Have Trouble Sleeping

Women tend to have more sleep problems than men, but there are ways to get a better night’s rest

JILL SUTTIE

A lot of my women friends have trouble sleeping. For some, it started when they had their first child, and constant night feedings threw their sleep patterns out of whack.

For others, menopause arrived with hot flashes that woke them up in the middle of the night. Still, others have been troubled by worries about work, relationships, or societal issues that keep their minds spinning at night.

Although women aren’t the only people who have problems sleeping, they do experience some unique issues—most notably, hormonal changes that occur during their lifespans. More women are at risk for insomnia than men, and up to 11 percent of women have insomnia that becomes unrelenting, requiring treatment.

Not surprisingly, these sleepless nights make us stressed and unhappy. Research shows that sleep loss hurts our work, mood, relationships, health, safety, and more. While an occasional sleepless night is just part of being human, if it continues to happen, we can find ourselves in a troublesome pattern that is difficult to change.

What can women do? They might try picking up sleep expert Shelby Harris’s new book, “The Women’s Guide to Overcoming Insomnia.” It is chock full of information about how the human sleep cycle works and what we can do to “hack” our thoughts and behaviors for a better night’s sleep.

While people often are prescribed pharmaceutical sleep aids to handle insomnia, research suggests that these may not work well in the long run. Harris says that it’s impor-

Insomnia often builds up over time, and so correcting it means having patience.

tant to find ways to support our natural sleep drive if we want to sleep better. Here are some of the tips that she offers to help us change our thoughts and behaviors around sleep.

1. Track Your Sleep

The first step is to figure out how much sleep you are getting and when. Why? First, people who have sleep problems often focus only on their most terrible nights and forget that some nights are better than others. It helps to get a more realistic picture of the problem. Second, if you want to see how much better you’re doing over time, you need a baseline. That way, once you try out various changes, you’ll know whether or not they’re helping. A sleep log sheet is included in the book.

2. Eliminate ‘Sleep Stealers’

Harris includes a long list of things that you can do to give yourself the best support for falling asleep more easily and staying asleep longer. Many of these are well-known tips, but for those who don’t already know about them, they are worth reiterating:

- Avoid alcohol, nicotine, and heavy meals within three hours of your bedtime
- Keep your bedroom quiet, dark, and cool
- Don’t exercise right before bed
- Don’t drink caffeine after 2 p.m.
- Wind down before bed
- Don’t nap to make up for lost sleep
- Always set a morning alarm to get up at the same time every day
- Don’t look at the blue light of screens for at least one to two hours before going to bed

3. Learn to Love Your Bed

A key to getting better sleep is to reserve your bed for sleeping—not for resting or re-

laxing. It’s important to train your body to associate going to bed with sleeping, rather than other types of activities. That means going to bed at bedtime and getting right out of bed when your alarm goes off, too.

If you like to read in bed, don’t ... or don’t read for more than 15 minutes, Harris says. And, if you can’t fall asleep within about 20 minutes, you should get out of bed, rather than lie around waiting to get sleepy.

“Consistency is key,” Harris writes. “If you occasionally break the stimulus control rules, you’re giving a confusing signal to your brain and body.”

4. Spend Less Time in Bed

This may sound totally counterintuitive, but if you have insomnia, it’s often better to restrict your sleep than to let yourself sleep whenever you’re tired. Rather than napping at the first sign of fatigue, focus on sticking to good sleep hygiene—like trying to sleep at the same time every day, getting regular exercise, not drinking caffeine late in the day, etc.

The reason this works is that it builds up your body’s sleep drive, which ultimately makes it easier for you to fall asleep and sleep well when bedtime arrives. Of course, you have to be careful about doing this, and Harris gives detailed instructions in the book.

Insomnia often builds up over time, and correcting that means having patience and letting the changes in your hygiene have a chance to work. Ultimately, when you develop a healthier sleep pattern, you may end up getting better sleep, with less time in bed.

5. Take Care of Worrisome Thoughts

Many women have a lot to juggle in their lives and may spend hours in bed ruminating about everything. So, in addition to changing your behaviors, it’s important to cultivate skills for handling your thoughts, too.

Harris recommends a few strategies for dealing with intrusive thoughts. One is practicing mindfulness—learning to focus on your present experience, including thoughts or feelings, without judgment. Naming your worries as “just thinking” can help create a little distance between you and your thoughts. Setting aside time during the day to focus on worries can also help; and using reframing techniques, where you consider alternative interpretations of your negative thoughts, may take away their potency.

The book offers much more detail and many more tips, including for special cases—like when you are pregnant and need to reconsider naps or use pillows to help support your sleep. And, best of all, Harris’s advice is based in science and has been proven effective for many people.

Of course, you still may have to experiment to see what works best for you, and Harris encourages that. But if you can create a plan and stick to it, the rewards are great—namely, the possibility of finally sleeping soundly and waking refreshed. You’ll not only feel better, but you’ll also likely improve your relationships, your work life, and your health, too. And everyone around you will appreciate that!

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Death Doesn’t Have to Be So Scary

Facing our own mortality becomes easier when we accept that it’s a natural part of life

BRUCE HOROVITZ

Since he watched his mother collapse and die, Richard Bridgman’s fear of death has left him emotionally paralyzed.

It was right around Thanksgiving—nearly 45 years ago—and Bridgman was sleeping overnight on his mom’s living room couch.

“In the middle of the night, she walked into the room and said, ‘Richard, I’m dying,’” recalls Bridgman, who tried to reassure his mom that she’d be OK. But his mother, who had a heart condition, was suffering a massive heart attack. “She looked at me and fell over on her head. I didn’t know what to do. She was dead.”

Death haunted much of Bridgman’s early years. His stepfather died when Bridgman was 15. His father, an alcoholic, died when Bridgman was 17. And Bridgman was 26 when his mom died before his eyes. Now, 72, and long retired from the bill collection business he once owned in the Springfield, Illinois, area, he has spent most of his adult years trying to cope with—if not overcome—his immense fear of death.

“Death became an obsession,” he said. “No matter where I went or what I did, death was always in the back of my mind.”

Most people prefer not to think about death, much less plan for it. In a tech-razed world, where communication is broken into 140 characters and six-second sound bites, our connection with each other is dissected into so many bite-sized morsels that discussion of death would seem an unwieldy topic of conversation.

“Everybody has a fear of death, no matter what culture, religion, or country they come from,” said Kelvin Chin, author of “Overcoming the Fear of Death,” and founder of the Overcoming the Fear of Death Foundation and the nonprofit turningwithin.org. “Fear is simply an emotion caused by the anticipation of unhappiness.”

But wait. What if death isn’t actually unhappy? What if it simply—is? For Bridgman, whose fear of death was overwhelming, that simple question was a critical step in learning to deal with death. That question was posed to him by Chin, whom he discovered via a Google search. Several supportive phone consultations with Chin—combined with a simple meditation process that Chin teaches—have helped to keep Bridgman’s fears under control.

“I spent so much money on psychiatrists and psychotherapists—none of them did any good,” says Bridgman. But Chin steered Bridgman toward meditation. “Meditation is better than medicine,” Bridgman said.

Everyone must figure out their own way to handle the fear of death. One expert, who overcame her own fear through years of attending to the dying, says death is rarely the terrible thing that most folks fret about.

“Death is usually a peaceful process,” explains Donna Authers, a professional caregiver, motivational speaker, and author of the book “A Sacred Walk: Dispelling the Fear of Death and Caring for the Dying.”

“Very few people die screaming. They just go to sleep.”



Few things alleviate the fear of death more effectively than the affection and attention of our loved ones.

It reminded the grandmother that she will live on in the memories of the people she loves. That was all she needed to know.



But it took Authers years to learn the lesson that death need not be frightening. As a child, death haunted her. When she was 2 years old, her father was killed in World War II. Her mother, who had remarried, died on Authers’ fifth birthday. “Instead of a birthday party, I woke up to the worst day of my life,” she said. Her grandfather committed suicide when Authers was 15.

It was Authers’s grandmother—while dying from cancer—who taught her the most critical lesson in accepting death’s inevitability. Authers brought her grandmother home to tend to her during her final days, but her grandmother could sense her granddaughter’s terrible fear.

That’s when her grandmother took her by the hand and, unafraid, reminded Authers, “Death is part of life. You, too, will be where I am someday, and you can’t face death with fear,” she said. That changed everything. Seeing her grandmother bravely face death caused her own fears to dissolve.

“I was no longer afraid of death and dying,” Authers recalls.

Authers ultimately left her job as an IBM marketing executive to become a caregiver. Through the years, she has found that faith is the most important quality among those who face death without fear. “People who have faith in something don’t grieve like those who have no hope,” said Authers.

Increasingly, however, Chin has found that millennials—more than any other demographic—fear death the most.

“It’s the downside of social media,” said Chin. “The bombardment and speed of communication lead to an

overload that can trigger a fear of death.”

Perhaps even the world of politics can play a role, suggests Sheldon Solomon, professor of psychology at Skidmore College and author of “The Worm at the Core: On the Role of Death in Life.”

In times of political upheaval—particularly when people are reminded of their mortality—the fear of death increases, even as they tend to be attracted to political figures who promise them more security, said Solomon, who has conducted numerous experiments on this issue.

“When people are reminded of their own mortality, in an effort to bolster faith in their own view of reality, they become more hostile to anyone who is different.”

Even then, says Solomon, perhaps nothing alleviates a dying person’s fear of death more than love.

A terminally ill grandmother he knew was distraught at the prospect of death. No doctor and no medicine could help her. Then, she received a short phone call from her granddaughter, begging her for her cupcake recipe. “No one can make them like you,” her granddaughter said.

“That call did more in five minutes than anything else could have,” says Solomon. “It reminded the grandmother that she will live on in the memories of the people she loves. That was all she needed to know.”

Bruce Horowitz is a freelance journalist and regularly writes for Kaiser Health News, which first published this article. KHN’s coverage of end-of-life and serious illness issues is supported by The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

MINDSET MATTERS

Why Do I Dwell on the Past?

Memory plays an important role in our identity, but it can also lead to unwelcome thoughts

LAURA JOBSON

Many of us enjoy writing in a diary, reading autobiographies, or nostalgically reflecting with others about past times.

Why is remembering our past so important? Are there downsides? And what can we do if dwelling on the past bothers us?

Memories Make Us Human

Over several decades, researchers have shown that remembering your past is fundamental to being human, and has four important roles.

1. Memories help form our identity.

Our memories give us a sense of personal continuity—a consistent sense of self moving through time. They provide

important details of who we are and who we would like to be.

2. Memories help us solve problems.

Memories offer us potential solutions to current problems and help guide and direct us when solving them.

3. Memories make us social.

Personal memories are essential for social interactions. Being able to recall personal memories provides important material when making new friends, forming new relationships, and maintaining ones we already have.



ing able to recall personal memories provides important material when making new friends, forming new relationships, and maintaining ones we already have.

4. Memories help us regulate our emotions.

Our memories provide examples of similar situations we’ve been in before. This allows us to reflect on how we managed that emotion before and what we can learn from that experience.

Such memories can also help us manage strong negative emotions. For example, when someone is feeling sad, they can take time to dwell on a positive memory to improve their mood.

Memories Help Us Function in Our Wider Society

Dwelling on our memories not only helps us as individuals, it also allows us to operate in our socio-cultural context, just as our society and culture influence the way we remember our past.

For instance, in Western individualistic cultures, people tend to recall memories that are long, specific, detailed, and focus on the individual.

By contrast, in East Asian cultures, people tend to recall more general memories focusing on social inter-

actions and significant others. Researchers have seen these differences between children and adults.

Indeed, the way parents discuss past events with their children differs culturally.

Parents from Western cultures focus more on the child and the child’s thoughts and emotions than East Asian parents do. So, there are even cultural differences in the ways we teach our children to remember the past.

People from Western individualistic cultures tend to recollect specific unique memories that reaffirm someone’s uniqueness, a value emphasized in Western cultures. By contrast, in East Asian cultures, memories function to assist with relatedness and social connection, a value emphasized in East Asian cultures.

Memories and Ill Health

As remembering the past plays such a crucial role in how we function as humans, it is unsurprising that disruptions in how we remember arise in several psychological disorders.



Taking a moment to record your memories can help keep you from dwelling on bad experiences.

People with depression, for instance, tend to remember more negative personal memories and fewer positive personal memories than those without depression. For example, someone with depression may remember failing an exam rather than remembering their academic successes.

People with depression also have great difficulty remembering something from a specific time and place, for instance, “I really enjoyed going to Sam’s party last Thursday.” Instead, they provide memories of general experiences, for instance, “I like going to parties.”

We have found that people with depression also tend to structure their life story differently and report more negative life stories. They also tend to remember periods of their life, such as going to university, as either distinctly positive or negative (rather than a combination of both).

Disturbances in memory are also the hallmarks of post-traumatic stress disorder. This is when unwanted, distressing personal memories of the trauma

spontaneously pop into the mind.

People with anxiety disorders also tend to have biases when remembering their personal past. For instance, all of us, unfortunately, experience social blunders from time to time, such as tripping while getting onto a bus or spilling a drink at a party. However, people with social anxiety are more likely to be consumed with feelings of embarrassment and shame when remembering these experiences.

Finally, an excessive, repetitive dwelling on your past without generating solutions can be unhelpful. It can result in emotional distress and, in extreme instances, emotional disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

How to Resolve

If dwelling on the past bothers you, these practical tips can help.

Set aside a certain time of the day for your memories.

You could write in a diary or write down your worries. Writing about important personal experiences in an emotional way for as little

as 15 minutes a day can improve your mental and physical health.

Practice remembering specific positive memories from your past. This can allow you to engage differently with your memories and gain a new perspective on your memories.

Learn and practice mindfulness strategies. Instead of dwelling on painful memories, a focus on the present moment (such as attending to your breath, focusing on what you can currently see, smell, or hear) can help break a negative cycle.

When dwelling on past memories, try being proactive and generating ideas to solve problems rather than just being passive.

See your GP or health practitioner if you’re distressed about dwelling on your past.

Laura Jobson is a senior lecturer in clinical psychology at Monash University in Australia. This article was first published on The Conversation.

NATURAL WAYS

to Strengthen Your Mind



You can stay sharp and feel better with a few fun and easy habits

ERIKA LONG

Scientists are still discovering the extent of the mind's capacity and capabilities. Its neuroplastic nature was only recently discovered, and despite popular belief, the human mind can be developed and strengthened to function optimally. Here are five natural ways to enhance your mind's performance.



1 Meditate
Meditation can physically change the human brain. Studies show that people who meditate regularly develop higher folds in the outer region of the brain through the process of gyration. These outer folds are associated with the brain's ability to process and save information. More recently, a study conducted by Yale University revealed that long-term meditation hampers the "default" mode network of the brain. This network is responsible for purposeless wanderings of the human mind. Similarly, meditation has also been linked with increased cortical thickness in the hippocampus region of the brain which influences the mind's ability to learn and remember things.

2 Exercise
Regular exercise is linked with increased production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein that plays a pivotal role in the creation of new neurons. Exercising also increases blood supply to the brain, which naturally strengthens the human mind by enhancing its speech and cognitive function. Exercise can produce heightened mental clarity, improved reaction time, and an anti-depressant effect on the mind.

3 Play Boardgames
Boardgame lovers are in luck as these games are an excellent way of strengthening the human mind. Studies have revealed that boardgames that require using the mind's neurocognitive capabilities positively affect the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex regions of the brain. These regions are associated with various cognitive skills and complex memory functions. Similarly, board games also hamper the development of cognitive impairments, such as those related to dementia and Alzheimer's.

4 Eat Right
Foods rich in omega-3 fats, such as oysters, sardines, salmon, etc., naturally strengthen the brain. The docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) present in these food items activates the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex region, which governs the working memory. Similarly, consuming healthy foods, such as nuts, green vegetables, fruits, etc., leads to increased mental alertness. Of late, intermittent fasting has become popular. Several studies have proved that following intermittent fasting as a lifestyle choice can enhance mental power. To boost your mental performance, switch to a clean diet. Cut down on sugary and processed foods. If you are a non-vegetarian, include fish in your diet. If you have a sweet tooth, satiate yourself with berries or dark chocolate.

5 Sleep
Studies have revealed that sleep deprivation could lead to increased neuron-specific enolase and S100 calcium-binding protein. In simpler terms, this means that lack of sleep can lead to loss of brain tissue. Since the brain performs the function of repair and maintenance during sleep, getting proper sleep is vital to ensure brain health. Researchers have also conducted several studies to study the impact of sleep on memory. These studies have proven that people who get at least eight hours of sleep a day have enhanced memory.

Besides these five activities, scientists have evidence to believe that socializing and learning a new musical instrument or a language, as well as reducing stress, can enhance the mind's performance. The important factor is to keep challenging and nurturing the mind to grow. The mind needs good fuel, sufficient rest, and proper stimulation to function optimally.

Erika Long loves corgis, curry, and comedy. Always searching for the next great snuggle, flavor, or laugh, she inspires people to live their best life now. When not writing, Erika can be found at her local brewery dominating Harry Potter trivia night.



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