



TRUTH and TRADITION

A NEWSPAPER THE FOUNDING **FATHERS** WOULD READ

SUBSCRIBE TODAY ReadEpoch.com CHINESE WISDOM FOR SEASONAL LIVING

It's Time to Avoid Viral Infections, Flu, and Allergies

Exploring Solar Terms: 'Seeding Millet'

MOREEN LIAO

A solar term is a period of about two weeks and is based on the sun's position in the zodiac. Solar terms form the traditional Chinese calendar system. The calendar follows the ancient Chinese belief that living in accordance with nature will enable one to live a harmonious life. This article series explores each of the year's 24 solar terms, offering guidance on how to best navigate the season.

Characteristics and Meaning "Seeding Millet" (June 5-20) is the time when farmers harvest early grain crops and plant new seeds for those crops that need to be in before the weather reaches

its peak of heat and humidity. Too much dry weather during this time forebodes that drought in the coming months could challenge summer

With the change in season, spring blooms start to wither. A traditional ceremony used to be held to bid farewell to the flower gods as they journeyed back to heaven, and to express wishes that they return again next year.

Shower with lukewarm water, rather than hot, to promote blood circulation and thus reduce heat in the body.

It was said that the birthdays of the writer of the famous Chinese novel "Dream of the Red Chamber." as well as the main male character in the book, Jia Baoyu, are both during Seeding Millet.

The key female character, Lin Daiyu, buried dead flowers on the day of Seeding Millet and wrote a famous noem titled "Burying Flowers" on this day. For Daiyu, the burial was symbolic of sending off a beautiful spring and this beautiful time in life.

As for those plants that haven't yet bloomed, most likely they won't produce much fruit this year.

Impact on People

It's believed by ancient Chinese people that Seeding Millet is the peak time for viruses, infections, or inflammation. That's probably because of the high amount of rain and relatively high temperature at this time of year. It promotes the growth of the bacteria both inside and outside our bodies.

For this reason, it's best not to eat the types of foods that trigger allergies or

weaken our immune system at this time. There is good news, though, for those who are allergic to pollen. The end of the flowering season comes during **Wellness Tips**

1. Get up early to take advantage of the cooler morning hours and align yourself with the rising sun. Then, consider lying down at midday for a short nap. An afternoon nap can be very beneficial for the body.

Seeding Millet and means relief.

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- 2. Go swimming. It's the perfect exercise for this time of the year as it moves the body gently and helps with fluid circulation.
- 3. Shower with lukewarm water, rather than hot, to promote blood circulation and thus reduce heat in the body.
- Bathe your feet in warm water, which can help to relax and assist those who are not able to fall asleep on hot nights.
- Embrace the heat, but wipe away the sweat and keep your skin dry. For those who suffer from coldness in the winter, this is an ideal time to push out the hidden problems from the inside to the outside, and from our hearts as well. The increasing heat helps to draw out the remaining coldness inside our bodies. This is very important for those who often suffer from flu or cold, as the remaining coldness often resides in places in our body where viruses tend to attack, or the healthful energy can not penetrate.
- 6. For those who suffer from an upset stomach, try massaging four inches from the top of the belly button. This helps to relieve tension on the digestive system.
- 7. Use essential oils of wormwood, lavender, eucalyptus, lemongrass, and citronella to repel insects and minimize the impact of bacteria.

Foods to Eat

Drink plenty of fluids, eat plenty of fresh vegetables, and avoid greasy food. This will balance the body and help it to adjust to the coming heat.

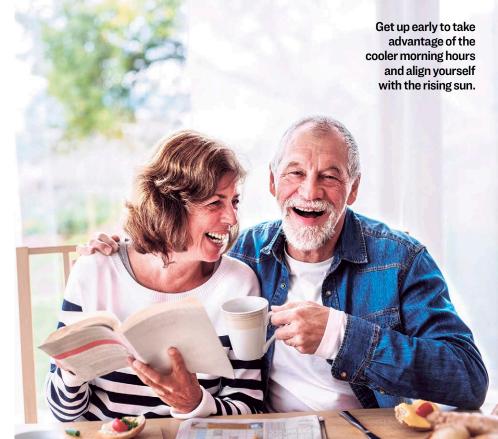
Enjoy plenty of endive, arugula, celery, chard, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, kale, spinach, zucchini, mushrooms, seafood, and watermelon.

To replenish fluids and quench your thirst, drink green tea, honeysuckle flower tea, hawthorn berry juice, and

Artichoke, broccoli, celery, tomato, water chestnut, yam, and all bitter vegetables are good to eat, to bring balance.

Epoch Times contributor Moreen Liao is a descendant of four generations of traditional Chinese medicine doctors. She is also a certified aromatherapist, former dean of the New Directions Institute of Natural Therapies in Sydney, Australia, and the founder of Ausganica, a certified organic cosmetic brand. Visit LiaoMoreen.com

HALFPOINT/SHUTTERSTOCK





Why are We So Vitamin D Deficient?

A statistical error has reduced our daily required dose of the 'sunshine vitamin' to our own detriment

WILLIAM F. SUPPLE JR.

here are many benefits of vitamin D and many risks that come with vitamin D deficiency but many people don't have enough of this easy-to-get vitamin.

The "sunshine vitamin" supports the musculoskeletal system by rddszegulating calcium use for optimal bone strength and density, in addition to enhancing muscle tone. Vitamin D also regulates the immune system by reducing levels of certain inflammatory cytokines and reduces the risk of certain cancers as well as cardiovascular

It is essential we get enough vitamin D,

don't measure up according to government data (NHANES). How can this unfortunate situation occur? First, we do not go out in the sun to get adequate amounts of natural, solar-generated vitamin D, and second, the dietary recommendations for vitamin D, specifically intended for those who don't

get vitamin D from sunlight, are wrong. Consider this: Pale young adult skin exposed to the summer sun will produce 10,000 IU of vitamin D within 15 minutes (Holick, 2008) yet the Institute of Medicine (National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements) has determined a recommended dietary allowance (RDA) of only 600 IU per day is required. Why are

yet, American's blood levels of vitamin D these values so far apart?

Consistent with how the skin generates vitamin D when exposed to sun, vitamin D researchers at the University of California-San Diego, Creighton University, and elsewhere have shown that 600 IU per day is only about one-tenth the amount needed to support vitamin D levels linked to reducing incidence or risk of diseases related to vitamin D deficiency (Heaney, Garland). How did the Institute of Medicine get vi-

cytokines and reduces

he risk of certain cancer

as well as cardiovas-

cular disease.

tamin D dosing so wrong? The RDA is the intake considered necessary to meet the nutritional needs of 97.5 percent of the population. The measurement the IOM used in their calculations was the

blood level of vitamin D derivative (25-hy-

droxy vitamin D) at 20 ng/ml to achieve the 97.5 percent criterion, however, due to a statistical error, the 20 ng/ml value was actually the level to ensure almost the opposite. sd

MELISSA ASKEW/UNSPLASH

Investigators from the University of Alberta published a paper in the journal Nutrients in which they showed that the IOM had made this statistical error in defining the intake needed to reach and maintain a vitamin D level of 20 ng/ml. Had the IOM calculated it correctly, the RDA would have been ten times greater in agreement with Heaney and Garland.

Using the same studies on which the IOM had based its calculation, Veugelers & Ekwaru determined 8,895 IU of vitamin D per day would be necessary to achieve 20 ng/ml in 97.5 percent of the population. Again, using the same set of IOM studies, Heaney's group found that 7,000 IU would bring 97.5 percent of people above 20 ng/ml.

Those who don't get much or any vitamin D from sun exposure due to indoor lifestyle, time of year, age, sunscreen use, or other factors must supplement to get healthy levels of vitamin D.

Conventional thinking among vitamin D scientists and physicians is that between 3,000 and 5,000 IU per day is appropriate for most healthy adults. While these amounts may seem like a lot, keep in mind that your body 'uses' 4,000 IU per day and that the skin can generate 10,000 IU of vitamin D after 10 minutes of full-body summer sun exposure.

Despite what you may have read elsewhere, vitamin D toxicity is very rare. In fact, the vast majority of physicians have never encountered it (ask your doctor about their experience). It can happen to those that take 40,000 - 50,000 IU a day for months or as a result of rare manufacturing errors, and in such isolated instances the treatment is to simply stop taking the additional vitamin D until blood levels normalize. Interestingly, it is impossible to 'overdose' from sun-generated vitamin D as there are checks and balances in place to prevent overproduction. Have you ever seen an unhealthy looking lifeguard?

During these sunnier months, it is important to practice sensible sun exposure to load up your vitamin D stores for winter. If you're a younger adult under age 40, this means

going out into the sun in a bathing suit with skin exposed with no sunscreen for 10–15 minutes. In that time period, your skin will produce enough vitamin D for that day's needs and the extra will be stored. After that time period, apply your SPF 15 and you'll reduce vitamin D production by

99 percent. Do this as often as you can. If you're older, have darker skin, or are obese, you'll need longer sun exposure to achieve

Quiz: Why do cold-blooded animals sun themselves? To get warm, right? Wrong. Lizards injected with vitamın D prior to be ing placed in the sun don't sun themselves as long as lizards injected with a placebo. Furthermore, the effect is dose-dependent; the more vitamin D that's injected into the lizard, the less time it spends in the sun. The lizard is responding to blood levels of vitamin D and regulating sun exposure based on those levels. The lizard is 'smart' enough to go into the sun to get its vitamin D. Do you go in the sun?

William F. Supple Jr., Ph.D., received his doctorate in neuroscience from Dartmouth College in 1986. He is one of the founders of StarPower LifeSciences, a research and educational foundation in South Burlington, Vt., that serves to inform regarding the power and benefits of vitamin D in health, disease, and longevity. Learn more about the health benefits of vitamin D at StarPowerLifeSciences.org

Help Your Heart by Getting Creative With 'Vacations'

Take the time to unwind, renew, and explore—even if you can't get far away from it all

DEVON ANDRE

You may have had to cancel your summer vacation. Perhaps the time you were supposed to be in the Jamaican sun has come and gone and for the first time in years, you've experienced winter without a break. Thanks, COVID-19.

The pandemic has halted plans and led to all kinds of additional stressors. Stressors that can harm your heart. And even if you don't necessarily realize it, those vaca-

tions can play a major role in your mental and physical well-being. Getting away from it all can allow your brain to recharge and your adrenaline and cortisol levels to regulate. Research has also shown that going on annual

holidays can reduce the risk of dying from a heart attack and other cardiovascular diseases.

There is also work to show that vacations can reduce heartdisease markers and metabolic syndrome, including lower cholesterol levels. One study showed that annual vacations could cut the risk of dying from heart disease by up to 30 percent.

There are too many benefits of pleasurable travel to list. And I'm sure at this point you're thinking of memories past. This year, however, travel might be out of the question. But if you get creative, you may still experience some of its health benefits.

What do you love about vacations? Is it alone time? The adventure? What about the idea of having zero deadlines? Maybe it renews the warmth in your relationship. Whatever it is, try tapping into that at home.

Schedule a few days a week where you just forget about it all: the financial stress, chores, or anything else you "have" to do. Take your mind, or body, away from your usual environment to

Exploring a park or trail nearby, developing a new hobby, or planning a romantic getaway at home can all help relax your nerves and ease the burden on your heart. Schedule some time all alone to sit with a book and a drink. Getting out for a walk can also be helpful and refreshing.

If you're craving some of the unpredictability of a vacation,



Exploring a park or trail nearby, developing a new hobby, or planning a romantic getaway at home can all help relax your nerves and ease the

consider a video conference with friends and dressing up for a holiday, music, or moviethemed party. Slap on your vacation-only hat and step out of your environment without actually

going anywhere. Just because you can't physically get away, you can still find ways to escape the monotony and transport yourself. It just takes a little creativity, and you can get the benefits of travel at home.

Devon Andre holds a bachelor's degree in forensic science from the University of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor

degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Andre is a journalist for BelMarraHealth, which first published this article.

NICK POLIZZI

hy do so many people equate relaxation and pleasure with walking barefoot along the beach as the waves roll in? How come my son River's first instinct is to take his shoes off when he sees a field of green grass? Is it kooky human behavior that is simply hard-wired into our genetic makeup, or is there something more to this urge to remove footwear?

The Shoe-Less Revolution

Historically speaking, it seems like we're right in step with our forebearers. Long before we had cushiony sneakers, our distant ancestors often walked barefoot over rock, rubble, dirt, stick, and stream. Their feet were strong and nimble, able to sense and react to any surface they encountered. More recent native cultures often walk through nature on their naked soles, instead of wearing moccasins or similar footwear.

Commonalities like "barefootedness" that we see repeated among ancient groups beg for further investigation, especially in cultures where simple footwear was already an option.

Thankfully, there is good science behind shoelessness and the findings are fascinating.

Current Research on Grounding

It turns out that the sensation we feel when our feet make contact with moist sand is more than just a feeling. This therapeutic touch of the Earth is laden with remarkable health benefits including reduced inflammation, higher antioxidant levels, improved sleep, and healthier blood flow.

The primordial practice of walking barefoot, sometimes referred to as "grounding," is only just beginning to be studied by modern science. One of he most groundbreaking findings is the powerful heart health effect of direct skin contact with the Earth.

A study published by the Journal of Alternative And Complementary Medicine from 2013 states that walking barefoot "reduces blood viscosity, which is a major factor in cardiovascular disease."

Blood viscosity is a term used to describe the thickness and stickiness of blood. The lower the viscosity, the easier your blood flows through your blood



vessels and circulates throughout your body. The higher your blood's viscosity, or thickness, the slower it moves.

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To test the effects of grounding on blood viscosity, subjects had their red blood cells (RBCs) examined under a microscope to determine the number of clumped groups of RBCs in each sample. High instances of aggregation (or clumping) in human blood increases your blood viscosity and can result in cardiovascular disease. This experiment was intended to measure whether grounding to the earth's innate electrical charge would have a positive effect on this blood condition.

Long story short, walking barefoot substantially lowered the instance of unwanted blood cell clumping in every one of the subjects and promoted healthier circulation.

A later study in the same journal found that "grounding" or "earthing" may help regulate both the endocrine and nervous systems as well.

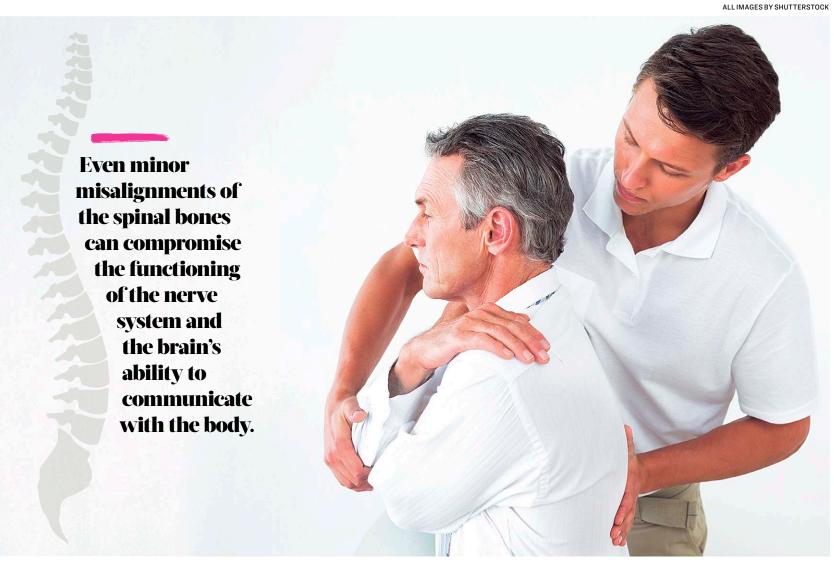
We present-day humans live in a sea of electromagnetic waves radiated by mobile phone signals, Wi-Fi, automatic doors, etc. This is referred to as "dirty electricity" or "electromagnetic pollution." Luckily for us, the Earth's surface is rich with electrons that can neutralize this dirty electricity, much like how houses have a copper cable that is sunk into the Earth to ground out their electrical wiring. Grounding allows currents within us to get back into a healthy neutral state.

This can boost our energy, balance our mood, clarify our thinking, and perhaps even save our lives.

So the next time you're in front of an appealing patch of earth, remove your shoes and socks and step forth onto terra firma and feel the sensation that runs through your body.

I'd recommend you do this at least a few times a week for better heart health and overall happiness.

Nick Polizzi has spent his career directing and editing featurelength documentaries about holistic alternatives to conventional medicine. He is the director of "The Sacred Science," which aims to honor, preserve, and protect the ancient knowledge and rituals of the indigenous peoples of the world. This article was first published on *GreenMedinfo.com*



CHIROPRACTIC CARE

Why a Back Problem Becomes a Brain Problem

The brainstem plays a critical role as the control center our brain uses to reach the body

JOSEPH A. GIGLIOTTI

n the medical system today, there are specialists for every part of the human body. Cardiologists, pulmonologists, ophthalmologists, and the list goes on. As a consequence, many people understand the body to be a group of separate mechanical parts, and with that mindset, the heart, lungs, and eyes are distinct and unrelated. This is akin to a car, as the odometer climbs, the brakes wear independent of the windscreen wiper blades, yet both components are critical to the safe operation of a vehicle on a rainy day.

While we can thank modern medicine for innumerable advancements, we must also acknowledge that it falls short in healing abilities.

While medical science is exceptional for crisis and trauma, an outside-in approach to healing is perhaps most evident in the pharmacological treatment of illness. Designed in most cases to manage and suppress surface symptoms, chemical therapeutics often fail to address the underlying imbalance or cause of illness and result in side effects and possibly further complications.

Many healing arts, on the other

the research tends to say otherwise. Ac-

excessive levels of acetaldehyde, the re-

The fruit, leaf, and root components of

the plant extracts given to the study par-

ticipants had been shown to either increase

the body's action of detoxifying the acetal-

dehyde or protecting organs, such as liver

and brain, from the effects of this toxic me-

tabolite. This enhanced alcohol detoxifica-

tion effect has also been found in Asian

ginseng, fenugreek, mango, asparagus,

The researchers stated, "It seems to be

clear that hangover symptoms are predom-

inantly caused by alcohol and its metabo-

lites this study significantly supports the

finding that the hemostasis of electrolytes and minerals inferred by alcohol consump-

spur flowers, and Asian pear.

bicarbonate, and zinc.

hangover symptoms.

hand, see the body as an integrated system. Some even acknowledge it as a living ecosystem given the presence of billions of microbes that live inside us and play essential roles in keeping us well. Most traditional medicine systems recognize that we are part of nature not separate from it. This can sound New-Agey to some, but consider this, our food grows from the soil and, in combination with the air we breathe,

creates all of our living tissues. We

are made from the world around

us, literally Within all of us, there is an innate intelligence from birth, keeping us alive when we are both asleep and awake. "The power that made the body heals the body" as the developer of chiropractic, Dr. B.J. Palmer once said.

Ultimately, we are designed to you cut a steak and let it sit, compared to what happens when you get a papercut. The absence of life means the steak will not generate new cells or heal. On the other hand, our bodies immediately react to paper cuts where tiny blood cells called platelets gather to create blood clotting and a host of other chemical changes protect us from infection at the sight of the wound and accelerate healing. Eventually, a scab is formed and new cells are made to seal the

wound.

If we are designed to heal, why does everyone not enjoy good health? There can be a variety of factors ranging from environmental to lifestyle. But one major overlooked factor in why people may experience poor health relates to our backs. How could a back problem be-

come a brain problem, you might ask. Surely that only applies to people who have had severe spinal injuries or who have undergone surgery and need rehabilitation? The truth however is that even minor misalignments of the spinal bones can compromise the functioning of the nerve system and the brain's ability to communicate with the body. This can impair the function and healing work of the body.

When you think of any organ many regards, mostly because it heal, and healing is an inside job. or tissue in your body, the lungs, The top two vertebrae of the doesn't factor in the body's innate Think of what would happen if or heart, for example, ask your-spine, called atlas (think Greek self what controls them. What instructs your lungs to take in a axis, protect the brainstem. The breath and your heart to carry out normal rhythmic pumping? Intuitively, we all know that our brain and the central nervous system controls these things. Our brain plays a central role in coordinating every cell, tissue, and organ in our body, by way of the nerve

The brain is floating in the skull in a nutrient-rich fluid called the cerebral spinal fluid. At the base

of the skull, there is a large round opening called the foramen magnum (meaning big hole). From this opening, the brainstem emerges and continues on as a spinal cord within the spinal column.

Many people understand the body to be a group of separate mechanical parts, and with that mind set, the heart, lungs and eyes are distinct and unrelated.

God holding the earth) and brainstem is our master control center, like ground control in Houston when a space shuttle leaves the Earth. It keeps us alive. There are an estimated 450 million nerve fibers that crisscross at this area. It's more specifically referred to as the "cranial cervical junction." All life flows through this neurology from the brain to guide the rest of the body.

Consider that the brainstem is the main entry point of the brain into the spinal column. Nerves branch out from between the 24 moveable bones of the spine to innervate the various parts of our body. Nerves go to the thyroid gland, they go to the tonsils, they go to the postural muscles, the lungs, the heart, the digestive tract, the various glands, the pancreas, the appendix, the colon, the arms, the legs, and so on.

Signals from the brain travel down through the spinal cord in our back at a speed of 269 mph, back-and-forth constantly. So if the nerve system is the superhighway that the brain depends on to communicate with all the tissues of the body, could bones out of alignment in the spine (spinal misalignments) cause dysfunction and symptoms in the tissues connected to the end of those nerves?

The simple and obvious answer is: yes. It is analogous to poor phone reception. In fact, this is what traditional chiropractors have known for over 100 years that these misalignments create spinal cord tension, irritate the nerves, and ultimately compromise a person's health.

As an upper cervical chiropractor, my main focus is to locate and correct spinal misalignments with a gentle specific and scientific adjustment, especially in the upper neck.

I have seen first-hand how patients with kinks in their upper neck from the stress and traumas of life recover from symptoms and conditions that were related to their spine when a gentle adjustment is given.

Many of them have enjoyed renewed health and life from having their spine checked and corrected for nerve interference on a regular basis.

It all seems pretty straightforward when you consider the spine's role, even if our acute care model of modern medicine rarely takes these matters into account.

It's important to understand that chiropractic does not treat, cure, or manage any condition or disease. It merely serves to restore proper nerve supply from the brain to the body, and improve the biomechanics of the spine. Then the body can heal itself.

cervical chiropractor at Full Life Family Chiropractic in Hamilton Ontario, Canada. He specializes in the upper neck and its relationship with brain health and the overall functioning of the nerve system. Dr. Gigliotti and his team serve the community in their growing practice, oftentimes helping those who have failed to find answers in conventional health care. For more information visit www. FullLifeChiro.ca

THE ROOT CAUSE

Herbal Hangover Remedy Points to Effects of Alcohol

Toxic byproduct of drinking is a class 1 carcinogen and the likely cause of morning-after miseries

ARMEN NIKOGOSIAN

he hangover has been a part of human existence for as long as we've consumed alcohol but new research suggests a combination of fruits, leaves, and roots can relieve the underlying causes of this unpleasant condition

The causes of veisalgia, commonly known as a hangover, are poorly understood but we do have some understanding of how alcohol affects our metabolism, which is the chemical reactions that take place inside the body to keep us alive. Drinking alcohol is linked to sleep depriva-

tion, dehydration, electrolyte imbalance, altered glucose usage, malnutrition, and suppression of the immune system. Drinking alcohol can also lead to the body producing too much acid (metabolic acidosis) and can disrupt the body's ability to synthesize prostaglandins, which have diverse hormonelike effects throughout the body.

Drinking alcohol can also cause acetal-

dehyde to accumulate in the body and this seems to drive many of these other changes. Acetaldehyde is a byproduct of our liver detoxifying the alcohol. It is an irritant to living cells and has been classified as a Group 1 carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

The plant extracts included ginkgo biloba, **Barbados cherry** (Acerola), ginger root, prickly pear and willow.

In response to the presence of acetalde hyde, the body produces a series of downstream effects that likely drive many hangover symptoms. The most prominent of these effects is edema, an inflammatory response that leads to the commonly experienced post-celebratory syndrome of headache, brain fog, body aches, and fatigue.

Anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen and naproxen have been used for decades with some success in countering these problems but there seems to be something missing. Even when this treatment was combined with known effective treatments, like hydration, electrolytes, and anti-histamine medications, there was still evidence of hangover effects. This lingering effect has driven a search for natural remedies but only one remedy, potentiated clinoptilolite, has been supported by research. Good luck finding it though.

Researchers from the Institute for Molecular Physiology in Germany recently discovered that a combination of plant extracts helped alleviate a hangover in a randomized double-blind placebo-controlled study.

The 214 participants were broken into 3 groups who each received their "treatment" before and after drinking. The first group received the plant extract and a vireceived only the vitamin/mineral blend; the third group received only a placebo solution of glucose. The average amount of alcohol consumed was virtually the same in all three groups during a four hour period after which participants were sent home to sober up. Twelve hours later, the participants filled in a questionnaire about the type and intensity of perceived hangover symptoms. Hangover symptom intensity varied widely among the participants.

and vitamin/mineral blend reported less severe symptoms including a 27 percent to 42 percent decrease in headaches, nausea, apathy, and restlessness. This was in comparison to the placebo group as well as the group which received only the vitamin/

tamin/mineral blend; the second group

The group taking both the plant extract

The plant extracts included ginkgo biloba, Barbados cherry (Acerola), ginger root, prickly pear, and willow. The vitamins and minerals included riboflavin, thiamine, folate, magnesium, potassium, sodium

tion might not be as strongly affected as While popular belief has held that the believed, as any significant dehydration hangover results primarily from the effects process due to (moderate) alcohol conof dehydration and electrolyte imbalance, sumption also could not be observed."

cording to the investigators, the familiar searchers can now focus their efforts on subeffects of the hangover are multifactorial stances that impact the detoxification of alcowith a driving force being the presence of hol and its toxic metabolite of acetaldehyde. This may seem a frivolous medical issue to many but one in eight Americans or 12 sidual toxic product formed in our body

after the alcohol has been metabolized by percent suffer from alcoholism. There is no our liver. Based on the results of this study doubt that the root solution to this problem is to stop drinking but that is easier said and those that came before, dehydration and electrolyte imbalance are at best minor than done. It may take alcoholics years to psychologically prepare themselves to contributing factors. It is the effect of the acetaldehyde on the various organs of our eject alcohol from their lives. body which likely produces many of these During this time, the toxic effects of

alcohol and acetaldehyde continue to ravage their bodies and minds. Then you have your average suburban Weekend Warrior who wants to enjoy a Friday night having some drinks with friends without ruining his Saturday morning with a hangover. While unlikely to save many lives, a potent plant extract hangover remedy would improve the quality of life for millions of Americans—every weekend no doubt.



Lessons to Remember When Lockdown Ends

Gratitude

something

we should

just show to

these current

heroes in our

isn't

midst.

JILL SUTTIE

lot of people I know have been starting to wonder about life after the shelterin-place orders have been lifted. What will it be like? What will the new normal be?

The answers to those questions will depend a lot on where you live, what your experience has been like, and what you make of it all.

Living in a city that imposed shelter-in-place orders 10 weeks ago, as of this writing, my own life has been a mixed bag. I shifted to working at home pretty easily, but it's been hard finding a routine and avoiding distractions. I'm connected with friends online, but I miss their physical presence. Plus, my sleep and mood have suffered as anxiety looms over the future of

I don't want to negate these feelings or ignore our losses. But, as a writer for Greater Good, I can't help but see some positives coming from this crisis, too. Reflecting ing opportunity for me and for all of us—a chance to focus more on what matters and to think about living life differently going forward.

Here are some lessons I want to hold on to once sheltering in place

1. Being With Others Is Key to

Many of us have been relying on social media and video conferencing to stay in touch with people during the pandemic. But, while I'm grateful for these platforms, they aren't the same as seeing people in person.

Why? For one thing, social media doesn't always bring us closer together. People inevitably curate

what they post online in ways that can make their lives appear carefree and wonderful. That leaves little room for sharing vulnerability—an important way to connect with others. And, of course, there's also a lot of alarmist news and clickbait on social media that can wreak havoc on your happiness. If you're looking for a deeper connection there, you're bound to be disappointed.

Video conferencing is an improvement, as you can see people faceto-face and have actual conversations. But it's tough to read body language on a screen, and so it's harder to pick up on how people are feeling. Also, the science of touch shows us that we humans crave physical contact, which video conferencing and social media can't provide. This loss is especially profound for those living alone, where the lack of any physical af-

fection has been particularly hard. So, while I may continue to use available online tools to stay connected with faraway friends, I've also gained a newfound appreciation for in-person get-togethers. Making more time in my life to be with the people I love and to express affection when we're together is something to bring forward from this experience.

In the near-term, as restrictions lift, I hope to have more physically distant backyard visits with friends and family. While we cannot hug, we can at least look each other in the eye. When the crisis has passed, I plan to prioritize spending more time gathering in groups of diverse people for concerts, sporting events, ceremonies, dancing, and more. The emotional high and sense of connection we get from being in the physical presence of others sharing an experience together is inspiring and sacred. Not only will I appreciate that presence so much more after shelter in place is over, doing so will deepen my sense of common humanity—something that when scaled up can build a kinder, more connected society.

2. Reducing Stress

Is Good for Everyone There have been a lot of things to stress out about during this pandemic. The risk of losing our jobs, becoming sick, or inadvertently infecting a beloved relative is frightening. Having to quarantine at home has kept us from employing our usual ways of coping with stress—like going out with friends or exercising at the gym. And being fed a constant diet of dire and alarmist news has amplified our anxiety and sense of helplessness, making us lose sleep.

Being in a constant state of high alert is not good for our minds or bodies—or for those around us. Emotional contagion is real, which means feeding our own stress and fear affects others, too. That's become even clearer as so many of us find ourselves in closer quarters with family members or roommates whose moods feed off

However, one silver lining of staying at home is that it's forced many of us to slow down and find new ways to manage stress and anxiety. Perhaps you've finally learned to meditate—something you'd heard was good for you but never really attempted. Or maybe you've pulled out a notebook and journaled about your experience, or taken a happiness course online. Some have turned to drawing, planting a garden, or playing a musical instrument. All of these have the potential to improve your mental health and could be worth holding on to once you are set free again.

Then there's the one stressbuster that beats them all: Being kind to others and helping those in need. Ask anyone who's volunteered at a local food bank, brought a meal to a stuck-at-home neighbor, reached out to a lonely friend, tutored students online, or organized their neighborhood relief group. They'll tell you: Focusing your attention on others reduces your own worry and stress—a lesson easily carried will helping others keep us sane, it will also aid in the recovery of everyone impacted by the pan-

3. Showing Gratitude Matters It's pretty obvious that we should be grateful to the "essential workers" during this time of shelter in place. Food suppliers, health care workers, delivery people, and first responders have taken on risks to themselves for the benefit of

everyone else. How can we repay them? By showing gratitude and paying the kindness forward.

Before the pandemic, most of us probably didn't think twice about the workers doing these jobs. Now that they are on everyone's radar, it's been heartwarming to see grateful citizens showing their appreciation openly by making signs, clapping, or howling out their windows at night, dropping off free meals, and over-tipping service workers. Even just saying "thank you" can go a long way toward building good will.

Gratitude isn't something we should just show to these current heroes in our midst, though.

We can show more gratitude for all of the people and things that make our life easier and happier. Showing gratitude feels good and encourages more kindness and generosity in both gratitude recipients and anyone who witnesses the expression of gratitude, creating a virtuous cycle. And, since sincere gratitude is a premier social glue in both personal relationships and society at large, offering it helps build a kinder, more compassionate society—something we should all keep in mind.

4. We Need Less Stuff Than We Think

Now that shopping at the mall, getting my hair done, or popping into the grocery store for a single ingredient has become impossible, I've realized that I'm surviving just fine.

It's pretty clear that we don't need so much stuff or as many conveniences as we've become accustomed to. The basic essentials—food, clean water, and good health, for example—are much more important than having a manicure or buying the newest computer. Given how many of these consumer items and activities hurt the health of the planet, it makes sense to rethink our priorities and consider skipping some to allow everyone to have the basics for survival.

Luckily, our well-being isn't dependent on consumer products. Studies have found that kindness and generosity make us happier than pampering ourselves or buying stuff. It may be hard to believe but researchers often find that people underestimate the impacts of giving to others on their happiness.

In short, we will be happier and create a healthier society if we can consume less and give more.

That's why I hope we will hold our homes. There is power in keeping in mind our common humanity and our sense of interconnection. If we also remember the importance of our relationships, resilience, gratitude, and doing with less, we can move forward into our unsheltered lives again with a renewed sense of purpose and tackle some of our most difficult problems. It could be that collective, compassionate action will be the key to creating a better future for us all.

Jill Suttie, Psy.D., is Greater Good's book review editor and a frequent contributor to the magazine. This article was originally published by the Greater Good online

BECOMING MINIMALIST

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 24 2020

How My Life Has Changed After 12 Years of Minimalism

An effort to own less has opened up my life to more of what matters, including faith

JOSHUA BECKER

emorial Day is a holiday in the United States when we pause to remember those who died in active military service. On a purely personal level, readers of my articles will know that Memorial Day weekend signifies something completely different in my life and my family's life.

It was on Memorial Day weekend, 12 years ago, that I was first introduced to the concept of minimalism, and my life changed forever. As I sat down to reflect on this holiday, 12 significant changes came to mind.

1. I own less.

I have never counted my things never wanted to actually. But when we first made the decision to become minimalist, we easily got rid of 60–70 percent of our belongings.

A lot has changed since then. We're in a different season of life. Most significantly, my kids are now 17 and 14 (rather than 5 and 2) and with their growing bodies and growing independence, different possessions have come and gone over the years.

But we still own much less than when we started this journey—and I can't even begin to imagine how much stuff we would own if we hadn't been pursuing minimalism these last 12 years.

2. I live in a smaller home. We moved 9 years ago from Vermont

(where my minimalism story began) to Phoenix, Arizona. When we did, we bought a smaller home than we lived in before. We knew the neighborhood where we wanted to live and waited for the smallest model of home to become available.

We bought a smaller home for numerous reasons and have never regretted that decision—even as our children have grown.

3. I have more money in savings. I suppose, as you grow older, it would be expected that you would

have more money saved and more money in your retirement accounts. But that is clearly not the case for every American. For us, however, it is. While my income has increased from 12 years ago (as would be ex-

pected), my expenses have significantly decreased thanks to points 1 and 2 above. Because of that, we've been able to save more than if our expenses had remained the same. 4. I am more generous.

Somewhere along this journey, someone thought our story should

be put into a book. So five years ago, we signed a book contract to write two books: "The More of Less" and "The Minimalist Home." Because my blog was covering our

modest financial needs, we used the book money to start The Hope Effect, a nonprofit organization changing how the world cares for orphans that is currently working in five cities around the world to make a difference for orphaned children. Earlier this year, we exceeded \$1

million raised to help orphaned children find families. This is something that would never have happened had it not been for a change to minimalism 12 years ago.

5. I have better habits.

Minimalism in my possessions resulted in countless other lifestyle changes in my life. When I became intentional with my belongings, I also became intentional with other daily practices: how I spend my time, how I care for my body, and how I seek to make the most

Would some of these habits of **8. I see the entire world** eating healthier, exercising more, differently.

minimalism certainly brought them

I have learned lessons

about the intersection

of faith and myself,

that I could not have

6. I don't try to impress people

Back 12 years ago, I had three book-

cases full of books in my office, even

though I read less than half of them.

finding minimalism looking at the

shelves and realizing, "I keep these

pressive. I'm literally using unread

books to impress people when they

It was a lightbulb moment for me.

I also realized, as I looked around

my office, I had hung my diplomas

on the wall behind me for that exact

same reason. Now, I realize there are

other people who have those items

in their office for reasons other than

point in my life when I recognized

how I was trying to use stuff to im-

press others rather than trying to

impress people with the life that

the ones I recognized in myself. But it was a significant changing

books only because they look im-

I remember one afternoon after

the world, money,

and possessions

learned through

minimalism.

come in my office.'

with things.

and writing more have happened I see culture differently. I see socianyway? Possibly, I suppose. But ety differently. I see advertisements differently. I see marketing differently. I see shopping differently. I see money differently. I see work

> The way I see the entire world has changed dramatically since beginning to live a minimalist lifestyle. And that is no exaggeration. The way you see the world will change

9. I have a new career.

peoples' lives.

As this blog grew and the time demands continued to increase, I was faced with a choice: choose one or the other. So seven years ago, I changed my job and the good I try

When I started Becoming Minimalist 12 years ago, I don't know of any

other blogs or websites dedicated solely to minimalism. There were people writing about minimalism (Leo Babauta comes to mind), but nobody writing about it solely. But over the last 12 years, things

have changed dramatically. There

I no longer try to impress people with the things that I own—whether with all the other writers and creators it be books, clothes, cars, houses, or technology. There are much better, and more fulfilling ways to make an

7. I have more time.

Excess possessions are a burden on our lives and schedules. They require cleaning, maintenance, organizing, repair, and replacement. And that doesn't even begin to mention all the time we spend working, just to make the money, to spend the time shopping, to buy the things that we bring home to clean and organize and manage and maintain and ultimately replace. Owning fewer possessions has freed up my life for more important uses of my time. And removing the pursuit of accumulating posses-

sions has freed up even more time.

impression on peoples' lives.

differently. I see people differently.

12 years ago, I was a pastor and loving every minute of it. I had not chosen the job to get rich, I had chosen the career to make a difference in

to bring into this world. BecomingMinimalist.com has been my full-time career for the last

seven years. And I have no intention of quitting anytime soon. I love 10. I have watched the

minimalist movement grow.

are now countless blogs dedicated to minimalism. There are also countless YouTube channels, books, and social media accounts. You can even find a documentary on Netflix. I am grateful that the movement continues to grow and stand proud

> Removing the pursuit of



who have helped proclaim the mes-When I became sage of living more by owning less. my belongings, I also became intentional with other

daily practices.

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accumulating

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more, and writin

anyway? Possibly,

I suppose. But

habits of eating

11. My faith has grown.

My faith has always been important to me. As I explain in The More of Less, my spirituality has greatly influenced my understanding and practice of minimalism. But equally so, minimalism has influenced and grown my personal faith.

I have learned lessons about the intersection of faith and myself, the world, money, and possessions that I could not have learned through any path other than minimalism.



own less. Minimalism, at first, was just a

personal journey. In fact, this blog, which now reaches 1-2 million readers every month was started as just a personal diary. I wrote about cleaning out my office and closet, and the time I threw out my wife's Jell-O molds.

But along the way, my focus changed. Rather than writing about my own journey, I began using this space and my experience to help others own less and live more.

Over the last 12 years, I've written four books, engaged with social media, started a magazine, created an app, and launched a YouTube channel. Always with one goal in mind: help others discover and embrace minimalism.

I love the work that I do. And none of it would have happened without discovering minimalism, 12 years ago today.

Thank you so much for being a part of it.

Joshua Becker is an author, public speaker, and the founder and editor of "Becoming *Minimalist"* where he inspires others to live more by owning less. Visit BecomingMinimalist.com

New Hobbies Can Help Older Adults Escape Depression Later in Life

MAT LECOMPTE

A new study from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing reveals how adopting a new hobby may help older adults keep depressive symptoms at bay, an important finding given rising levels of depression among this population.

Previous studies have shown the importance of non-medical sources of support for overall health and this study affirms a direct relationship between taking up new hobbies and easing depressive symptoms. Activities such as drawing, music, or handicrafts like sewing, collecting, carpentry, or model making have been shown to help relieve symptoms of depression.

These activities, along with others

engagement, self-expression, creativity, and relaxation, all of which are positively associated with mental health. The study included data from 8,780

adults with an average age of 67 with biennial measures from 2004/5 to 2016/17. At the start of the study, 71.9 percent reported having a hobby or pastime, while 15.6 percent were above the threshold for depression using the Centre for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D).

Researchers found that taking up a hobby was associated with 30 percent lower odds of experiencing depression and a decrease in depressive symptoms. In addition, they found that taking up a hobby was associated with the maintenance of lower levels of depressive sympdeveloping depression in those who of social prescribing did not previously have a depression of hobbies, as an al-

In those who had depression at the start of the study, and did not have a hobby, starting one was associated with 272 percent higher odds of recovering from the depression and a high improvement in depressive symptoms. These results were consistently found in both men and

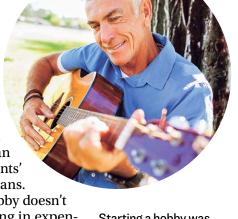
Improving the Quality of Life

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of people aged 65 or older will more than double by 2030, and ideas for improving the quality of life for those living longer means increasing activity. was first published on Bel Marra such as volunteering, can provide toms and 32 percent lower odds of This study helps to support the use *Health*.

ternative to drugs, for this aging population. Prescribing hobbies can help supplement patients' existing health care plans. Taking up a new hobby doesn't

have to mean investing in expensive supplies or joining a class. It can be as simple as picking up a book. Reading, walking, or even just getting outside to watch the birds can help with mental health. No matter what you enjoy, there are hobbies you can take up to help keep depressive symptoms at bay.

Mat Lecompte is a freelance health and wellness journalist. This article



Starting a hobby was percent higher odds of recovering from the depression and a high improvement in depressive symptoms.

As States Reopen, Tensions Flare Between the Rule Followers and Rule Breakers

MICHELE GELFAND

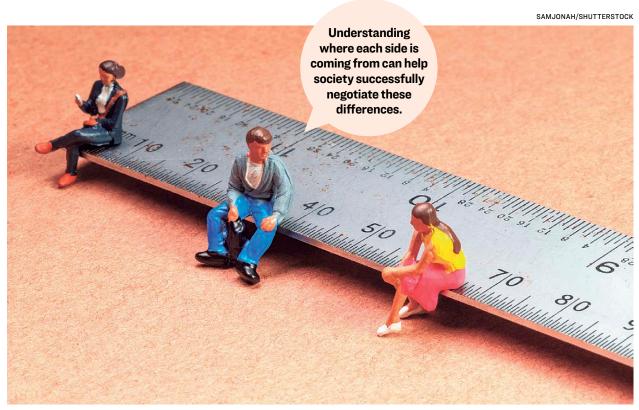
ince Republicans, on average, are five times more likely than Democrats to believe it's safe now to resume normal business activity, reopening the economy has often been framed as a partisan issue.

But within households, many families are having their own arguments about how lax or strict they should be about the threat of the virus. Can dad golf? Can mom get a haircut?

Some are uneasy about opening up and going against official guidance like wearing masks. Better be safe than sorry, the thinking goes. Others balk at being told what to do and feel anxious or even angry about the restrictions being put in place.

These tight-loose differences can reflect the history of a nation or an individual—whether they've experienced war, famine, and disease, or higher stress and trauma.

These differences aren't just random personality types; they reflect our primal social mindsets. And unless these differences are better understood, it will be that much more difficult to navigate life under COVID-19.



As a cultural psychologist, I've spent the last 25 years researching the relationship people have toward rules.

Some tend to have what I call a "tight" mindset. They notice rules around them, have a strong desire to avoid mistakes, have a lot of impulse control, and love structure and order.

Others have "loose" predispositions. They can be skeptical about rules, they're willing to take risks, and they're comfortable with disorder and ambiguity. Neither of these mindsets is intrinsically good or bad.

At a macro level, think about the immense cultural differences between Singapore and Brazil. According to our research, the former is a tight country. This means that there are many laws and rules in place, and punishments are severe. In Singapore, you can

be fined for spitting, and bringing chewing gum into the country is forbidden.

Brazil, on the other hand, tends to be a loose country and is much more permissive. Loose cultures can seem more disordered, but they also tend to be more tolerant of differences and celebrate creative expression—just look at images from the country's annual Carnival.

At a micro level, think of all the ways these tight-loose tensions play out in households. Are you a helicopter parent or more laidback? Do your children follow the rules or do they challenge them

frequently? These tight-loose differences can reflect the history of a nation or an individual—whether they've experienced war, famine, and disease, or higher stress and trauma. The greater the history ple, when a community has an increasing number of COVID-19 cases, it's critical to collectively abide by rules regarding social distancing, masks, and handwashing. People with loose mindsets, who take encroachments on their personal autonomy very seriously, may find this challenging.

can serve a purpose. For exam-

Week 24, 2020 THE EPOCH TIMES

But shaming them, or holding them in contempt isn't going to be effective. It's more useful to remind everyone that these constraints are temporary and that the more diligently they're practiced, the sooner they can be

On the flip side, when the threat subsides, people can loosen up with vigilance. Tight-minded citizens struggle with this because the relaxation of rules makes them feel vulnerable.

The key here is gradual steps. of experiencing these threats, the Tighter folks may panic at a crowded mall or beach. But slowly acclimating them to visits with a trusted friend could make reopening smoother.

higher likelihood of adopting a

The sweeping lockdowns relat-

these inclinations. Embracing or-

are feeling claustrophobic.

The Tight-Loose Dance

experiencing high levels of anxi-

This struggle need not be paralyz-

ing, though. Instead, understand-

ety and friction in their homes.

tighter mindset.

ed to COVID-19 have accentuated As countries begin the long iourney back to a new normal. der and constraint in the face of threat, tight-leaning friends and we'll all be doing the equivalent of a tight-loose dance with family members are even more our friends and fellow shoppers. fastidious. Our looser family members and friends, however, Above all, learning to appreciate the basis for our social differences It's no wonder some families are will go a long way toward defusing potential conflicts.

> And the more we can be ambidextrous—tightening when there's a threat and loosening when it's safe—the better off we'll all be.

ing where each side is coming Michele Gelfand is a distinfrom can help society successfully guished university professor in negotiate these differences. the department of psychology at A basic principle—backed by the University of Maryland. This a lot of evidence—is that when article was originally published on The Conversation. there is a real threat, tightening

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THE EPOCH TIMES



JUDITH GRAHAM

ven as states relax COVID-19 restrictions, in most cases, older adults are advised to keep But for some, the burden of isolation and uncertainty is becoming hard

This "stay at home awhile longer" advice recognizes that older adults are more likely to become critically ill and die if infected with the virus. At highest risk are seniors with underlying medical conditions such as heart, lung, or autoimmune dis-

Yet after two months at home, many want to go out into the world

again. It is discouraging for them to see people of other ages resume activities. They feel excluded. Still, they want to be safe.

"It's been really lonely," said Kathleen Koenen, 77, who moved to Atlanta in July after selling her house sheltering in place. in South Carolina. Georgia residents age 65 and older are required to shelter in place through June 12, along with other vulnerable populations. Koenen is living in a 16th-floor apartment while waiting to move into a senior housing community that has

had cases of COVID-19. "I had thought that would be a new community for me, but everyone there is isolated," Koenen said. "Wherever we go, we're isolated in this situation. And the longer it goes

on, the harder it becomes." Her daughter, Karestan Koenen.

Wherever we go, we're isolated in this situation. And the longer it goes on, the harder it becomes.

Kathleen Koenen, 77

is a professor of psychiatric epidemiology at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. During a Facebook Live event this month, she said her mother had felt in March and April that "everyone was in [this crisis] together." But now, that sense of commonality has disappeared.

Making it worse, some seniors fear that their lives may be seen as expendable in the rush to reopen the

"[Older adults] are wondering if their lives are going to end shortly for reasons out of their control," said Dr. Linda Fried, dean of the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University, in a university publication.

Continued on Page 10

THE **EPOCH TIMES**

ANEWSPAPER GEORGE WOULD READ

For Seniors, COVID-19 Sets Off Pandemic ofDespair

Social isolation weighs more heavily on older generations who face extended restrictions

Continued from Page 9

"They're wondering if they'll be able to get the care they need. And most profoundly, they're wondering if they are going to be cast out of society. If their lives have value."

On the positive side, resilience is common in this age group. Virtually all older adults have known adversity and loss; many have a "this too shall pass" attitude. And research confirms that they tend to be adept at regulating their reactions to stressful life events—a useful skill in this pandemic.

"If anything, I've seen a very strong will to live and acceptance of whatever one's fate might be," said Dr. Marc Agronin, a geriatric psychiatrist and vice president of behavioral health at Miami Jewish Health, a 20-acre campus with independent living, assisted living, nursing home care, and other

Several times a week, psychologists, nurses, and social workers are calling residents on the campus, doing brief mental health checks, and referring anyone who needs help for follow-up attention. There's "a lot of loneliness." Agronin said, but many seniors are "already habituated to being alone or are doing OK with contact [only] from staff."

Still, "if this goes on much longer," he said, "I think we'll start to see less engagement, more withdrawal, more isolation—a greater toll of disconnection."

Erin Cassidy-Eagle, a clinical associate professor of psychiatry at Stanford University, shares that concern.

From mid-March to mid-April, all her conversations with older patients revolved around several questions: How do we keep from getting COVID-19? How am I going to get my needs met? What's going to happen to me?

If this goes on much longer, I think we'll start to see less engagement, more withdrawal, more isolation—a greater toll of disconnection.

Dr. Marc Agronin, geriatric psychiatrist and vice president of behavioral health, Miami Jewish Health

But more recently, Cassidy-Eagle said, "older adults have realized the course of being isolated is going to be much longer for them than for everyone else. And sadness, loneliness, and some hopelessness have set in."

She tells of a woman in her 70s who moved into independent living in a continuing care community because she wanted to build a strong social network.

Since March, activities and group dining have been canceled. The community's director recently announced that restrictions would remain until 2021.

"This woman had a tendency to be depressed, but she was doing OK," Cassidy-Eagle said. "Now she's incredibly depressed and she feels trapped."

Especially vulnerable during this pandemic are older adults who have suffered previous trauma. Dr. Gary Kennedy, director of the division of geriatric psychiatry at Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, has seen this happen to several patients, including a Holocaust survivor in her 90s.

This woman lives with her son, who got COVID-19. Then she did as well. "It's like going back to the terror of the [concentration] camp," Kennedy said, "an agonizing emotional flashback."

Jennifer Olszewski, an expert in gerontology at Drexel University, works in three nursing homes in the Philadelphia area. As is true across most of the country, no visitors are allowed and residents are mostly confined to their rooms.

"I'm seeing a lot of patients with pronounced situational depression—decreased appetite, decreased energy, a lack of motivation and overall feelings of sadness.

"If this goes on for months longer, I think we'll see more people with functional decline, mental health decline, and failure to thrive," Olszewski said.

Some are simply giving up. Anne Sansevero, a geriatric care manager in New York City, has a 93-year-old client who plunged into despair after her assisted living facility went on lockdown in mid-March. Antidepressant and anti-anxiety medications have not helped.

"She's telling her family and her health aides, 'Life's not worth living. Please help me end it," Sansevero said. "And she's stopped eating and getting out of

The woman's attentive adult children are doing all they can to comfort their mother at a distance and are feeling acute anguish.

What can be done to ease this sort of psychic pain? Kennedy of Montefiore has several suggestions.

"Don't try to counter the person's perception and offer false reassurance. Instead, say, 'Yes, this is bad, no doubt about it. It's understandable to be angry, to be sad.' Then provide a sense of companionship. Tell the person, 'I can't change this situation but I can be with you. I'll call tomorrow or in a few days and check in with you again."

"Try to explore what made life worth

living before the person started feeling this way," he said. "Remind them of ways they've coped with adversity in the past."

> If someone is religiously-inclined, encourage them to reach out to a pastor or a rabbi. "Tell them, I'd like to pray together or read this Bible passage and discuss it," Kennedy said. "Comforting person-to-person interaction is a very effective form of support." Don't count on older adults to own

> will acknowledge that, yes, they've been feeling sad, but others may describe physical symptoms—fatigue, difficulty sleeping, difficulty concentrating," said Julie Lutz, a geropsychologist and postdoctoral fellow at the University of Rochester. If someone has expressed frequent

up to feeling depressed. "Some people

concerns about being a burden to other people or has become notably withdrawn, that's a worrisome sign, Lutz said. In nursing homes, ask for a referral to a

psychologist or social worker, especially for a loved one who's recovering from a COVID-19 hospitalization.

"Almost everybody that I'm seeing has some kind of adjustment disorder because their whole worlds have been turned upside down," said Eleanor Feldman Barbera, an elder care psychologist in New York City. "Talking to a psychologist when they first come in can help put

people on a good trajectory." The National Alliance on Mental Illness has compiled a COVID-19 information and resource guide, available at nami.org/Covid-19-Guide. The American Psychological Association has created a webpage devoted to this topic and recently wrote about finding local mental health resources. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has a 24-hour hotline, 1-800-662-4357. And the national suicide prevention hotline for those in acute distress is 1-800-273-8255.

Judith Graham is a contributing columnist for Kaiser Health News, which originally published this article. KHN's coverage of these topics is supported by The John A. Hartford Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and The SCAN Foundation.

attenuate harm, even if there is some

risk involved. Perhaps we need to be

applying this same strategy to keeping

dying persons and families together in

these difficult decisions

what we see to be most

we perceive the good.

valuable in life and how

How we approach

reveals a lot about

palliative care.



TRUTH and TRADITION

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COVID-19 Public Health Restrictions Shouldn't Mean Dying Alone

Dying alone is so potentially harmful that we need to balance harms using a harmreduction approach

BARBARA PESUT

ne of the most heartbreaking aspects of the COVID-19 physical distancing has been accounts of people dying alone in hospitals or in long-term care

These incidents have devastated family members and disturbed many people with the sense that something has gone wrong with how our society cares for aging or vulnerable people and responds to illness and dying.

On May 19, the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) launched a campaign called "Saying Goodbye" that calls on health authorities to "implement a more compassionate approach to end-of-life visitations across Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic." The CHPCA states that "while certain provinces have taken steps to relax visitation protocols for end-of-life situations, many hospitals and long-term care homes still do not allow family access, even with personal protective equipment (PPE)."

Dying in Long-Term Care

In my province of British Columbia, the B.C. Centre for Disease Control guidelines suggest that there is indeed room for "essential visits" in long-term care

These are described as including but

not being limited to "visits for compassionate care (end of life and critical illness), visits considered paramount to resident care and well-being, such as assistance with feeding or mobility."

But there is a great deal of room for interpretation of what constitutes an essential visit.

One might argue that those in longterm care aren't imminently dying and so perhaps the right of family to be present doesn't outweigh the risks of COVID-19.

Firstly, however, families with people in long-term care will tell you that their visits are essential. The COVID-19 crisis has revealed many of the fault lines in our long-term care system.

Those in residential or long-term care can be at risk and it is often the vigilance of family members that ensure that these vulnerable persons receive adequate care. A family member who visits regularly is a powerful surveillance

Secondly, what health care practitioners call an "end-of-life situation" exists on a continuum.

The Office of the Seniors Advocate British Columbia notes that the average length of stay for residents in longterm care is 871 days—less than twoand-a-half years. That means that, if following best practices, all people residing in long-term care should receive a palliative approach to care.

The World Health Organization defines hospice and palliative care as "... an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with lifethreatening illness." It seeks to prevent and relieve "suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial, and



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and some hopelessness

Erin Cassidy-Eagle, clinical associate

professor of psychiatry, Stanford

Being alone in our final moments is a fear many have endured as COVID-19 restrictions keep familes from a loved one in their final moments.

Of note in this definition is that palliative care seeks to address people holistically as individuals in relationships.

Although most Canadians wish to die at home, circumstances often lead to an institutional death. Long-term care has increasingly become a site for palliative care. Wishes for care are obtained upon admission and the supportive harm, real or threatened. The governprinciples of palliative care are applied to ensure that people in care enjoy the highest quality of life possible for the limited time they have left.

But the fact that many people still need institutional care at end of life has proven exceedingly challenging in the context of the physical distancing ethical values about care for elders or requirements of COVID-19.

Community Versus Individual

In times of pandemic, ethical decisionmaking tends to emphasize the good of the community over the good of the

But paradoxically, the good of individuals is also harmed when they are and institutional level and significant

prevented from honoring their community and family ties. How we approach these difficult decisions reveals a lot about what we see to be most valuable in life and how we perceive the good.

From a public health ethics perspective, the harm principle means that "a society has a right to protect itself from ment is justified in intervening and possibly impinging on the rights of individuals to protect the community from harm."

But if impinging on the rights of an individual is actually a matter of harm insofar as it violates ancient social and the dying, and thereby hurts the dying and their loved ones—we need to think

Deliberating such challenging ethical decisions, and having the adequate resources to respond to them, can rarely be accommodated ad hoc. Rather, it requires careful planning at a systems

resources, space, education, screening, and infection control measures.

At a higher level, it also means our research investments and policy deliberations about COVID-19 must not abandon questions related to what it means to die with the disease or in the context of the pandemic.

Harm-Reduction Approach

Those we love are an integral part of our dyingjourney. So much so that a recent court case in the United Kingdom concluded that patients have a fundamental right to be with their family at the time of death.

In a context where patients are receiving a palliative approach to care, we need to start from the assumption that living and dying alone is so potentially harmful that we need to balance harms using a harm-reduction approach.

We have come to know of the value of harm reduction primarily from people who are vulnerable because of addic-

We provide treatment that seeks to

Perhaps particularly in the context of a limited life span, for individuals in care, the harm of separation must be considered alongside the harm of infection. Respecting the rights of those who are dying would then mean we need to allow them and their loved ones to take some risks. This means, of course, ensuring that facilities are adequately resourced not only with the equipment

across care teams. Until we reach herd immunity, find a treatment, or develop a vaccine, COV-ID-19 is here to stay—but these precious lives are not. Giving people permission to be together at the end of their lives will take some ingenuity and money. But it's the right thing to do.

they need to protect staff and visitors but

also with personnel who can collaborate

Barbara Pesut is a professor at the school of nursing at the University of British Columbia in Canada. This article was originally published on The of the effects

of isolation

are common to

all human beings

across times

and places.

We feel the consequences of social distancing differently as our minds shape our suffering

CARLY OSBORN

am feeling isolated. Is this a state, or an emotion? Rather than getting into the semantics of language, I will ask another question: What does isolation feel like? Isolation feels like being stuck on the couch despite having time for a walk. Isolation feels like comfort eating nachos and box wine.

Our bodies are tired. Our minds slip and skid between blank boredom and anxious overthinking. What is happening to us, here in our homes, away from the routines and interactions that used to shape our days?

I am feeling isolated. Scholars of emotion talk about feelings as judgments—our considered response to what's happening. These judgments tint our experience as we live it: like the transferred epithets of author P. G Wodehouse's character Bertie Wooster who was known for epitaphs like "pronging a moody forkful" of eggs, or "balancing a thoughtful lump of sugar" on his teaspoon. Experience reaches us through these filters of judgment.

This morning I made myself a lonely piece of toast and am writing this article drinking a grateful-for-free-childcare cup

Every Lonely Person Is Lonely in Their Own Way

Some of the effects of isolation are common to all human beings, across times and places. Humans are communal beings living in families and communities. We feel pain in social isolation and enjoy social connection.

Beyond these human constants, our emotional experiences are powerfully shaped by our individual circumstances. Our social and personal histories affect our expectations of life and our responses to events. In this sense, your feeling of isolation is different to mine. Like Leo Tolstoy's unhappy families, each of us is feeling this crisis in

Medical researchers of isolation note this recursive flow of emotion: Symptoms like poor sleep and high blood pressure correlated not with measures of patients' objective isolation, but their perceived isolation.

One person's agonizing loneliness is another's boring staycation. We are as isolated as we feel.

Meditation

This doesn't mean our feelings aren't real. They are, in fact,



the only reality we can know. Is there a meaningful difference between asking "How are you?" and "How are you feeling?"

Full-Bodied Feeling Our feelings are experienced by our whole selves: bodies, minds,

emotions, all intertwined.

We feel the absence of human touch, we feel anxiety as we obsess over daily statistics, we feel exhausted by shopping trips that feel like ventures into no-man's-land, we feel grief at the horrific headlines of death, and frustration at government responses. We feel loss and confusion about our identity and value as jobs disappear.

Those who contract COVID-19 report not only fear of dying but boredom and anger at being isolated from family and friends. We are feeling isolated.

Despite our Tolstoyan uniqueness, we find comfort in shared feelings. We share memes about interminable Zoom meetings, or homeschooling, or day drinking. We feel seen, heard, understoodless isolated. These are called affiliative behaviors and they are a powerful coping strategy for all kinds of crises. Somehow our suffering is more bearable if another human being knows how we feel, and feels it, too.

Connecting with one another, and feeling that we are in this together, can mitigate some of the pain of isolation. Sufferers during previous pandemics who felt their isolation was serving an altruistic goal of protecting their neighbors reported less negative emotions about

isolation.

Connecting with one another, and feeling that we are in this together, can mitigate some of the pain of isolation.

Political exiles have, throughout history, found ways to endure isolation. Early modern English nuns in exiled European convents drew upon antique history to comfort themselves, identifying with biblical stories

of suffering that finally resolve in homecoming and restored

community. Prisoners in solitary confinement have relied on simple things like sunlight and human voices on the radio to keep the worst at bay.

They are feeling isolated. Isolation feels like being alone but it also feels like reaching beyond our usual spheres, feeling new empathy with people who were strangers before.

Isolation is a long-term state for many. From professional women in male-dominated fields to caregivers and those in remote communities to all forms of minorities.

Asylum seekers in detention report deep feelings of isolation and invisibility. Their poems open up for us in

New parents, especially mothers, experience isolation with feelings familiar to many of us right now: "powerlessness, insufficiency, guilt, loss, exhaustion, ambivalence, resentment and anger." Those who are young, or poor, or single, are especially at risk of feeling isolated, overwhelmed, and

In our empathy, we are connected across social and economic gaps.

Emotional Force

We are feeling isolated. Now, our shared emotions become a central part of how we make sense of the crisis.

Shared, collective emotion can be a strong driver of collective activity. Enough shared emotion can cause us to feel like a unified nation, our common humanity stronger than our superficial differences. Conversely, emotional sparks can create political cliques who cohere around shared anger toward other groups.

Scholars of emotion describe emotions as a force, not only felt within but acting upon the external world. Emotions do things. Big, collective emotions do big things. We are only beginning to discover what isolation is doing to us.

Carly Osborn is a visiting research fellow at the University of Adelaide in Australia. This article was originally published on The Conversation.

How to Lower Blood Pressure Naturally

Many adults can make dietary and other lifestyle changes to bring their blood pressure to healthier levels

DEBORAH MITCHELL

o you have high blood pressure (aka, hypertension)? If the answer is yes, there's some good news for you and the one-third of adults in the United States who share this cardiovascular condition. There's also help for the additional one-third who have pre-hypertension, which means their blood pressure is higher than normal but not yet at the hypertensive stage.

The good news is there are numerous techniques to lower blood pressure nat urally, without the need for prescription medications. In addition, these natural methods also can benefit your health in other ways, which makes adopting them a win-win situation.

A Few Words About **High Blood Pressure**

Unlike many health

problems, high

blood pressure

doesn't typically

present with any

Unlike many health problems, high blood pressure doesn't typically present with any symptoms. That's why it's important to have your blood pressure checked periodically. You can do this easily by visiting your doctor or using a home monitor or a blood pressure monitoring device available at many pharmacies. Be sure a blood pressure check is part of any doctor visit.

Although there are many blood pressure prescriptions on the market, hypertension is largely a disease of lifestyle, which means making modifications to every day habits can significantly reduce or even eliminate high blood pressure. Some of these modifications are discussed below. Always discuss any of these blood pressure remedies Hypertension is largely a disease of lifestyle, which means making modifications to every day habits can significantly reduce or even eliminate high blood pressure.

with your doctor before trying them, especially if you are taking any type of medication or supplements.

Drop Extra Pounds

Blood pressure tends to rise as we gain weight, so one of the best ways to help lower blood pressure is to drop those excess pounds. Countless studies have revealed that weight loss among people who are overweight or obese is accompanied by a decline in blood pressure. A 2017 study, for example, reported that obese adults who lost weight also enjoyed a significant decline in systolic and diastolic blood pressures along with a drop in resting pulse and fasting blood glucose.

Follow the DASH Diet

There's a program called DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) that has been shown to reduce blood pressure by up to 14 mmHg. The diet is simple: focus on fresh fruits and veggies, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and fish, and significantly reduce saturated fat and cholesterol.

Sack the Salt

The impact of salt (sodium) on blood pressure is not the same for everyone, but generally, it's best to limit your sodium intake to less than 2,300 mg daily. If you are older than 51, African America, or already have high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease, then you are more sensitive to salt and should strive for lower intake. Substitute herbs for salt and stay away from processed foods, which are typically loaded with sodium.

Befriend Beets

Beets (beetroot) are a rich source of natural nitrate (NO3), which is transformed in the body into the active nitrite (NO2), and nitric oxide (NO). Nitric oxide dilates and relaxes blood vessels, which lowers blood pressure. Enjoy beets or beet juice with the knowledge that a meta-analysis of 16 studies demonstrated how beet juice was associated with a significant drop in systolic blood pressure.

Embrace Herbs and Nutrients

While you are cutting back on salt and adopting the DASH diet, also consider adding some herbs and nutrients to your menu. A variety of these natural additives have demonstrated an ability to lower blood

Cardamom is good in soups, stews, and stir-fry. Research shows that cardamon can significantly reduce systolic, diastolic, and mean blood pressure.

Flaxseed is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which can lower blood pressure. Flaxseed can be added to nearly any recipe, ranging from salads and soups to smoothies, stews, grains, cereals, baked goods, and vegetables.

Garlic has an ability to relax blood vessels and in turn helps lower blood pressure. A recent meta-analysis of 20 trials, for example, reported that garlic reduced both systolic and diastolic blood pressure in hypertensive adults. Fresh and roasted garlic

are an excellent addition to many dishes, but you can take supplements (odor-free)

> **Ginger**, a versatile ingredient that works well in soups, desserts, noodle and vegetable dishes, and stir-fry, as well as tea, can improve blood circulation and benefit blood pressure. A new study in Nutrition reports that daily consumption of ginger can reduce the risk of hypertension and also

protect against coronary heart disease.

Hawthorn, a traditional Chinese medicine herb that has been used for cardiovascular issues for millennia. Currently, there is growing scientific evidence that hawthorn can improve mild cases of hypertension and also reduce the risk of other cardiovascular factors. Take hawthorn according to the directions of a knowledgeable health care provider.

Exercise Regularly

If you exercise at least 30 minutes on five or more days per week, you can expect to reduce your blood pressure by 4 to 9 mmHg. It's important to be consistent, however, because your blood pressure can go up again if you skip your sessions. So tie up your shoelaces and get walking, jogging, dancing, spinning, or using the elliptical

Allocate Alcohol

While consuming one or two drinks per day (for women and men, respectively) can be beneficial for blood pressure, going over that limit can work against you. Not only can drinking more alcohol raises blood pressure, but it also can interfere with any blood pressure drugs you may be taking.

Smokers can expect to experience a healthy drop in blood pressure once they stop smoking. The best time to stop smoking

Manage Stress

We all experience stress, but it's how we deal with it that matters for our health. Identify the stressors in your life—be they issues with relationships, work, finances, school, or other challenges—and adopt ways to reduce or eliminate the stress. Those ways may include meditation, exercise, support groups, changing the situation or your perspective of it, and practicing

Monitor Your Blood Pressure

It's a good idea to have a home blood pressure monitor so you can monitor your values and see how any lowering efforts are working. Be sure you know how the device works; you may need to talk with a pharmacist or your health care provider for pointers. Talk to your doctor about how often you should keep tabs on your blood pressure and when office visits may be necessary.

Deborah Mitchell is a freelance health writer who is passionate about animals and the environment. She has authored, co-authored, and written more than 50 books and thousands of articles on a wide range of topics. This article was originally published on NaturallySavvy.com

De-Stressing During Lockdown Focus on what feels good and what you can control



atching COVID-19 or safely dealing with existing physical health problems is likely top of mind for many these days. But they aren't the only conditions affected by the pandemic. Mental health is another major area of concern during these trying times.

Research is now emerging about the pandemic's effect on mental health in China, where the first COVID-19 outbreak occurred. Parts of the country went into lockdown in January, continuing into early April.

A study published in Psychiatry Research surveyed more than 7,200 Chinese men and women durng the lockdown. They found more than one-third were suffering from COVID-related general anxiety disorder," while out one-fifth were showing signs of depression. Just over 18 percent indi-

All the doom and gloom out there can make it seem like these struggles are inevitable, but many experts agree there are plenty of coping strategies to help you calm down and feel better during the pandemic.

Focus on things you can control, and things that make you feel good.

A good place to start is acknowledging that you might be feeling overwhelmed, scared, or stressed. Instead of avoiding these feelings, accept them, and tell yourself it's OK to feel that way. Next, focus on things you can control, and things that make you feel good.

For example, you can control how you spend your days. One place to start is shutting off the news and setting a daily time to check it, looking at only trusted, reliable sources. With the extra time, you can carve out moments of joy and relaxation.

Appreciate the exercise you're getting. Have fun chatting or playing a game with family or friends (remotely if needed). Perform a hobby like painting, or cooking a meal. All of these can be mood boosters to limit stress and foster positive emotions.

You can also help shut down your stress response with meditation or relaxation methods. Sitting outside listening to the birds' chirp or reading a book, doing yoga, or even just taking a few deep breaths can help lower cortisol and adrenaline.

These are troubling times that can leave your mind uneasy. Turning your focus to what makes you feel good and what's within your control can help you weather

Devon Andre holds a bachelor's degree *in forensic science from the University* of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Andre is a journalist for Bel Marra Health, which first published this article.

Are You Self-Sabotaging Your Energy Levels?

If daily naps beckon with greater urgency, you may need to make some changes

MOHAN GARIKIPARITHI

Tired? Join the club. More and more people I talk to are napping. It could have to do with a lot of things: feeling down and anxious about the pandemic, poor sleep, having more time, and other factors.

But one thing they may be overlooking Snacks are always easy to reach for and

today's living conditions make it even easier. Food can be comforting. Consumption can be unconscious. And choices can have consequences. One is less energy. If you tend to eat a lot of foods that are

high in refined grains or sugar, energy levels can plummet and suck the energy from your life. Reaching for more can only compound the problem.

Foods like white bread and pasta, muffins, danishes, soda, fruit juice, cookies, sweets, ice cream, and more are dietary staples. But too many of these can have health implications. One of them is a massive spike in blood sugar.

If you tend to eat a lot of foods that are high in refined grains or sugar, energy levels can plummet and suck the energy from your life.

At first, these foods seem to restore energy. But then it comes crashing down and you're feeling fatigued. Reaching for



ending. Over time, you're likely to develop high blood sugar, add weight, and increase your potential for metabolic diseases and

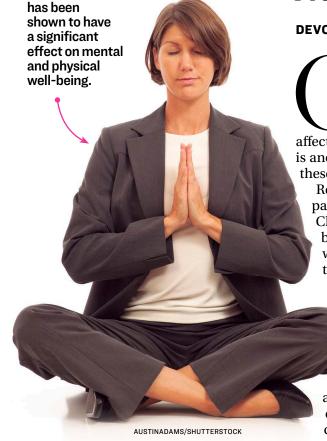
Instead, swap out these refined grains and high-sugar options for nutritious and fiber-rich options. This alone can make a big difference. Whole grains and high fiber foods help regulate blood sugar and provide longer-term sustained energy. They don't create massive blood sugar spikes or hard crashes.

These small decisions can help you stay energized throughout the day and keep fatigue at bay. But food choices only play one role in overall energy levels. Activity,

sleep quality and duration, and potential nutrient deficiencies also play a role.

Energy, blood sugar, blood pressure, and disease risk are all influenced by food. Eating things with the potential to make you feel great can lead to overall health.

Mohan Garikiparithi holds a degree in medicine from Osmania University (Uni versity of Health Sciences). He practiced clinical medicine for over a decade. During a three-year communications program in Germany, he developed an interest in German medicine (homeopathy) and other alternative systems of medicine. This article was originally published on Bel



Week 24, 2020 THE EPOCH TIMES



FOOD AS MEDICINE

Vitamin D and Fish Oil May Help Prevent Cancer Death, Heart Attacks

provides many benefits including

The standard American

diet lacks the omega-3s

you need, being dispro-

portionately filled with

omega-6s.

Vitamin D's

ing cancer

effect in reduc-

death has been

meta-analyses.

confirmed by

While cancer rates were not affected, those who participated in the experiment had better cancer survival rates

Sought-after nutritional therapies vitamin D and omega-3s found in fish oil have gone through intense scrutiny with the largest study to date, called VITAL. Results of the study on whether they can effectively prevent cancer or cardiovascular disease have shown that these therapies are popular for a reason, and the benefits simply cannot be ignored.

In a span of more than five years of research and treatment, the VITamin D and OmegA-3 Trial, or VITAL, has tested the rigor of benefit claims around vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids (found in fish oil) against the rates of cancer mortality and heart attacks.

While the primary endpoints of the study, which involved 25,871 men and women in a nationwide survey, showed no significant reductions, notable benefits emerged and offered a strong case for both further studies and supplementation.

Study Details

The randomized clinical trial set out to prove whether taking daily supplements of vitamin D3 (2,000 international units of D3 or cholecalciferol) or omega-3 fats (1 gram of fish oil) reduced the risk of developing cancer, heart disease, and stroke in individuals without a prior history of these

Prior to the trial, results were mixed but show promise for certain outcomes, now confirmed by updated meta-analyses. According to the scientists, large primary prevention trials on the two therapies using adequate dosing in general populations were previously lacking.

The subjects were randomly assigned to one of four groups: daily intake of vitamin D and omega-3s, daily vitamin D and omega-3 placebo, daily vitamin D placebo and omega-3s, and daily vitamin D placebo and omega-3 placebo. All of them took two pills every day, as well as filling out a short questionnaire every year on their health, lifestyle hab-

its, family history of illness, and new medical diagnoses.

Nearly 17,000 of the participants provided an optional blood sample at baseline, while about 6,000 provided a follow-up blood sample from years 1 to 5 of the trial. At the start, year two and year four, a sub-cohort of 1,054 subjects had a clinical exam and underwent further

Significant Benefits That Cannot Be Ignored

After more than five years of research, the study concluded that major cardiovascular events and total invasive cancer weren't significantly reduced by omega-3 or vitamin D3. However, several important benefits surfaced from the findings:

Fish oil reflected a small yet insignificant decrease in the primary cardiovascular endpoint of major heart disease events but was linked with meaningful reductions

Omega-3 substantially slashed total myocardial infarction, especially among African Americans and those who had lower fish intake at the beginning of the study. The associated heart benefits have been confirmed by recent meta-analyses of omega-3 randomized trials.

Vitamin D supplementation didn't decrease major cardiovascular disease events or total incidence of cancer, yet was associated with a statistically important reduction in total cancer mortality among people who participated in VITAL for at least two years. Vitamin D's effect in reducing cancer death has been confirmed by meta-analyses, too.

Dr. JoAnn Manson, a lead study author from Brigham and Women's Hospital, said the pattern of findings suggests a "complex balance of benefits and risks" for every intervention, identifying the need for further research on who will most likely benefit from the supplements.

Why You Need Your Fix of Sunshine and 'Good' Fats

The health benefits of vitamin D are widely documented. GreenMedInfo.com has collected research documenting more than 200 health conditions that may benefit from optimized vitamin D levels.

These vitamin D benefits include painkilling or analgesic properties, increased subcutaneous fat metabolism or better fat loss, and even longer human lifespan. You can find some 1,000 abstracts with vitamin D research on GreenMedInfo.com.

Sunlight is a well-known source of vitamin D, but in the absence of adequate sun exposure and other factors, supplementation proves to be an effective source of the

Meanwhile, have you ever wondered why you may need to supplement essential fatty acids? Ideally, eating cold-water fatty fish 2 or 3 times a week is an efficient way to obtain enough omega-3s in your

diet, particularly the anti-inflammatory (EPA) and brain-assisting (DHA)

fatty acids. However, the standard American diet has been found to sorely lack the omega-3s you need, being disproportionately filled with omega-6s. Even with fish oil supplementation, ab-

sorption is only improved when the supplement is consumed with a meal that includes fat. Multivitamins also typically don't contain essential fatty acids in

The human body contains some 15 percent to 30 percent fat, and that dietary fat offers an alternative fuel source when there isn't glucose. Healthy fats are satiating, help burn fat, and balance a number of fat-regulating hormones in the system.

The GreenMedInfo.com database provides about 600 abstracts with research on omega-3 benefits, including against inflammation, Type 2 diabetes, depression, and cardiovascular diseases.

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 work is reproduced and distributed with the permission of GreenMedInfo LLC. Sign up for the newsletter at www.Greenmed-

Intravenous Vitamin C as a Potential Antiviral Treatment

Case studies point toward potential protocols for four viruses using ascorbic acid

itamin C is an essential nutrient for been studied for its potential benefits in treating a variety of conditions including the common cold, lowering cholesterol, improving fertility, and reducing the risk of cancer. Recently, four separate case studies have tested the efficacy of intravenous vitamin C against a series of viral infections.

[Editor's note: Case studies are limited in nature but provide potential insight and often inspire researchers to conduct larger studies.]

Each study showed positive results, concluding that intravenous vitamin C is a potential treatment and can be used to effectively alleviate symptoms for four specific viral infections.

1. Infectious Mononucleosis

Infectious mononucleosis, often referred to as "mono," is a viral infection of the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) that's transmitted by saliva. Symptoms include sore throat, fatigue, headache, upper respiratory symptoms, fever, and loss of appetite. Researchers estimate that roughly 90 percent of the world's population is infected with EBV, although most don't show symptoms.

However, the severe fatigue that often accompanies infectious mononucleosis can be debilitating and have long-term effects on school or work attendance. An EBV infection C is able to effectively increase can also trigger autoimmune disimmune response, may inactivate eases through the excessive stress it RNA and DNA viruses, and reductreatment could be used for a vaouts on the immune system. Most conventional treatments of EBV are by a viral infection. For these reasupportive in nature, meaning they treat the symptoms and not the viral

Researchers have tested a variety of natural compounds to find

if any could suppress viral replication and shorten the duration of illness. Studies have found that high doses of intravenous vitamin C can effectively reduce EBV antibody levels, shortening illness, and lessening symptoms.

In a case report, researchers described the effects of intravenous vitamin C on a 30-year-old woman suffering from an EBV humans and has infection, reporting that the treatment (using 50 grams (g) of vitamin C for three consecutive days) reduced symptoms after only five days, with no adverse side effects.

Researchers believe that vitamin C's efficacy is due to its ability to increase cytokine production and neutralize the oxidative stress caused by the viral infection.

2. Chikungunya Fever

Chikungunya fever is a viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes and is most commonly found in Africa, Asia, and India. Symptoms include fever, joint pain, muscle aches, headaches, and rash, with most symptoms lasting for a week.

While not usually fatal, the joint pain caused by the Chikungunya virus can be debilitating. Symptoms are often treated with acetaminophen, but no consistent patient protocol is in place. As an antioxidant, vitamin C possesses potent antiviral properties and is also effective at increasing the production of T-cells and natural killer cells, both of which increase the immune system's response to viral infections.

In a recent case report, a 54-yearold Hispanic patient was treated with high doses of intravenous vitamin C for two days and experienced a significant reduction of symptoms on the first day and a complete absence of symptoms on the second day.

Researchers found that vitamin sons, and based on the recent case report, researchers are eager to continue testing the efficacy of ascorbic acid against the Chikun-

STUDIO.C/SHUTTERSTOCK



tions because of the relatively safe nature of the treatment.

Ascorbic acid has long been studied for its mitigating effects on influenza symptoms and duration, but a recent case study found that intravenous (IV) use of vitamin C may be an effective treatment protocol for severe cases of the flu. The report tracked the efficacy of intravenous ascorbic acid in a 25-year-old male who had been suffering from flu-like symptoms for over a week.

Symptoms included weight loss of 15 pounds, fever, chills, nausea, and joint pain. As in other case reports, the patient was treated with 50 grams of intravenous vitamin C daily and experienced no adverse side effects. The patient noticed significant improvement within 24 hours after starting the initial IV, including an improvement in appetite, lack of headache, and increased strength.

Studies found that high doses of intra venous vitamin C can effectively reduce EBV antibody levels, shortening illness, and less ening symptoms.

IV treatments lasted for four days, after which the patient felt "normal," but continued to take smaller amounts of vitamin C orally following the IV. Given that acute influenza symptoms can last five to seven days or longer and that coughing and exhaustion can last much longer, the fast recovery following intravenous ascorbic acid treatment led researchers to determine that this

4. Zika Fever

Zika fever is an arthropod-borne viral infection that causes fever, joint pain, and red eyes, and may increase the risk of congenital birth defects in infants when transmitted to pregnant women. No official treatments exist, but a recent case study found that intravenous vitamin C resolved symptoms after only three days

Researchers believe that the correlation between oxidative stress and viral infection may explain the efficacy of vitamin C in reducing Zika fever and other viral infection symptoms, as vitamin C is known to have potent antioxidant properties.

Based on numerous studies and the case reports listed here, it seems plausible that intravenous vitamin C could be a key to reducing the severity of viral infections and alleviating symptoms, in some cases perhaps even more quickly than the standard protocols currently in place. To learn more about this body of research and to view a complete list of the studies being done, please visit our Green-MedInfo.com intravenous vitamin C database.

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 work is reproduced and distributed with the permission of GreenMedInfo LLC. Sign up for the newsletter at www. GreenmedInfo.health

The GMI Research Group is

Amazing Foods for Healthy Teeth

Sink your teeth into something that can help keep them strong and healthy

LISA ROTH COLLINS

eeth are one of the first things that someone notices when you smile, talk, and eat. Maintaining your dental health is also important to living a healthy life.

Fortunately, there are tasty and healthy foods that can help you keep a sparkling set of teeth. You might even notice your teeth getting whiter and brighter after welcoming these food items in your life.



1. Cheese

If you are the one who orders food with extra cheese, you are already on the right track. Cheese has calcium to strengthen your teeth. Also, it has a milk protein called casein which can help to control the loss of minerals from tooth enamel. Eating cheese also increases your pH which lowers the risks of tooth decay. If you avoid cheese, no worries, we have other non-dairy solutions for you.



2. Yogurt

Yogurt with no added sugar is another one of the best foods, not just to increase the strength of your teeth but also for your gums. Not all bacteria are bad, and yogurt contains bacteria which may reduce the chances of cavities. It helps to protect your teeth enamel with its significant amounts of calcium, casein, and phosphorus. Make sure you choose no sugar yogurt or add a bit of fresh fruit to plain yogurt. There are also many cultured non-dairy yogurts available.



3. Leafy Greens

Broccoli, spinach, kale, and other leafy green vegetables are great. They have a lot of minerals, fiber, and calcium—which is often more absorbable than the calcium in dairy. They're also low in calories. A great way to whiten your teeth at home—and improve your overall health—is just by adding one of these to your daily diet.



4. Kiwifruit

Kiwis contain a lot of nutrients and few calories. They have a lot of calcium and protein, which help strengthen your teeth. Those minerals, and kiwi's high fiber content, are great for saliva and can reduce acid harmful to teeth. Did you know you can eat the skin of a kiwi, too? That makes



5. Avocado

Avocado has vitamin C, Vitamin B5, potassium, and prebiotic fiber. This nutritious fruit is a must for your oral health. It contains many vitamins and proteins that benefit tooth enamel and strengthen your teeth. Avocado can help you avoid damage from acidic foods and cavities and is great for your overall health and digestion.



6. Carrots

That nice sound you hear while taking a bite of a carrot is fiber. Fiber helps you increase saliva and flush bacteria from your mouth. Also, carrots have vitamin A, which is great for your teeth and helps whiten them.



7. Celery

Just like the carrots, celery has fiber and water content. They help produce saliva to wash away bacteria while massaging your gums as you chew. Carrots and celery also have nutrients to strengthen your eyes, liver, and teeth.



8. Almonds

Just like the leafy green vegetables, almonds have a large amount of calcium and protein. These nuts are full of antioxidants and vitamin E, which help you strengthen your teeth. Almonds also keep your cells strong and may slow down the process of aging because of their vitamin E content.



9. Apples

An apple a day keeps the doctor away—and also the dentist. If you love apples, you just found another reason to eat them. Apples also have lots of fiber and water content, and their crunchy bite strengthens your

Eat more of these foods to give your teeth the nutrients, fiber, and chew that can keep them healthy. And make sure you drink enough water to keep yourself hydrated and your mouth moist.

Lisa Roth Collins is a registered holistic nutritionist and the marketing manager at NaturallySavvy.com, which first pub-

lished this article.

Intravenous treatments of vitamin C are often tried with a variety of condi-

Week 24, 2020 THE EPOCH TIMES

Coffee Versus Cardio:

Can Exercise Offer the Same Mental Boost as Caffeine?

ANISA MORAVA & MATTHEW JAMES FAGAN

our alarm goes off and it's time to start another day. What's your first step? Perhaps making a cup of coffee? You may want to consider a brisk walk instead.

In Canada, and the United States, coffee is second only to water as the beverage most commonly consumed by adults. Although caffeine—the psychoactive ingredient present in coffee—is associated with several positive effects such as an increase in alertness, energy, and mood, caffeine is not all good news for everyone. Some individuals experience negative effects from caffeine consumption, such as increased anxiety symptoms and muscle tremors.

Concerns about caffeine consumption have also been raised for both children and pregnant women, prompting reduced consumption guidelines for these groups. At some point, the majority of caffeine consumers have experienced the adverse effects of withdrawal symptoms. These can feel like a headache, tiredness, and grouchiness.

The question then becomes: what could provide similar benefits to caffeine without the side effects? The



answer may be aerobic exercise.

Caffeine Versus Exercise

Our lab examines how exercise can improve various health outcomes, one being cognition. In a recent study, we put aerobic exercise and caffeine head to head, to look at their ability to provide a "boost" to a measure of cognition called working memory.

Working memory refers to our ability to temporarily store and manipulate information to complete a task. Working memory is what you are using when you are at the grocery store trying to quickly recall the items on your list while updating that information with the price tags you are seeing in front of you. It is used in our everyday life and is associated with how well we perform at school and work.

In our study, we examined what would happen to working memory when we got healthy adults to complete a brisk, 20-minute walk on a treadmill versus when we gave them a dose of caffeine equivalent to what people consume in a small cup of coffee.

Our results indicated that a dose of moderate-intensity exercise was essentially equivalent to a dose of caffeine in improving working memory in both adults who regularly consume caffeine and those who don't. This result would suggest that replacing coffee with a single bout of aerobic exercise could not only provide a cognitive boost similar to coffee but may also provide other health benefits that come along with exercise.

Walk to Reduce Withdrawal Symptoms

To dig a little deeper into the issues surrounding caffeine, exercise, and cognition, our team wanted to examine what would happen during caffeine withdrawal.

This time, we asked our caffeine consumers to undergo a 12-hour caffeine deprivation period. Then they had to come into the lab so we could assess their caffeine withdrawal symptoms, including fatigue, difficulty concentrating, grouchy mood, lack of motivation, and headache. We also assessed their working memory and found that it was not affected by caffeine withdrawal.

Then we tested whether a brisk walk or caffeine consumption could reduce their withdrawal symptoms and improve their working memory. Interestingly, our results showed that the brisk 20-minute walk was able to reduce their withdrawal symptoms, particularly fatigue and depressed mood. However, working

memory, which had not been affected by withdrawal, remained the same.

So how exactly does aerobic exercise provide this cognitive boost and reduce caffeine withdrawal symptoms? Although there is still a lot of debate, and investigations are underway, previous research has suggested improved blood flow in the brain, the release of neurotrophic factors (which are like food for brain cells) and the release of hormones such as dopamine and epinephrine that are associated with mood and energy, may all be in some part responsible for these effects.

These findings are encouraging, as they suggest something as simple as taking a brisk walk during your lunch break may help fight off the afternoon energy slump. Furthermore, for individuals who may want to avoid coffee, engaging in short bouts of aerobic exercise may be a compelling alternative for improving several health outcomes.

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