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MINDS BODY

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Health Benefits of Hugs

Social touch stirs more than warm feelings, it can help us stay well

FRANCIS MCGLONE & SUSANNAH WALKER

For many people, the thing they've missed most during the pandemic is being able to hug loved ones. Indeed, it wasn't until we lost our ability to hug friends and family that many realize just how important touch is for many aspects of our health—including our mental health.

The reason hugs feel so good has to do with our sense of touch. It's an extremely

important sense, which allows us not only to physically explore the world around us, but also to communicate with others by creating and maintaining social bonds.

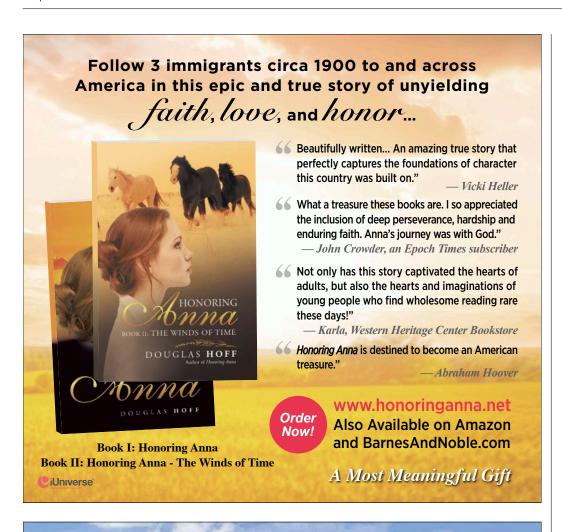
Touch consists of two distinct systems. The first is "fast-touch," a system of nerves which allows us to rapidly detect contact—if a fly landed on your nose, or you touched something hot, for example. The second system is "slow-touch." This is a population of recently discovered nerves, called c-tactile afferents, which process the emotional meaning of touch.

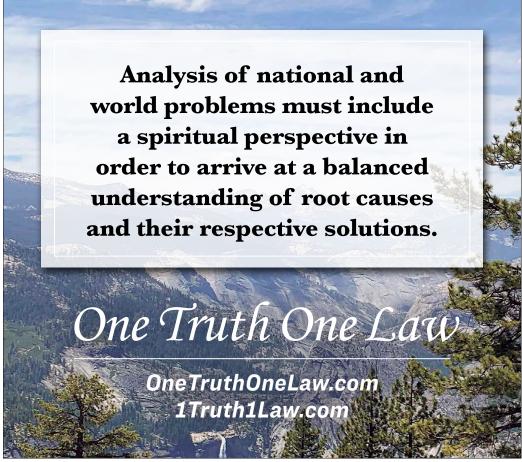
These c-tactile afferents have essentially evolved to be "cuddle nerves" and are

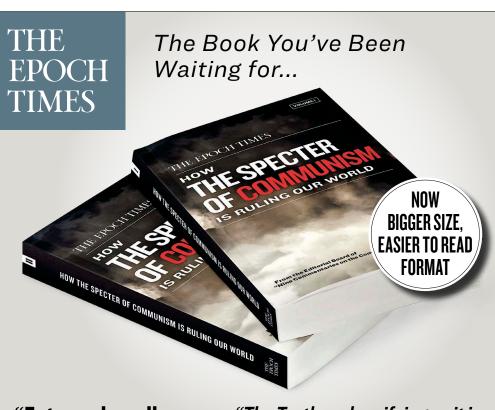
Continued on Page 5



Take the family to get away, relax, and enjoy this big, beautiful country we love.







"Extremely well researched and true." "The Truth, as horrifying as it is, shall set us free. This should be on this country's academia's list of required reading."

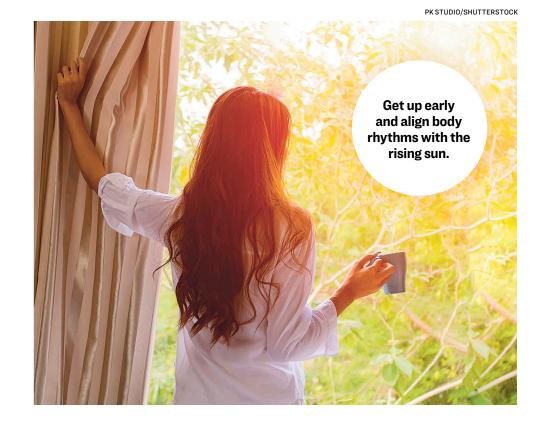
HOW THE SPECTER OF COMMUNISM IS RULING OUR WORLD

The specter of communism did not disappear with the disintegration of the Communist Party in Eastern Europe

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CHINESE WISDOM FOR SEASONAL LIVING

How to Avoid Viral Infections and Allergies as Summer's Peak Approaches

Solar Term: 'Seeding Millet' (June 5 to 20)

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.

Solar Term: 'Seeding Millet'

2021 Dates: June 5 to 20

Characteristics

and Meaning "Seeding Millet" is the time when farmers harvest early grain crops and plant new seeds for those that need to be in before the weather reaches its peak of heat and humidity.

With the change in season, spring blooms start to wither.

Too much dry weather during this time forebodes drought in the coming months, which could pose a challenge for summer crops.

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, as well as express wishes that they return again next year.

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

The key female character, Lin Daiyu, buried dead flowers on the day of Seeding Millet and wrote a famous poem titled "Burying Flowers" on the same 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, they most likely won't produce much fruit this year.

Impact on People

It was believed by the ancient Chinese people that Seeding Millet was 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, which promote the growth of bacteria both inside and outside of our bodies.

For this reason, it's best not to eat the types of food that trigger allergies or weaken the immune system at this time. There is good news, however, for those

who are allergic to pollen. The end of the flowering season comes during Seeding Millet, providing relief.

Wellness Tips

• Get up early to take advantage of the cooler morning hours and to 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.

Go swimming. It's the perfect exercise for this time of the year, as it moves the body gently and helps with fluid circulation.

Shower with lukewarm—rather than hot—water 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 from inside our bodies. This is very important for those who often suffer from flu or cold, as the remaining coldness often resides in places within our body where viruses tend to attack or the healthful energy can't penetrate.

For those who suffer from an upset stomach, try massaging four inches from the top of the belly button. This helps to relieve pressure on the digestive system.

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.

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

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

Make Wise Decisions Based on Facts About COVID-19

Protect yourself and bolster your immune system, regardless of your vaccine choice

MARK SHERWOOD & MICHELE SHERWOOD

ith all the attention on the pandemic, it's amazing how little people still know about the novel coronavirus. CO-VID-19 is one of seven types of known human coronaviruses. Like the MERS and SARS coronaviruses, it may have evolved from a virus previously found in animals. These other known coronaviruses cause a significant percentage of colds in adults and children, and aren't a serious threat for otherwise healthy adults.

All viruses accumulate mutations over time, and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) virus, which causes COVID-19, is no different. Therefore mutations, now changed, are harder to identify and control.

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is mainly spread in large droplets by coughing and sneezing. This means that "the air" will likely not infect you, but direct contact with these droplets can lead to infection, and the surfaces where these droplets land can be infectious for about a week on average.

Because of this, everything associated with infected people could be contaminated and potentially infectious. You are unlikely to be infected unless your unprotected face is directly coughed or sneezed upon. This virus seems to attach itself to cell receptors in the nose and throat area. So, if your hands were to touch an infected surface, and you put your hands into or near your mouth or nose, infection could occur.

However, please keep in mind that exposure doesn't equal infection. In some people, the virus is actually prevented

An Ounce of Perspective

There have been many predictions, recommendations, and government mandates—many of which, in hindsight, have been completely wrong—enacted during the pandemic. For example, in the spring of 2020, many "experts" were warning that millions of Americans would die from the them, even when they're taken as divirus. Thankfully, predictions like this haven't become reality.

Every life is precious, and each casualty of COVID-19 is a tragedy. We must never minimize the fallout from the pandemic. At the same time, it's critically important to align our perspective with historical records. The following data are the annual numbers for the leading causes of death in the United States in 2017, provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

- Heart disease: 647,457 • Cancer: 599,108
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases:
- Stroke (cerebrovascular diseases):
- 146,383 • Diabetes: 83,564

Since these statistics were reported, the numbers have only increased. Contrary to the impression the news media has created, many more people die each and every year from these ailments many of which are preventable through lifestyle choices.

And when it comes to COVID-19 deaths and hospitalizations, the medical community acknowledges that these comorbid conditions, like those above, greatly contribute to the mortality of COVID-19. Additionally, according to a Harvard University Center for Ethics study, about 128,000 people die annually from drugs prescribed to

We're rightly focused on COVID-19 in this country, but let's not be ignorant of the other statistics, which reflect needless human suffering. Many of these deaths are preventable.

Any population that increases consumption of refined sugars, chemically-altered highly-processed foods, and trans fats while decreasing activity and sleep quality—and lives in fear—will have less effective immune systems and higher disease prevalence.

We now have an opportunity to view our current pandemic from a different lens. The question then becomes, are you in panic mode, reacting to the pandemic, or being proactive about your long-term health?

join the population al-

Not all fermented foods

ready in your gut.



Staying active and preparing real food are great ways to boost your immune system.

We're rightly focused on **COVID-19 in** this country, but let's not be ignorant statistics.

Reactive or proactive?

Obviously, we're all affected by the mass hysteria created with consistent media coverage, ever-changing government mandates, and vaccine confusion.

MIND & BODY | 3

It's no secret that immunocompromised people are more likely to have serious effects from any virus. On the other hand, those with younger and more robust immune systems generally get sick less, have less severe symptoms, and recover faster. Athletes generally have few symptoms, for obvious reasons.

So how does a person become immunocompromised?

Here are some definite contributors:

- Consistent consumption of the "standard American diet" consisting of highly processed and refined foods which contain few nutrients, and often contain carcinogens.
- Lack of adequate sleep · Uncontrolled stress
- Obesity
- Sedentary lifestyle

On the flip side, there are ways we can strengthen our immune systems.

- 11 Ways to Bolster Your Immune System 1. Don't live in fear. This will only weaken your system by producing massive amounts of cortisol.
- 2. Maintain adequate sleep.
- 3. Use colloidal silver products to wipe your hands and spray in your nasal passages and mouth. Wipe down seats frequented by multiple people.
- l. Consume sulforaphane-yielding broccoli sprouts or powder supplements. They can
- assist the body in repelling viral entry. 5. Take vitamin C as an anti-viral—2000 to 4,000 mg per day is recommended, but
- always check with your physician. 6. Zinc lozenges. These lozenges have been shown to be effective in blocking coronavirus—and most other viruses—from multiplying in your throat and naso-
- 7. Optimize Vitamin A, 5,000 to 10,000 IU daily, and Vitamin D, 5,000 to 10,000 IU
- 8. Consume plenty of nitric-oxide-yielding foods to ensure optimal oxygenation. Examples are beets and melons.
- 9. Eat real food containing plenty of fruits and vegetables. When selecting, use the following criteria: organic, grass-fed, hormone and antibiotic free, free range, and wild caught.
- 10. Enjoy at least three hours of moderate exercise per week.
- 11. Become disease confident. This means don't expect to get sick. Expect to be one of the healthy majority.

Make choices based on facts and communicate those facts to your family—and extended family—in a clear, consistent manner.

Our bodies are amazing in their ability to protect us from the many dangers we face on this Earth. As we re-emerge into more social interaction this summer, it's also the perfect time to make positive changes to your own lifestyle.

Drs. Mark and Michele Sherwood are the founders of a successful medical practice and help patients from around the world find the health they were created to enjoy, in every area of life. As bestselling authors, podcasters, movie producers, and media personalities, they founded Hope Dealers International to reach beyond their clinic. For more information, visit their website: Sherwood.tv

Good Things Can Happen When Your Gut Is Happy

MAT LECOMPTE

There is an ever-expanding pool of research indicating that your gut health can influence how you think, feel, and function.

But if you want the mental and emotional benefits of a healthy gut, you have to give your gut what it needs.

The magic that fuels your gut's psychological impact is bugs—tiny little microorganisms that colonize and reside in your intestine. There are good ones and bad ones, and the overall population is known as your microbiome.

There are more than 100 trillion of these microbes inside you. Ideally, you want the good ones to make up the majority of the population. And although you don't have

Think of them as pets to be taken care

got, you do have overarching influence.

will have probiotic benefits. It really depends on how much depends on

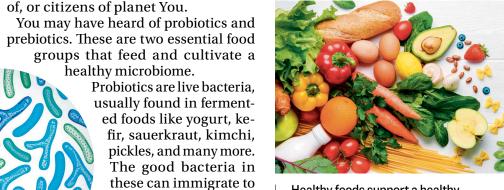
processing they have undergone. When these foods are cooked or heated too much, the organisms beneficial and their benefits—die. symbiotic

of, or citizens of planet You.

healthy microbiome.

That's why probiotic supplements

But probiotics, or any healthy bacfull control over the population you've teria, can't survive and thrive without prebiotics. Prebiotics are essentially fiberrich foods that healthy gut bacteria love



Healthy foods support a healthy microbial community in our gut.

Prebiotics increase your potential of nourishing a flourishing microbiome.

to eat. That's why you should eat plenty of fruit, vegetables, and whole grains that give your microbiome what it needs. Prebiotics increase your potential of

nourishing a flourishing microbiome. Of course, the Standard Western Diet,

rich in refined carbohydrates, refined sugars, processed food, and low in fiber, does little to encourage gut health. In fact, it can help unhealthy microbes proliferate. These unhelpful microbes may contribute to poor mood, inflammatory conditions, and more.

Try to include more probiotic and prebiotic foods in your diet to help improve the state of your microbiome. Consistency is required. Try to get at least one of each per meal, while boosting your overall intake of fruit, vegetables, and whole grains in place of processed foods.

Give your gut what it needs to thrive because if you take care of it, it can take care of you.

Mat Lecompte is a health and wellness journalist. This article was first published on BelMarraHealth.com



As Pandemic Eases, Many Seniors Have Lost Strength

Need for rehabilitative services rises as lockdown leaves many seniors in rapid physical decline

Ronald Lundquist, 87, has been active all his life. So, he wasn't prepared for what happened when he stopped going out during the COVID-19 pandemic and spent most of his time, inactive, at home.

"I found it hard to get up and get out of bed," said Lundquist, who lives with his wife of 67 years in Palm Springs, California. "I just wanted to lay around. I lost my desire to do things."

Physically, Lundquist noticed that getting up out of a chair was difficult, as was getting into and out of his car. "I was praying 'Lord, give me some strength.' I kind of felt, 'I'm on my way out—I'm not going to make it," he admitted.

One little-discussed, long-term toll of the pandemic: Large numbers of older adults have become physically and cognitively debilitated and less able to care for themselves during 15 months of sheltering in place.

No large-scale studies have documented the extent of this phenomenon. But physicians, physical therapists and health plan leaders said the prospect of increased impairment and frailty in the older population is a growing concern.

"Anyone who cares for older adults has seen a significant decline in functioning as people have been less active," said Dr. Jonathan Bean, an expert in geriatric rehabilitation and director of the New England Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center at the Veterans Affairs Boston Healthcare System.

Bean's 90-year-old mother, who lives in an assisted living facility, is a case in point. Before the pandemic, she could walk with a walker, engage in conversation and manage going to the bathroom. Now, she depends on a wheelchair and "her dementia has rapidly accelerated tor said.

Bean said his mother is no longer able to improvements if given proper attention.

to this horrific pandemic that people aren't even talking about yet," said Linda

sion rehabilitation manager in Bayada Home Health Care's Towson, Maryland, office. "What I'd love to see is a national effort, maybe by the CDC [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention], focused on helping older people overcome these kinds of impairments."

The extent of the need is substantial, by many accounts. Teodosio said she and her staff have seen a "tremendous increase" in falls and in the exacerbation of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, congestive heart failure, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

"Older adults got off schedule during the pandemic," she explained, and "they didn't eat well, they didn't hydrate properly, they didn't move, they got weaker."

Dr. Lauren Jan Gleason, a geriatrician and assistant professor of medicine at the University of Chicago, said many older patients have lost muscle mass and strength this past year and are having difficulties with mobility and balance they didn't have previously.

"I'm seeing weight gain and weight loss, and a lot more depression," she noted.

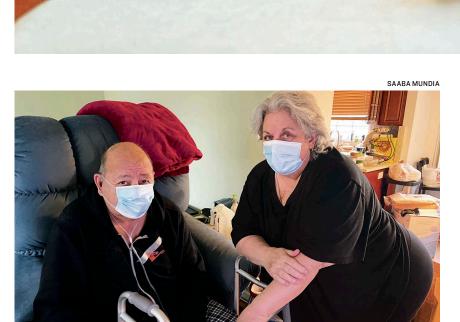
Mary Louise Amilicia, 67, of East Meadow, New York, put on more than 100 pounds while staying at home roundthe-clock and taking care of her husband Frank, 69, who was hospitalized with a severe case of COVID-19 in early December. While Amilicia also tested positive for the virus, she had a mild case.

"We were in the house every day 24/7, except when we had to go to the doctor, and when he got sick I had to do all the stuff he used to do," Amilicia told me. "It was a lot of stress. I just began eating everything in sight and not taking care of myself."

The extra weight made it hard to move around, and Amilicia fell several times she can't really care for herself," the doc- after Christmas, fortunately without sustaining serious injuries.

After coming home from the hospital benefit from rehabilitative therapies. But Frank couldn't get out of a chair, walk 10 many older adults might be able to realize feet to the bathroom, or climb the stairs in his house. Instead, he spent most of the day "Immobility and debility are outcomes in a recliner, relying on his wife for help.

Now, the couple is getting physical therapy from Northwell Health, New York Teodosio, a physical therapist and divistate's largest health care system. Just be-



Frank Amilicia was hospitalized with a severe case of COVID last December. Returning home, h was confined to his recliner. His wife, Mary Louise cares for him but fell several times after Christmas. Now, the couple is getting physical therapy to help them regain function.

Zinc

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and syrup

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to intranasal

fore the pandemic, Northwell launched a "rehabilitation at home" program for patients who otherwise would have seen therapists in outpatient facilities. (Medicare Part B pays for the treatments.)

The program is serving more than 100 patients on Long Island, in Westchester County and in parts of New York City. "The demand is very strong and we're in the process of hiring another 20 therapists," said Nina DePaola, Northwell's vice president of post-acute services.

Sabaa Mundia, a physical therapist working with the Amilicias, said Mary Louise can walk up to 400 feet without a walker, after doing strengthening exercises twice a week over the course of three weeks. Frank had been using a wheelchair and is now regularly walking 150 feet with a walker after more than a month of therapy.

"Older adults can lose about 20 percent of their muscle mass if they don't walk for up to five days," Mundia said. "And their endurance decreases, their stamina decreases, and their range of motion decreases."

Recognizing that risk, some health plans have been reaching out to older members to assess how they're faring. In Massachusetts, Commonwealth Care Alliance serves more than 10,000 older adults who are poor and eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, the federal-state program for people with low incomes. On average, they tend to have more medical needs than similarly aged seniors.

Between March and September last year, the plan's staffers conducted "wellness outreach assessments" by phone every two weeks, asking about ongoing medical care, new physical and emotional challenges, and the adequacy of available help, among other concerns. Today, calls are made monthly and staffers have Many seniors have grown more frail during COVID lockdown restrictions.

YAROSLAV SHURAEV/PEXELS

At first, Lundquist walked about 1,500 steps a day; now, he's up to more than 5,000.

resumed seeing members in person.

An increase in physical deconditioning is one of the big issues that have emerged. "We've had physical therapists digitally engage with members to coach them through strength and balance training," said Dr. Robert MacArthur, a geriatrician and Commonwealth Care's chief medical officer. "And when that didn't work, we sent therapists into people's homes."

In California, SCAN Health Plan serves a similarly vulnerable population of nearly 15,000 older adults dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid through its Medicare Advantage plans. Care navigators are calling these members frequently and telling them "now that you're vaccinated, it's safe to go see your doctor in person," said Eve Gelb, SCAN's senior vice president of health care services. Doctors can then evaluate unmet health needs and make referrals to physical and occupational therapists, if necessary.

Another SCAN program, Member-2Member, pairs older adult "peer health advocates" with members who have noted physical or emotional difficulties on health risk assessments. That's how Lundquist in Palm Springs connected with Jerry Payne, 79, a peer advocate who calls him regularly and helped him come up with a plan to emerge from his pandemic-induced funk.

"First, he said, Ron, you should try getting up every hour and taking a few steps' that was the start of it," Lundquist recalled. "Then, he'd suggest walking another block when I would take my dog out. It was painful. Walking was not pleasant. But he was very encouraging."

A month ago, Payne had a Fitbit sent to Lundquist. At first, Lundquist walked about 1,500 steps a day; now, he's up to more than 5,000 steps a day and has a goal of reaching 10,000 steps. "I'm sleeping better and I feel so much better all around," Lundquist said. "My whole attitude and physicality has changed. I tell you, this has been an answer to my prayers."

We're eager to hear from readers about questions you'd like answered, problems you've been having with your care and advice you need in dealing with the health care system. Visit khn.org/columnists to submit your requests or tips.

KHN (Kaiser Health News) is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues. Together with Policy Analysis and Polling, KHN is one of the three major operating programs at KFF (Kaiser Family Foundation). KFF is an endowed nonprofit organization providing information on health issues to the nation.

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.

For links to studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at TheEpoch-Times.com

FOOD AS MEDICINE

Zinc has

been shown

to reduce the

duration of

respiratory

tract

Why Your Body Needs Zinc

Zinc is an unsung dietary hero. It's so **Zinc: Why You Need It** essential that your cells wouldn't know Have you ever wondered why people what to do without it. It's an important trace mineral found throughout your body, second only to iron in its preva- gests that supplementing with lence in human cells and tissues. Zinc zinc within 24 hours of the plays a part in critical processes such as wound healing, immune system response, and functions such as cellular growth and repair.

There's even an established link between zinc levels and respiratory health, giving zinc added importance during has been linked with the loss cold and flu season and whenever your body is under stress.



take zinc lozenges at the first sign of a cold? Evidence sugonset of symptoms may help shorten the length of colds. Oral supplementation in the form of zinc lozenges, capsules, and syrup are preferable to intranasal zinc, which of sense of smell in some individuals.

Another function of zinc is the regulation of metabolism. Found in more than 300 enzymes, zinc is critical to digestion and allows us to absorb and metabolize essential micro-

nutrients. Zinc deficiency can lead to malnutrition, which is a major problem worldwide.

Adequate zinc intake is especially important for children of all ages or if you are pregnant or lactating. Deficiency of zinc during formational times could lead to retarded growth of biological systems like the gastrointestinal tract and skeletal, immune, and reproductive systems.

Top Zinc-Rich Foods

Unlike iron, which is contained inside cellular components in your body, zinc

permeates cells and tissues, performing critical structural, catalytic, and regulatory functions. That's why getting an adequate intake of zinc through your diet or supplementation is so important.

Safeguarding against zinc deficiency means having a varied diet fortified with zinc-rich foods. Proteins such as pastured beef and poultry, and sustainably harvested, wild-caught fish and oysters are all good sources of this essential mineral. Vegetarian sources include organic cereals, beans, nuts, oats, and tofu.

While adults and seniors have the same average physiological requirements for zinc, absorption can decrease as you age. High-quality, bioavailable supplements can ensure that you meet your body's unique needs, especially during times of increased stress or poor eating.

Zinc: A Very Precious Metal

Research into zinc's importance has identified several beneficial mechanisms through which zinc, a group 2B metal, can have on the human body:

- Antioxidant properties, protecting cells from damage by free radicals
- Stabilizes organelles, structures within a cell that control functions such as growth and energy production
- Anti-apoptotic agent, protecting cells from death
- Important cofactor in the synthesizing of DNA strands
- Vital component of wound healing • Acting as an anti-inflammatory agent

These vital functions make zinc supplementation important for anyone facing illness. For asthmatics and sufferers of respiratory tract infections, zinc may be one of your best dietary defensive strategies.

Zinc for Respiratory Health

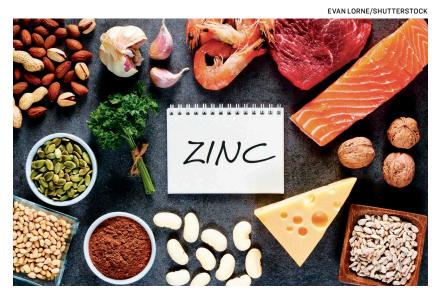
A 2021 study, published in the journal BMJ Global Health, identified acute respiratory tract infections as a leading cause of illness and death worldwide. Researchers did a meta-analysis to estimate the pooled effects that supplementing vitamins D and C, zinc, and multiple micronutrients (MMS) would have on the occurrence of acute respiratory tract infections and the duration of their symp toms.

Results of multiple studies showed that vitamin D supplementation reduced the risk of acute respiratory tract infections and shortened duration of symptoms by 6 percent. Vitamin C had the same effects to a degree of 9 percent, with a greater effect among men than women, and in middle-income countries in comparison to high-income countries. While zinc in isolation didn't reduce the risk of acute respiratory tract infections, it significant-

ly decreased the duration of symptoms. Takeaways from this important micronutrient study highlight the need for a varied, vitamin-rich diet and regular sun exposure or a high-quality, bioavailable supplement combining vitamins C and D with zinc and essential micronutrients for the greatest degree of protection for

Ingesting too much zinc also carries risks. Taking oral zinc in high doses over long periods may lead to copper deficiency. Symptoms of low copper lev-

your lungs and airways.



There are many delicious foods you can eat to get your daily zinc.

Zinc is critical to digestion and allows us to absorb and metabolize essential micronutrients. els include numbness and weakness in your extremities. The National Institutes of Health considers supplementation at 40 milligrams of zinc per day to be the upper limit for adults.

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Health Benefits of Hugs

Continued from Page 1

typically activated by a very specific kind of stimulation: a gentle, skin-temperature touch, the kind typical of a hug or caress. We see c-tactile afferents as the neural input stage in signaling the rewarding, pleasurable aspects of social tactile interactions such as hugging and touching.

Touch is the first sense to begin working in the womb, at roughly 14 weeks. From the moment we're born, the gentle caress of a mother has multiple health benefits, such as lowering your heart rate and promoting the growth of brain cell connections.

When someone hugs us, the stimulation of c-tactile afferents in our skin sends signals through the spinal cord to the brain's emotion processing networks. This induces a cascade of neurochemical signals that have proven health benefits. Some of the neurochemicals include the hormone oxytocin, which plays an important role in social bonding, slows down heart rate, and reduces stress and anxiety levels. The release of endorphins in the brain's reward pathways supports the immediate feelings of pleasure and well-being derived from a hug or caress.

Hugging has such a relaxing and calming effect that it also benefits our health in other ways.

It improves our sleep: From the benefits of co-sleeping with infants to cuddling your partner, gentle touch is known to regulate our sleep, as it lowers levels of the hormone cortisol. Cortisol is a key regulator of our sleep-wake cycle, but also increases when we're stressed. So it's no wonder high levels of stress can delay sleep and cause fragmented sleep patterns or insomnia.

It reduces reactivity to stress: Beyond the immediate soothing and pleasurable feelings provided by a hug, social touch also has longer-term benefits to our health, making us less reactive to stress and building resilience.

Nurturing touch, during early developmental periods, produces higher levels of oxytocin receptors and lower levels of cortisol in brain regions that are vital for regulating emotions. Infants that receive high levels of nurturing contact grow up to be less reactive to stressors and show lower levels of anxiety.

It increases well-being and pleasure: Across our lifespan, social touch bonds us together and helps maintain our relationships. Such touch releases endorphins, which reduce pain and make us feel good. These are part of the reason we see hugs and touch as rewarding. Touch provides the "glue" that holds us together, underpinning our physical and emotional well-being.

And when touch is desired, the benefits are shared by both people in the exchange. In fact, even stroking your pet can have benefits on health and well-being—with oxytocin levels increasing in both the pet and the owner.

It could help us fight off infections: Through regulation of our hormones—including oxytocin and cortisol—touching and hugging can also affect our body's immune response. Whereas high levels of stress and anxiety can suppress our ability to fight infections, close, supportive relationships benefit health and well-being.

Research even suggests that cuddling in bed could protect us against the common cold. By monitoring hugging frequency among just over 400 adults who were then exposed to a common cold virus, researchers found that the "huggers" were significantly less likely to get a cold. And even those who did had less severe symptoms.

Hug It Out While it's important that we continue to keep

reduce stress.

ourselves safe, it's equally as important that we don't give up hugs forever. Social isolation and loneliness are known to increase our chances of premature death—and perhaps future research should investigate whether it's a lack of hugs or social touch that may be driving this. Touch is an instinct that is allaround beneficial for our mental and physical health—so we should celebrate its return. Of course, not everyone craves a hug. So for those that don't, there's no reason to worry about missing out on the benefits of hugs—as giving yourself a hug has also been shown to regulate emotional processes and

Francis McGlone is a professor in neuroscience at Liverpool John Moores University in the UK, and Susannah Walker is a senior lecturer of natural sciences and psychology at Liverpool John Moores University. This article was first published on The Conversation.



PERSONAL MASTERY

Learning to Manage Our Fear

Fear can be a powerful motivator, but it needs to be understood and handled appropriately

Continued from Page 1

In an article published in a June 2020 edition of the bimonthly journal Health and Behavior, researchers pointed to several studies that showed that fear-inducing public health campaigns can also inspire denial, backlash avoidance, defensiveness, stigmatization, depression, anxiety, increased risk behavior, and a feeling of lack of control.

"Fear appeals, also known as scare tactics, have been widely used to promote recommended preventive behaviors," the researchers wrote. "We contend that unintended negative outcomes can result from fear appeals that intensify the already complex pandemic and efforts to contain it."

Fear is an awful feeling, but it's that way by design. This hardwired survival mechanism jolts us into action when we face lifethreatening situations.

Unfortunately, this feeling can misfire.

Some news coverage can make us feel like the threats we face are

Fear is infamous for distorting reality. It can make small threats appear bigger than they actually are, and force us to live under the stress of every worst-case scenario.

But how can fear be a source of both good and bad advice? According to Brandon La-Greca, author of the new book, "Cancer, Stress and Mindset: Focusing the Mind to Empower Healing and Resilience," it's not so much the feeling, but rather your reaction to it. LaGreca, who also practices Chinese medicine, said the quality of advice we get from fear all depends on how well we manage it.

"It's about evaluating our fear, seeing if it's warranted or not, and then considering what we can do about it," LaGreca said.

To get a better perspective on the strange dual nature of this raw emotion, LaGreca broke fear into two basic categories: immediate and looming. We have little control over one category, and we control the other way too much.

Immediate fears are those that strike with no warning and demand immediate action.

stress go hand-"Say someone is driving in in-hand and take front of you and slams on the a biochemical tol breaks. Your body has to respond." LaGreca said. "That saves your life. You slam on the breaks, you swerve, and you do wha you need to do."

Compare this to fears that fall into the looming category, such as rejection, abandonment, death, social discord, political turmoil, and fear of the unknown. These fears can weigh on us for weeks, months, or for much of our lives. They threaten some point in our future, but you never know when. Looming fears force us to be on guard at all times. To an outside observer, these fears may appear trivial and unwarranted, yet we still suffer.

Our responses to immediate and looming fears also differ biochemically. LaGreca explained that, when confronting an immediate fear, your adrenal glands pump out epinephrine and norepinephrine. This gives you a quick surge of energy and focus to handle the acute stress. When the danger has passed and we catch our breath, the fightor-flight state fades, and stress hormones fall back to baseline.

The hormone that primarily helps us mitigate looming fear is cortisol. However, the obsessive nature of looming fear never gives this hormone a break. And when cortisol is chronically elevated, mental and physical damage can result.

In addition to handling stress, cortisol regulates inflammation and blood sugar. However, the body is designed to make threats

overwhelming and inevitable.



a priority, even if other functions suffer. In an environment of never-ending stress and elevated cortisol, people typically acquire fat more easily and have a harder time losing it. Their immune function suffers. Blood sugar is thrown off balance. And the whole body is subjected to greater wear and tear.

"We are making ourselves sick by making this chronic cortisol exposure and then having all of the inflammation that comes with that," LaGreca said. "We know that cortisol is catabolic [destructively metabolic] to the gut. That causes long-term damage to the

Fear has an important function, but you have to be able to shut it off at some point. We need to shift from fight or flight to rest and digest—a much calmer, healthier longterm state of being.

You can see this flip from one state to another in nature. The rabbit that runs from the rottweiler will soon be happily munch-

Fear and

on our body.

ing on violet leaves just behind the fence. Humans, however, are prone to ruminate about the past and fretting

about the future; perpetuating our fears, maintaining stress, and keeping cortisol elevated.

The adrenaline jolt of immediate fear is designed to protect you from harm, but looming fear is a recipe for disease if we can't break

this cortisol loop. Living long term in a fear-filled state has been shown to weaken the immune system, upset our digestion, and accelerate aging through an inflammatory process found at the heart of chronic disease. Chronic disease is the nemesis of modern

medicine. Chronic disease is slow, often invisible, and usually tied firmly to lifestyle and stress. Acute disease or injury is local, and often has immediate causes and cures, such as clearing a clogged artery or sewing

"We're really good at the acute stuff that's how our species has survived. And then there's this long-term, chronic stuff," LaGreca said. "It's this latter category that I really focus on, especially when it comes to cancer patients, but you could also apply it to people being afraid of COVID."

Chronic disease is persistent and ongoing. It isn't easily remedied with drugs or surgery. It's usually systemic and tied to the patterns of lifestyle we've established over a lifetime.

Name That Fear

It's tempting to run from fear. And in some immediate instances, fleeing may be the best option. But for looming fears, we're better off choosing fight over flight.

That fight starts by examining the fear you feel. It helps tremendously if you can share it with others.

"Think about a cancer patient. If they're bottling all that up, it's going to make it twice as bad," LaGreca said. "Instead of just thinking: 'This is a horrible diagnosis. I'm afraid of dying,' get it out. Tell it to family or therapists. Do whatever it takes. To be able to name your fear takes the teeth out of it."

If you do nothing to acknowledge your fear, you may not even realize it's there. You may just sense some looming feeling that you're always desperately trying to escape. Registered nurse and trauma recovery coach Jami Carder said she was in her 40s when she first learned that fear had guided nearly every decision she had ever made. When she made up her mind to embrace her fears, everything changed.

"Each time I was faced with something fearful, it gave me a chance to be brave,"

How Optimism Helps You Achieve Goals With Less Stress

A new study finds that optimistic students are more likely to study and more likely to succeed

SHANNA B. TIAYON

When you hear the word optimism, what comes to mind? Does it resonate as a tried-and-true life practice? Or perhaps it sounds too Pollyanna-ish for your taste.

Essentially, optimism is hopefulness about the future—a general belief that things will work out in your favor. Whether you are a devoted practitioner or devout skeptic, you've likely asked yourself at least once, "Does optimism produce actual life benefits or is it just feel-good fluff?"

A new study has provided evidence that cultivating optimism might be worthwhile. According to the paper, which was published last month in the journal Emotion, optimism appears to be particularly useful when tackling challenges or approaching situations that could elicit high levels of stress.

Researchers Heather Lench and Zari Carpenter explored the benefits of optimism using two separate studies. In the first study, more than 1,000 undergraduates completed a survey two weeks before taking their first psychology exam, assessing their anticipated grade and their emotions about the exam. One day before the exam, participants were surveyed again about their expected grade, as well as their study habits leading up to the exam. Two days after taking the test, participants reported on the actual grade they received, as well as their emotional response.

Indeed, the researchers found that there is likely a connection between optimism and effort. Greater optimism two weeks prior to the exam predicted more study

Researchers found that optimism seemed to fuel resilience in the face of failure.



Optimism affects our motivation to put in necessary effort. MICROMANIAC/SHUTTERSTOC

Fear can be

uncomfortable,

even painful.

But it's a pain

that needs to

be heard.

hours, greater overall satisfaction A new study with the quality of their studying, and a better grade on the exam. If students lowered their expectations that cultivatthe day before the exam, they'd ingoptimism study less and get a worse grade. This finding highlights that it's not

just optimism that drives effort and results, but rather unflappable optimism maintained over a steady period of time. In the second study, the researchers used the context of the highly anticipated

Match Day, a day when fourth-year medical students find out which hospitals they have been paired with for their residency. Where medical students receive their residency training can impact the trajectory of their medical career, making it a very important and often stressful culminating event after four years of rigorous study.

The 182 participants first reported their ranked list of residency programs. Two weeks before Match Day, researchers surthe matching process, such as their happiness and stress levels, their perceived likelihood of matching with their choices, and their anticipated level of happiness if they got into the program they ranked first.

On the day following Match Day, once participants found out which medical residency—if any—they'd been matched to, they received another survey assessing their happiness and stress levels.

Over 50 percent of participants matched with their top-ranked program and 2 percent of participants did not match at all. The



researchers found that a high level of optimism toward matching with their top choice was associated with higher levels of happiness and lower levels of stress during the process leading up to the match decisions, as well as a greater likelihood that they matched with their top choice.

MIND & BODY 7

The study also refuted a common misbelief about optimism—that if I'm too optimistic and don't get what I want. I'll be even more devastated. Medical students who were optimistic but weren't matched didn't demonstrate greater levels of distress. In other words, the optimism seemed to fuel resilience in the face of failure.

Why? Optimism appears to fuel our efforts in achieving personal goals, and also improves the overall quality of our experiences while doing so, by increasing happiness and reducing stress. Less stress also reduces the likelihood of mental distress, a common side effect of striving. "For fuveyed participants on several aspects of ture events that are specific, controllable, and important," conclude the researchers, "it appears optimism has benefits with very little cost."

> Shanna B. Tiayon, Ph.D., also known as "The Wellbeing Doctor," is a writer, speaker, and trainer working in the area of well-being. Currently, Shanna is the owner of WellbeingWorks, LLC, a boutique well-being firm bringing together the best interdisciplinary knowledge in the areas of social psychology, human resources, research, and training design.



Researchers warn that using fear

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As Carder examined her fears, she found that they all pointed to a similar theme: She was afraid of rejection. As she began to confront these feelings and push past her fear, she felt herself become stronger.

"Many times, the things I feared never happened. Actually, most of the time. But sometimes, I was rejected or abandoned. And it didn't feel good, at all. But, I survived," said Carder. "I've faced rejection and received rejection enough times now that I almost feel invincible.'

Of course, that invincible feeling typically doesn't happen overnight. But LaGreca pointed out that even those not yet strong enough to confront their fears can still learn to sit with them, and become more comfortable in their presence.

"We can't necessarily shut off that fear response, but we can dampen it with things like breathwork and meditation," he said. "They can certainly change your setpoint so that you are not as responsive to the stresses as they come up. You can build resilience by doing so."

A Call to Action

Fear can be uncomfortable, even painful. But it's a pain that needs to be heard. Trying to ignore your fear will only end up hurting you more.

Firearm instructor Cindy Frost said using fear as a motivational vehicle has saved her life countless times. She described one occasion when she was a young police ofher endless fear loop was when her 4-yearncer, searching in a rough neighborhood for a man who had violently threatened a woman earlier that night. Sizing up a suspect she spotted on the street, Frost considered if she should call for backup.

"I spotted a man who stood over six feet, her out, starting with the news. She filled had a very large belly, silver combed-back hair, and was wearing a flannel shirt. He was walking in the middle of the street," Frost said. "The hair at the back of my neck rose with every detail that confirmed this was likely the offender."

Frost had handled many calls and traffic stops without assistance during her nightly tour of duty. But she was familiar enough with the chill of fear to know that this was a time she couldn't act alone.

"These are God-given reactions," Frost said. "Listen and consider the emotion of fear to be a directive. Respond accordingly."

Shift Your Focus

There's a distinct difference between examining your fear and obsessing over it. One is a motivator. The other is just a burden.

The goal isn't to shut off this survival mechanism, but to be mindful of its message and cultivate the courage to handle it. Anything less just feeds the fear. For fashion designer and happiness coach

Evey Rosenbloom, the fear she fed was the thought that something horrible might happen to her family. It all started when a wildfire and a shooting happened in her area. The events made Rosenbloom worry incessantly about her children's safety. She said she was stuck in constant fight-or-flight mode.

Rosenbloom could see this obsession destroying her mind and body, but she couldn't stop. She poured hours of research into how to prevent violent crime, and monitored all the potential threats her community might face. Her health continued to deteriorate.

"The more I read, the more anxious I got, until it hit me on a physical level. Suddenly, I was seeing flashes of light and felt like I was going to collapse," Rosenbloom said. "The dizziness lasted for months. I was diagnosed with vestibular migraines, and when the doctors told me there was no cure, I felt like my life was over. I began to feel overwhelming sadness, wishing I could have given my kids a happy life."

What finally snapped Rosenbloom out of old daughter found her crying. She said "Mommy, you can choose to be happy."

From that moment on, Rosenbloom shifted her focus from fires and violence to joy. She disconnected from anything that stressed the void with uplifting podcasts and happy

"It was incredible how quickly I was able to transform into feeling like myself again, once I was able to recognize and eliminate the stressful content and rewire my brain through positive thoughts and actions," she said. "It was liberating to decide that I would no longer let my fears keep me from celebrating life. Instead, my priority was to create a positive environment for my children."

Fear is an innate protective mechanism but manipulative forces are known to take advantage of this hardwired reflex. Propaganda is notorious for hacking into emotion for political gain and leading people to make choices out of fear rather than logic.

Those brave enough to examine the unconscious reactions triggered by the looming threats can begin to look beyond fear as the only adviser and turn to something more

Like Rosenbloom, LaGreca said to focus on the positive. He recommended gratitude as a pivot.

"Take, for example, March of last year, where you didn't know if you're going to have enough toilet paper or food," LaGreca said. "That's when you should ask: 'What do I have? What can I be grateful for? Who are the people in my community that are supporting me right now?' Draw on all those positive aspects in your life that you can tap into. It's huge."

Our survival depends on our ability to respond to the threats that confront us, but we also must notice our abundance and support. If your fear feels like a disease, try to instead think of it as a teacher. Listen for the lessons it gives.

"What are the imbalances in your life? And how can you use this as a wake-up call to be a more empowered person on the other side of it?" LaGreca said. "Healing is about becoming a fundamentally different person on the other side of whatever you're going through."

It can be awkward to refuse an offer or request but it's essential to our well-being

HILARY BARNETT

v 3-year old is better than me at some things. Yes, it's tough to admit. I so often focus on what I need to be teaching my daughter, it's easy to overlook what she teaches me. As we were having lunch one day, I asked her if she wanted her favorite

lunchmeat, salami. Out of her mouth came three words I had never before heard her utter, "No, thank you." As I picked my jaw up off the floor, I asked her where she had heard that. "From myself, Mama.'

That sounds about right, since she certainly hadn't heard it from me.

The nonchalance with which she said those three words struck me. She just stated it, plain and simple, no strings attached, no emotional baggage behind it. She didn't say, "Oh I'm so sorry, but I'm just not in the mood for salami today, I hope that's OK?"

She didn't say, "I'm not sure, let me think about that salami option and get back to you in a few hours.' She didn't say, "Well not really, but if

you want me to have the salami then I guess I will."

She has heard me say each of those phrases too many times to count. Something tells me if you are someone

who takes risks, enjoys adventure, and invests in people, then you might find yourself saying them quite often also. We need to reconsider the power of saying "No, thank you."

I wouldn't recommend just saying no that's just rude. If you live in the South as I do, you aren't going to get away with

that type of behavior if you want any

But "no, thank you" has a nice ring to it, doesn't it?

It adds a touch of civility to the whole interaction and lets the other party know you at least appreciate the offer. Sadly, even this perfectly affable state-

ment has become taboo in our culture. We have forgotten how to say it and just leave it out there. Let it hang thick in the air, and bask in the awkwardness it

We have to justify it, to give our reasons, to run down our laundry list of obligations. This constant desire to keep everyone happy around us is killing us and keeping us running in a thousand different directions.

This constant desire to keep

happy around

us is killing us.

everyone

In life, in business, in creativity, in relationships—saying "no, thank you" is vital. Without it, we can't say yes to what truly matters. We can't simplify any-

How do we say "no, thank you" more

1. Know your values.

Values aren't just things the Moral Majority liked to sling around in the '80s. Even if you don't think you have them, you do. Your calendar and your bank statement will give you a pretty good idea of what they are.

Once you know them, you can decide if they are taking you where you want to go. If you don't know what matters most to you, if there is no true north, then saying yes and no is going to be a daunting task.

2. Be aware of the season you are in right now.

Did you just start a new business? Have a new baby? Are you charging full speed ahead with a project, or currently sailing with the breeze?

Take a moment to assess where you are and allow your values to reflect that. Sometimes "no, thank you" can simply mean, "not right now."

3. Identify what is draining you and what is feeding you.

It's important to ask yourself this often. It applies across the board. What people in your life are encouraging, helpful, and reliable?

Week 23, 2021. THE EPOCH TIMES

What clients do you simply love working with? What projects do you love working on and cannot believe how fast time has flown by when you are in the flow of it? Focus on those things, and begin to say "no, thank you" to the rest.

4. Focus on where you want to go.

Visualize your life five years from now. Where are you? Who are you with? What are you working on? How are you spending your free time?

Once you know where you are headed, you can much more easily identify what is helping you, and what is hindering you. Then you can give the heave-ho to the things that are holding you back from stepping into that future.

Let's all practice together. Say it with me now, out loud. "No, thank you."

Say it in the mirror while you are brushing your teeth. Say it while you are walking the dog. Before you have to say it to anyone in real life, let the words roll around in your mouth. Get comfortable

Then try it out. Say it to someone, and just wait. See what happens. Something tells me they will be less disappointed or hurt than you imagined, and you may just feel a newfound sense of exhilaration and purpose.

And most importantly, you will now be able to say YES to what truly matters.

Hilary Barnett lives and works in Nashville, Tenn., with her husband, two daughters, and feisty Boston terrier. She has been writing professionally since 2008 and is currently publishing her first book called "The Good Enough Mother: Reimagining Motherhood and Work."

Being able to say "no, thank you," is a prerequisite to managing your time and saying "yes" o what really matters.

Legal Notice

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE SERIAL # 1335682, for On Premise Liquor oplied for by the undersigned to se at 306 308 E. 6th St., New York NY 10003, Nev York County, for on premises Hat LLC d/b/a Beetle House

inevitably produces.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE, SERIAL # 1335725, for Liquor, Wine & Beer Liquor, Wine & Beer at retail under the Alco-holic Beverage Control Law at 258 Wythe Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11249, Kings County, fo

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE. Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider at retail in a Restau rant under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 310 W. 4th St.,New York, NY 10014. New erry Hospitality LLC d/b/a October.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE. been applied for by the undersigned to sel Wine, Beer & Cider at retail in a Restauran under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 1827 2nd Ave., New York, NY 10128. New VI. GI Gourmet 96 Corp. d/b/a Enzo Bruni La

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NUMBER 1334674 for On Premise Liquor lied for by the undersigned to sell Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 234 Starr St., Brooklyn, York, NY 11237, Kings County

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE, SERIAL # 1335734, for Liquor, Wine & Beer has been applied for by the undersigned to sell Liquor, Wine & Beer at retail under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 49 Carmine St., New York, NY 10014, New York County, for on prem-

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11040. Queens County, for on premises consumption. Jay Ned Inc. d/b/a ABCD. rant under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 4367 11th St., Long Island City, NY 11101. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE,

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> > OVA Tenant LLC. One Vanderbilt Owner LLC and NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE. napplied for by the undersigned to sell Wine Beer & Cider at retail in a Restaurant under the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 793 6th Ave., New York, NY 10001. New York County, for on otion. Nangman LLC d/b/a

rant Group Inc. d/b/a Badshah Mod

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE. lied for by the undersigned to sell Wine, Bee & Cider at retail in a Restaurant under the Alco holic Beverage Control Law at 335 3rd Ave., New York, NY 10010. New York County, for on ption, 335 SFD Corp d/b/a

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE NUMBER PENDING, for liquor, wine and beer has been applied for by the undersigned* to sell liquor, wine and beer at retail in a restaurant under the nption.*MPMTAVERNSLLC

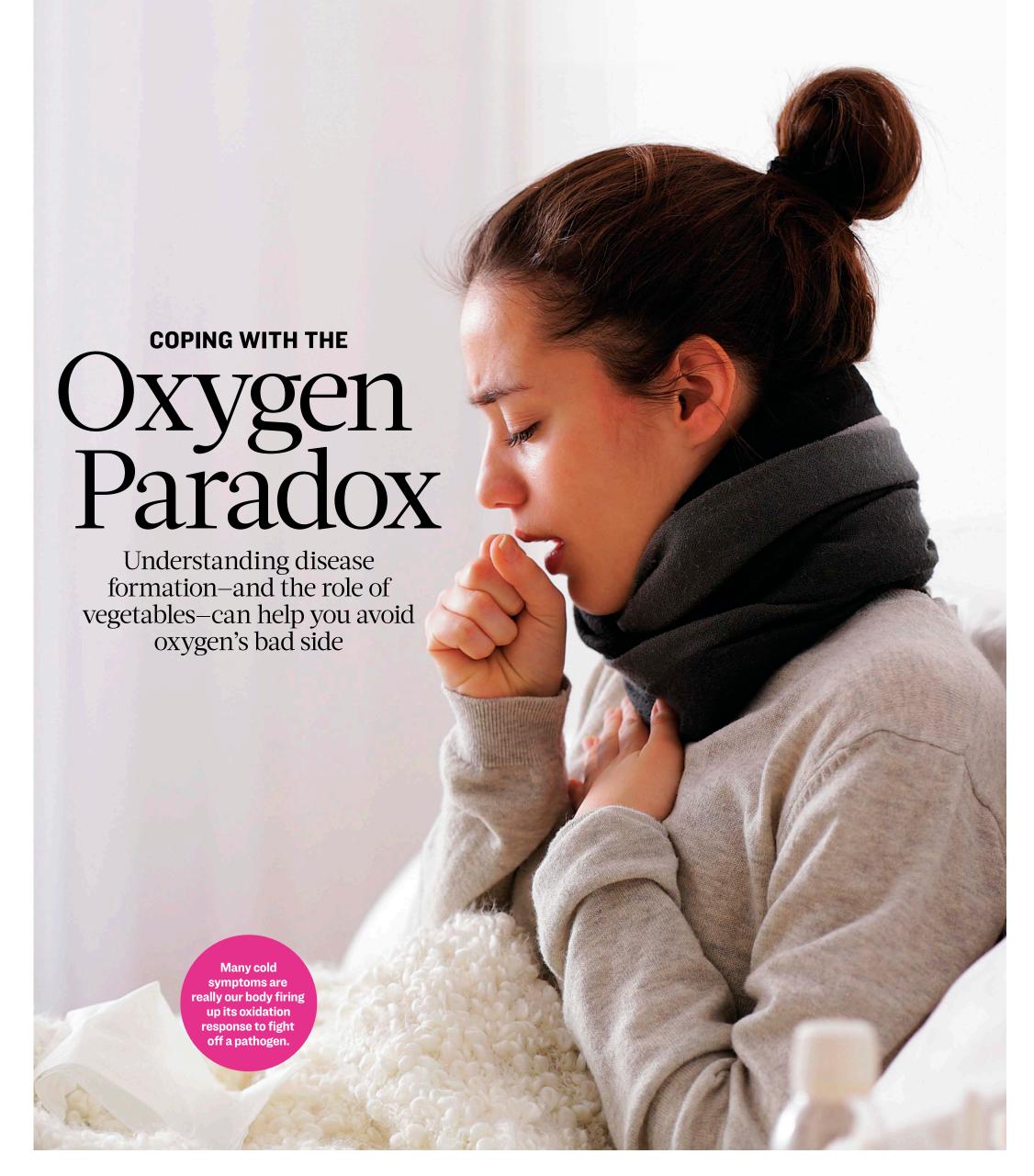
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE. been applied for by the undersigned to serve beer, liquor, wine full bar at retail in a restaurar under the Alcohol Beverage Control Law at 5586 Broadway, Bronx, NY 10463. Bronx County, for ises consumption, 5586 BROADWAY NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A LICENSE.

Control Law at 164 9th Ave., Store 2, New York NY 10011. New York County, for on premise con NUMBER 1335687, for Restaurant Wine has Alcoholic Beverage Control Law at 515-517

applied for by the undersigned to sell Liquor

Wine & Beer at retail under the Alcoholic Beverage





CONAN MILNER

xygen is essential to our survival, and yet this toxic, mutagenic, and highly reactive gas also has the capacity to

The destructive side of oxygen is called oxidation. Slow oxidation turns cut apples brown and hard metal brittle with rust. Rapid oxidation destroys things more quickly, in an exothermic chemical process of combustion, otherwise known as fire.

Oxygen is a highly reactive element because it's missing two electrons. That means it's constantly looking to gobble up electrons from other elements, changing molecules and chemicals in the process.

When our immune system malfunctions, our body becomes the target of its own oxidative onslaught.

It's inherently unstable, and that nature makes it both dangerous and essential. Our cells rely on oxygen's reactive na-

ture to drive organic chemical reactions that create the special energy they need for everything from muscle contraction to chemical synthesis. Just like the fire that heats our home, oxi-

dation can go wrong in our bodies as well, and rather than providing us the heat we need to survive the winter, it can burn the things we need in order to survive.

Oxygen's Dual Nature

When our cells get overwhelmed with oxidation, it's called oxidative stress. The process is linked to inflammation and chronic disease. Kelvin J. A. Davies, professor of molecular

biology and biochemistry at the University of Southern California, coined the term "oxygen paradox" to describe this strange dual nature.

The oxygen paradox compels us "to look for the mechanisms by which life on earth has managed to find ways to profit from an oxygen environment without immediately falling prey to the dangers of oxidation," Davies wrote in a journal article published in The Archives of Biochemistry and Biophysics.

Oxygen plays many roles in the body, and sometimes a role that looks like a problem is actually a solution, and other times it's just contributing to disease formation. Oxidative stress is one example.

Doing kind things for

others is the best way to

Continued on **Page 10**

If You Want to Be Happy, Try to Make Someone Else Happy

A new study shows that doing kind things for others is an important path to happiness

Many Americans chase after new gadgets and hedonistic pleasures in a seeming attempt at happiness. But what if that approach is wrong? What if happiness comes from aiming to make others happy instead of doing nice things for

That is exactly what a recent study

In the study, college students reported on their happiness and on their sense of autonomy, competence, and connection to others—all what researchers consider Continued on Page 15

to be "basic psychological needs" for wellbeing. The students, 360 in total, were then randomly tasked to do something to either make themselves happier, make another person happier, or socialize. Assigning one group to socialize helped determine if seeking happiness for another had an effect above and beyond simply being in someone's presence.

Later that day, after doing their tasks, participants reported what they did, and then filled out their happiness and needs questionnaires again.



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I read The Epoch Times daily. I still like hard papers [...] and I still like to grab that paper in my hand, but I get more printed versions of stories than ever before. You guys have done an amazing job, and really—I think there's such a void in media. especially newspapers. They slant so solidly one way that there are very few papers that I can really feel that I can rely on, and The Epoch Times is one. **SEAN HANNITY** Talk show host



The Epoch Times is a great place where you can understand traditional values in a way and in a tone and through content that is accessible. It's smart. **CARRIE SHEFFIELD** Columnist and broadcaster



I congratulate you and The Epoch Times for the work you are doing, especially with regard to keeping the menace of the communist threat in front of us.

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COPING WITH THE

Paradox

Understanding disease formation—and the role of vegetables-can help you avoid oxygen's bad side

Continued from Page 9

Oxidative Stress

According to Brian J. Day, a researcher who studies oxidative stress at National Jewish Health in Denver, our immune system purposely produces high levels of reactive oxygen molecules to kill the pathogens that cause infection: bacteria, viruses, and fungi.

"When the immune system gets going, it generates large amounts of these, much higher than the byproduct of metabolism," Day said.

These reactive oxygen species (ROS) are created through many processes in the body and play many essential roles, including cell growth and differentiation. They're also related to many ailments, including chronic inflammation, age-related diseases, and cancers.

During an immune response, our body uses them to launch an oxidative attack against the pathogens.

That attack is what makes us feel so lousy when we have a cold or flu. A stuffy nose, headache, and sore throat are all symptoms we suffer when we're sick. However, they're not generated by the infection per se, but from our immune system's reaction to it. The genius of this strategy is causes metal to rust that our body can recover from a short, self-inflicted surge of oxidation. Pathogens typically

"When the immune system is workand then retreats, and the tissue re-stand it." immune system keeps us from being overrun by pathogens, and it has clever tion is a process that takes place at a ways to prevent friendly fire. It fools the molecular level. And oxygen-related rebugs. It can produce an oxidant that the

is kind of cool. It's like a smart bomb."

Unfortunately, when this system malfunctions, it's a major problem, because your body becomes the target of its own oxidative onslaught. In autoimmune diseases, for example, the immune system responds to the body's own tissue as a foreign invader and uses oxidation to attack itself.

You can see this self-destruction process play out in cystic fibrosis, an inflammatory lung disease. Day said that what typically kills people with cystic fibrosis is lung failure, because these organs are subjected to high levels of oxidative stress.

"It's due to having this immune system constantly active. It totally destroys the lung," he said.

This is also true of many CO-VID-19 deaths, in which people died from an overly strong immune response known as a cytokine storm.

Oxygen's Radical Side

popular buzzword in modern medicine because it promises to deliver deeper insight into degenerative disease. Researchers have linked oxidative stress to cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic conditions. But how exactly a life-giving

still learning to comprehend. "It's complex," Day said. "I have a hard ing properly, it goes in, does its thing, time even getting scientists to under-

Part of this complexity is due to the chemistry and scale involved. Oxidaactions are so varied and so widespread bugs can't metabolize, but that we have in the body that scientists struggle to

substance can also harm us

is an idea some doctors are

an antioxidant defense against, which

Oxidative stress has become a forces that help keep it in check.

grapple with them all.

With that said, oxidation's destructive power becomes self-evident at times because it rapidly accelerates the aging

Oxidative stress is a corrosive agent at a molecular scale. It can eat away at the main constituents of a cell: fat and protein. Even if it doesn't destroy cells outright, it can seriously warp them.

"One of the molecules that can get damaged is your DNA. If you damage your DNA oxidatively, it can cause mispairing, point mutation, band breaks, and all these things that make it very hard for your cells to replicate properly. Some of those events can lead to premalignant tissue," Day said.

What makes oxygen so destructive is its radical nature. Any molecule with an unpaired electron is unstable, but oxygen has two unpaired electrons, also known as free radicals. When these free radicals steal electrons from our cellular molecules, they can leave dead and damaged cells in their wake.

And yet this destructive force can also provide the spark of life. Our cells are designed to harness oxygen's reactive nature to give our body energy.

That process creates ATP (adenosine triphosphate), Day said.

"These are the energy currents of the mitochondria. It's used to move your muscles, to digest food, power your brain, your heart, and lungs. This is the currency your body uses for energy."

Oxygen is inherently unstable, and that nature makes it both dangerous and essential.

More Radicals

For air-breathing creatures (aerobes), oxidation is essential to life. But people today are probably subjected to more problematic forms of oxidation than those of the past. Exposure to the modern world—pollution, chronic stress, and a bad diet—can turn up the volume of bad oxidation, or impair the defense

Like the brick lining of a fireplace, our body has several mechanisms to manage oxygen's reactive nature and keep oxidation in check, or active in the right reactions. But we are now bombarded with outside elements that can break those mechanisms, unleashing oxida-

Car exhaust, coal-burning power plants, or anything that creates fumes with fire generates a wealth of reactive molecules that we inevitably breathe in. Smoking is by far the worst.



When we are sick, our body fights back with an immune response that includes oxidation. This response is what causes our stuffy nose,

"It's probably one of the most horrific sources of oxidative stress and damage and why it produces so many diseases," Day said of the habit. "It increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, heart attack, atherosclerosis, and COPD. And there are a lot of carcinogens in those combustion products, so they're a large source of cancers, like oral and lung."

Building a Better Defense System

Cleaner air can cut our exposure to some of these interfering elements, but we can't escape them entirely. Thankfully, those internal forces that prevent oxidation from turning into oxidative stress can be supported with special agents known as antioxidants.

Antioxidants work by neutralizing reactivity. They pair free radicals up with a stabilizing proton, turning these potentially harmful molecules into some-

"When you have a bunch of electrons in highly reactive oxygen species and put protons onto them, you create water. You go from oxygen to water, and water is pretty harmless. This system is very efficient," Day said.

Unfortunately, many of the touted sources of antioxidants aren't as good as their marketing suggests, Day said.

"All the vitamins you supplement for are one-to-one. Once you oxidize them, they're done. That's why the vitamin C pill is so large. The reason you have to is because they are very inefficient, and they are very slow," he said.

In other words, these pills don't start a chain reaction that boosts our body's ability to create more antioxidants, they just pair up with free radicals present

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOC

in the body and have a limited effect on neutralizing these troublemakers. And some of those antioxidants never get used because they pass through the

body without encountering any free

"Americans have some of the richest urine in the world because some of these antioxidants your body doesn't store. So once it hits a certain level, you just flush it out," Day said.

radicals to neutralize.

These one-to-one antioxidants are known as circumetrics. This group includes vitamins, carotenes, and glutathione. There's another group that consists of antioxidant enzymes that are far more efficient. They can help neutralize many free radicals with greater speed and precision than circumetrics. But as a supplement, they have even larger limitations.

"Even if it really did have the enzyme in it, your digestive system would just break that down like it would a hamburger into the basic building blocks of the amino acids, and you wouldn't get any of the benefits," Day said. "It ends up being a very expensive protein

Antioxidant Power Plants

So what does Day believe is the best strategy to boost your antioxidant defense? Cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage. Other plant foods, like berries, may contain take large amounts of these antioxidants far more circumetric antioxidants. But thing even more valuable—constituents that trigger your body to increase its own endogenous antioxidants, both enzymes and circumetrics.

"Cruciferous vegetables have com-

pounds in them to defend against hungry insects. It's kind of a chemical weapon they use to try to poison them. But these are also the molecules that can turn on your antioxidant defense system," Day said.

One major problem with supplements is that they can't account for the myriad of responses that happen inside your body when it's faced with oxidation. In an article on antioxidant therapeutics, Day said that most oxidant exposures evoke adaptive responses in the body that a supplemental antioxidant may block. This results in less protection from oxidative stress.

One documented example of this is seen in cigarette smokers who took beta carotene supplements. Rather than protect smokers from oxidative stress, this common antioxidant was actually shown to increase the risk of

But this paradoxical reaction only comes from taking isolated nutrients. Evidence shows that people who eat fruits and vegetables that contain beta carotene reduce their risk of disease.

Another problem with supplements is that they might interfere with your immune system's ability to generate reactivity when you face an infection. Vegetables, on the other hand, can provide what your body may need at any

"Eating vegetables is a clever way to arm your immune system so it won't hurt you," said Day

It turns out that just eating healthy food has the power to turn the same oxygen that could create diseases in your body into the oxygen that can protect your body from disease.

Raw Honey: A Natural Sweetener With Health Benefits

Oxidation is what

and apples to turn

Research has revealed that honey deserves the high renown it has received since ancient times

Consuming honey, nature's sweet gift freely given through the work and movement of honeybees, gets sweeter in light of its wide-ranging health benefits.

If you reach for honey for your cup of freshly brewed tea or to sweeten your homemade desserts, you may already know that science favors honey for its wholesome health benefits versus those of various other natural sweeteners. Honey is produced by honeybees from

the nectar of flowers as food. For humans, it's also a whole food source that contains amino acids as well as vitamins and minerals, including thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin A, vitamin C, and vitamin E. The mix of the nutrients varies based on the plants visited by the bees.

It contains abundant active biological constituents, such as polyphenols, which are nutrient-dense phytochemicals that boast antioxidant properties. Honey is made up of approximately

50 percent fructose found in table sugar and the 40 percent to 90 percent in highfructose corn syrup, which sweetens many processed foods in the standard Western diet. Heavy fructose intake has been linked to many prevalent health issues, from liver ailments to metabolic diseases. Lower fructose content in honey also offers other health advantages.

For instance, a 2004 study that compared honey to dextrose and sucrose concluded that natural honey was able to lower plasma glucose, C-reactive protein, and homocysteine in healthy, diabetic, and hyperlipidemic participants.

Separate research confirmed that honey more effectively promoted lower weight gain, lower adiposity, and lower triglycerides than sucrose. Now let's have a closer look at the advantages that honey offers for well-being.

Relief for Seasonal Allergies 40 percent fructose, compared with the Bee medicine, which uses bee-related



Long-term consumption of honey might positively affect the metabolic consequences of Type 1 diabetes.

products such as pollen, propolis, and honey, has been popular in folklore for centuries and is now a rising star of anti-allergy therapy. A randomized, placebo-controlled trial in Malaysia studied the complementary effect of ingesting a high dose of honey on allergic rhinitis, in addition to standard medications.

The trial divided 40 patients with allergic rhinitis equally into two groups: one ingesting one gram per kilogram body weight of honey every day for four weeks, and another receiving the same dose of honey-flavored placebo. Both groups received 10 milligrams of loratadine daily for four weeks.

While both groups progressively improved their symptoms at week four, only the honey group showed continuing improvement at week eight. It's also the only group that significantly improved in individual symptoms, per-



Honey bees visit hundreds of flowers to make a delicious and healthy sweetener with healing property.

sisting for a month after the treatment

Anti-Influenza Activity

Research from 2014 revealed that honey may provide a natural alternative to anti-flu medications, one without the nasty side effects linked to this class of drugs. Testing a commonly researched H1N1 influenza strain called A/WSN/3, the study exposed virus-infected cells to different kinds of honey, such as manuka, soba, kanro, acacia, and renge.

The results demonstrated that honey—manuka honey in particular—had strong inhibitory activity against the flu virus and provided "a potential medicinal value." This study is one of hundreds that vouch for the role of natural compounds in preventing infection as well as reducing mortality rates against in-

Reducing Heart Disease Risk

Honey helped reduce the overall amount of cholesterol and fats in the bloodstream in healthy young adults. This was shown by a study published in August 2018 as a collaborative effort between researchers from Iran's Isfahan University and Mashhad University.

In the study, which recruited 60 subjects and assigned them to honey or sugar groups, the researchers compiled these findings:

Consuming honey slashed total cho-

increased the presence of beneficial HDL cholesterol in the blood. Consuming sucrose offered the inverse effect, increasing total cholesterol

and significantly raising LDL while reducing HDL in the blood.

Wound Healing

Among the much-promoted benefits of honey is wound healing. As found in different studies, honey had several benefits:

- Resulted in a decrease in wound sizes and faster healing after tooth extraction in children Served as an effective antibacterial
- wound healing agent against MRSAcolonized leg ulcers Notably reduced the rate of amputation and improved wound healing

when used for a wound dressing in

- chronic diabetic foot ulcers Combined with milk and aloe vera in ointment form, honey facilitated multiple healing effects on burn wounds
- in animal models Used twice a day, thyme honey accelerated the healing process of open

Potential Aid Against

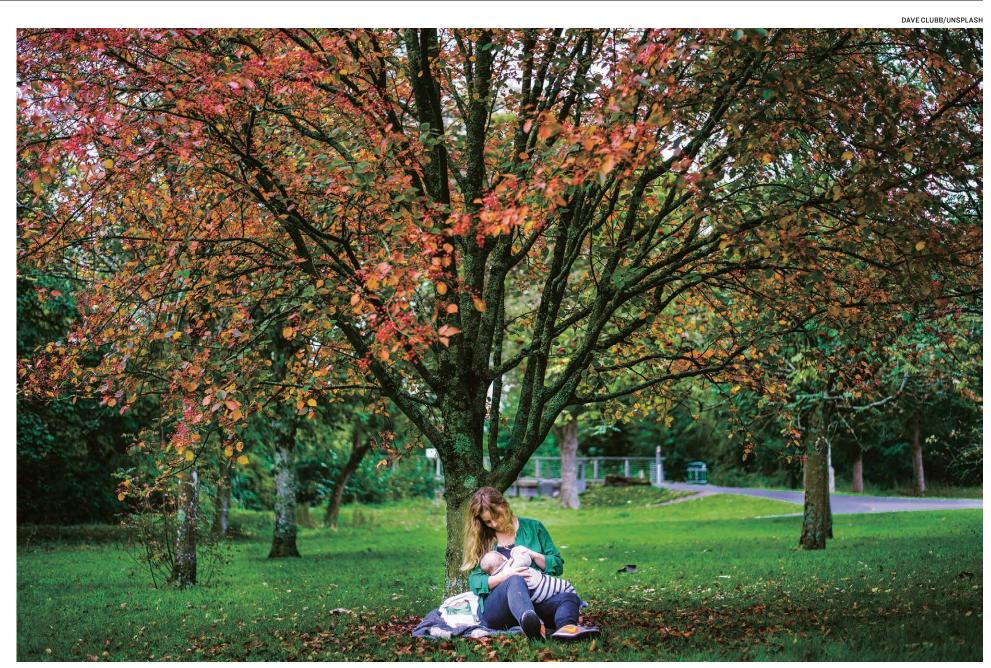
Type 1 Diabetes A 2010 human study found that longterm consumption of honey might positively affect the metabolic consequences of Type 1 diabetes, such as possible beta cell regeneration as indicated by climbing fasting C-peptide levels.

Among the lesterol and LDL cholesterol, as well as **much-promoted** benefits of honey is wound healing.

"This small clinical trial suggests that long-term consumption of honey might have positive effects on the metabolic derangements of Type 1 DM [diabetes mellitus]," wrote the researchers in this study that recruited 20 patients of both sexes ages 4 to 18. To appreciate an entire list of honey's health benefits, head over to our honey research page at GreenmedInfo.health.

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Week 23, 2021. THE EPOCH TIMES



Breast milk is the most perfect food for a newborn infant and common chemicals are contaminating it.

Mothers' Milk Positive for Chemicals Causing Birth Defects

Despite chemical exposure, breastfeeding still offers important advantages for infants

JOSEPH MERCOLA

n the 20th century, scientists developed a group of complex, manmade chemicals called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). In the which researchers say is the first past decade, researchers have found study in 15 years to analyze PFAS in a these chemicals contaminating drinking water and the environment. Current re- United States—gathered data from search measures them at alarming rates a cross-section of socioeconomically in breast milk.

The properties of these substances include oil and water repellency, temperature resistance, and friction reduction. Experts estimate there may be up to 10,000 of these forever chemicals, the full effects of which aren't yet known.

The most widely recognized PFAS are perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), both associated with kidney and testicular cancers. This family of chemicals is also linked to endocrine disruption and a host of other problems in people who live in communities that have heavily contaminated drinking water.

Out of the 10,000 forever chemicals, 3M agreed to stop making PFOS in 2002 and DuPont began phasing out PFOA in 2005. Yet, with just a chemical tweak, companies began marketing a new generation of PFAS with similar chemical structures.

The properties of PFAS have made them useful in aerospace technology, photography, construction, and everyday items such as paper products and nonstick cookware.

Ubiquitous use, delays in reducing use, and the known bioaccumulative and persistent effects of the chemicals have generated an environmental problem, largely because some of these forever chemicals can take up to 1,000 years to degrade.

Frightening Levels of **Forever Chemicals Found** in Breast Milk

A new study was published in Environmental Science and Technology group of breastfeeding women in the and geographically diverse groups of women and found PFAS contamination in all 50 samples tested.

In some samples, the levels were nearly 2,000 times higher than what is recommended safe for drinking water. There are no set standards for PFAS found in breast milk. However, as a comparison, the Environ-

mental Working Group (EWG) advises a target for drinking water at 1 part per trillion (ppt) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry recommends 14 ppt in children's drinking water.

The researchers found levels ranging from 50 ppt to more than 1,850 ppt in women's breast milk. Evaluating the effects of high amounts of PFAS in infants is difficult. Dr. Sheela Sathyanarayana, a co-author of the study and pediatrician with the University of Washington, spoke with a reporter from The Guardian.

Studies in older children and adults have shown the presence of these chemicals damage the immune system and create hormonal disruptions, she said. This is particularly problematic for infants, as their immune system isn't yet mature.

Erika Schreder, a co-author of the study and science director with Toxic Free Future in Seattle, told The Guardian, "The study shows that PFAS contamination of breast milk is likely universal in the U.S., and that these harmful chemicals are contaminating what should be nature's perfect food."

The results of the study counter the industry claim that the new generation of PFAS don't bioaccumulate in humans. The researchers also evaluated international breast milk data, finding in comparison to the current data that older chemical concentration is declining, while newer chemical concentration has doubled

every 4.1 years.

Evidence from this study has also suggested the challenge with PFAS bioaccumulating in people is get ting worse. When data from the current study were compared to a study spearheaded by the EWG in 2005, the researchers found there was an increase in the amount of new-generation PFAS found in breast milk.

Additionally, while manufacturers have phased out some older compounds, they were still present in breast milk, and some were found at high levels. Schreder believes the best solution is banning the entire class of chemicals.

"The study provides more evidence that the PFAS that companies are currently using and putting into products are behaving like the ones they phased out, and they're also getting into breast milk and exposing children at a very vulnerable phase of development," she said.

Polluting Infants Likely Has Lifelong Consequences

More than 15 years ago, the EWG found 287 chemicals in umbilical cord blood that pass between mother and baby. Of these, 180 are known to cause cancer in humans and animals, 217 are known toxins to the brain and nervous system, and 208 are known to cause abnormal development or birth defects in animal models.

There is substantial scientific evidence that demonstrates exposure in the womb may be dramatically more harmful because



Formula can't

give babies the

same benefits as

breast milk.





the baby is developing. Exposure during childhood also increases vulnerability related to the rapid development and incomplete defense systems of a child.

Many of these PFAS chemicals can potentially leach from food packaging, causing one group of 33 scientists to write a consensus statement pleading with lawmakers "to take swift action to reduce exposure" to plastics in food packaging.

Pete Myers, founder of Environmental Health Services and publisher of Environmental Health News, was also a contributor to the statement. In an editorial on the consensus statement, he wrote:

"Hazardous chemicals can transfer from food contact materials into food, and some are known endocrine disrupting chemicals, or 'EDCs.' EDCs are associated with chronic diseases such as diabetes, obesity, cancer, and neurological disorders like ADHD.

"The authors say while there is a great amount of information for some of the most well-studied food contact chemicals, such as bisphenol A (BPA) and phthalates, many of the 12,000 reported food contact chemicals lack data on their hazardous properties or level of human exposure. This suggests that the human population is exposed to unknown and untested chemicals migrating from food wrappings, with unknown health implications."

Increasing amounts of data have demonstrated that PFAS chemicals have a lethal effect on human health and the environment. After years of mounting evidence, the EPA revealed its PFAS Action Plan in February 2020, in which it states that the "agency has multiple criminal investigations underway concerning PFAS-related

"Since 2002, the agency has initiated 12 enforcement actions, including four since 2017."



Some mothers are unable to breastfeed.

Breastfeeding Supports

When women choose not to breastfeed, the only other option is bottle feeding with labproduced formulas mixed with drinking water, some of which have tested positive for toxic chemicals across the United States. But while PFAS chemicals were found in breast milk, that doesn't negate this food's important benefits for babies.

Just as the food you eat impacts your gut microbiome and consequently your immune system, so does the food that infants and children eat. In one study published in the Journal of Pediatrics, researchers looked at how bacteria in an infant's digestive system affect the burning and storage of fat, and how the infant body uses energy.

Information was gathered from 1,087 infants. Mothers reported how long infants were breastfed, when formula was introduced, and when solid food was introduced. Stool samples were collected at 3 to 4 months of age and again at 12 months and tested for gut bacteria.

Data revealed the highest level of beneficial bacteria at three months and one year was in infants who were exclusively breastfed. Infants who were exclusively formula-fed had the least variety of bacteria and nearly double the risk of becoming overweight.

Several studies have also demonstrated that breastfeeding benefits a baby's brain. Data from Brown University used magnetic resonance imaging to watch brain growth in children under age 4. They discovered that babies who were exclusively breastfed for the first three months had "enhanced development in key parts" of the brain as compared to those who were fed formula or a combination of formula and breast milk.

Published in the journal Breastfeeding Medicine, one review of the literature concluded there was compelling evidence in both full-term and preterm infants that breastfeeding benefits a child's neurode-

"Overall, available evidence regarding neurodevelopmental benefits supports existing recommendations that infants should be breastfed exclusively for six months and that hospitalized preterm infants should receive fortified maternal milk," the authors wrote.

A third study released from Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C., demonstrated how breast milk can increase biochemicals important for brain growth and development. The researchers studied extremely premature babies in the neonatal intensive care unit. They discovered "significantly higher levels of some key [natural] biochemicals in breastfed babies, compared to those who had been fed formula milk. Namely, there were increased amounts of inositol (a molecule similar to glucose) and creatine (a molecule which helps to recycle energy inside cells). The percentage of days that babies were fed breast milk was also linked to higher levels of a vitamin-like nutrient called choline."

The study shows that PFAS contamination of breast milk is likely universal in the U.S., and that these harmful chemicals are contaminating what should be nature's perfect food.

Erika Schreder, co-author of the study and science director at Toxic Free Future

More Amazing Benefits of Breastfeeding

If you're making a decision about breastfeeding, it's helpful to know the benefits to both baby and mom.

Benefits for Babies

The breastfeeding benefits for babies range from long-term health gains to lower mortality rates.

Natural immunity: Breastfeeding initially provides passive immunity as antibodies from the mother are passed through breast milk to the infant. Researchers have also found breast milk has a unique capacity to stimulate the infant's immune system with long-term positive effects.

Bonding: The close interaction during breastfeeding is just one way mothers develop a greater bond with their infant, which may extend years beyond infancy and impact parenting.

Reduction of blindness: Retinopathy of prematurity causes blindness in 10 percent of severe cases occurring in premature infants. Breastfeeding reduces this risk.

Reduction in SIDS: In one study, breast feeding reduced the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in children by 50 percent at all ages through infancy.

Reduced allergies: In one study of 1,278 mothers and babies, exclusive breastfeeding prevented the development of allergic diseases and asthma.

Benefits for Mothers

Breastfeeding isn't only beneficial to children. It's also very much in the interest of mothers, with wide-ranging health and wellness benefits.

Quicker recovery from childbirth: The release of oxytocin during breastfeeding helps the uterus return to a normal size and reduces postpartum bleeding.

Faster weight loss after childbirth: During pregnancy, the mother's body automatically stores extra fat to provide food for the baby. Producing milk burns 480 extra calories each day, which helps mobilize visceral fat stores.

Reduced rates of breast cancer: Breastfeeding may cut the risk of breast cancer in women who have had children.

Reduced rates of cardiovascular disease: Women who breastfeed have a 10 percent lower risk of heart disease and stroke.

Reduced risk of postpartum depression: $The \, release \, of \, prolactin \, and \, oxytocin \, while \,$ breastfeeding produces a peaceful and nurturing sensation. Women who breastfeed enjoy a reduced risk of developing postpartum depression in the first four months of their infant's life.

Dr. Joseph Mercola is the founder of Mercola.com. An osteopathic physician, best-selling author, and recipient of multiple awards in the field of natural health, his primary vision is to change the modern health paradigm by providing people with a valuable resource to help them take control of their health. This article was originally published on Mercola.com



Flexibility is a frequently overlooked component of being physically fit.

Simple Ways to Avoid Athletic Injuries

An ounce of prevention is better than a month of wasted recovery time

LYNN JAFFEE

Whether you're a weekend warrior or you get your exercise walking the dog, chances are that if you're physically active, at some point you've been on the receiving end of an athletic injury. Believe me, there is nothing worse than to be hobbled by an injury just before your big tournament, an active vacation, or just as the weather turns warm enough to be able to play outside.

Cold muscles and joints are more prone to injury.

I'm writing from experience here. I've blown out my knee on the altar of faulty ski equipment. I've suffered stress fractures from stubbornly refusing to stop running. And I've nursed a shoulder injury caused by not training adequately for a paddling event. Uh, make that not training at all.

The good news is that you can do a lot to make sure you end up on the field rather than on the sidelines. Here are my best tips:

- 1. Warm up. This means stretch a little, get your body moving, and ease into your workout.
- 2. Start slowly. Once you begin your workout, stay in low gear for the first 5 or 10 minutes. As an acupuncturist, I've treated my share of athletes from the basketball court to the softball field who have badly pulled a muscle going out too fast before they were warmed up.
- 3. Use the right equipment for your sport, and make sure your equipment fits. On more than one occasion, I've restrained myself from yelling out the car window at cyclists who need to raise their seats. I can see the knee injuries awaiting these people after a few months of riding like that. Borrowed, old, and ill-fitting equipment is a recipe for injury.
- 4. Dress for the weather. This means wearing layers to keep warm and dry during the cold weather and clothes that breathe and wick away moisture during the heat. How does this help avoid injuries? Cold muscles and joints are more prone to injury, and I consider heatstroke to be an injury.
- 5. If something hurts, stop doing it. This is an ancient Chinese secret.
- **6. Stretch.** Flexibility is a frequently overlooked component of being physically fit. The only way to hold onto your flexibility is by stretching regularly. A flexible muscle is less likely to get injured under stress.
- 7. **Drink!** Not the pale ale ... well, at least not until later. Be sure to stay hydrated during and after you've exercised. This helps your body recover from the stresses of your
- 8. Be consistent with your workouts.

This is where the weekend warriors take a hit. Your body will rebel if you try to blast the competition without training for the game. Give yourself enough time to build up some fitness first. A good rule is to increase by no more than 10 percent of your previous week's effort.

- Listen to your body. If you're feeling achy, on the verge of getting sick, or fatigued, heed the message that your body is sending. Sure, you could go out and take a run or lift some weights, but you're feeling funky for a reason. A better choice may be to skip the workout, do something easier, or go get a
- 10. Rest. When you rest, your body recovers from those killer workouts. If you're really training for an event, you actually need some rest days to get better.
- 11. Mix it up. Do more than one kind of workout. This may take the form playing your game in a different way. Switching it up gives your body a rest, uses different muscles, and allows you to recover from those harder workouts. It also keeps things fresh.
- 12. Know the signs of an overuse in**jury.** Pain that lasts hours or days after your workout, swelling, decreased range of motion, a decrease in strength, or favoring a particular muscle or joint may mean you've got an injury waiting in the wings.
- 13. Take care of your body. Get a massage, stretch, get some acupuncture, or take a Yoga or Tai Qi class. Your body will thank you.
- 14. Work with a trainer. An athletic trainer is a beautiful thing. They can help you achieve your goals while ensuring you're using the right equipment, form, and training schedule.
- 15. Lose some weight. If you're overweight, you are putting all kinds of stress on your body from your lower back to the arches in your feet. In addition, poor form or a mechanical imbalance will be magnified by any extra weight you're carrying.
- 16. Get some acupuncture. I know, I know; it's all about acupuncture. The reality is that if you're injured or if you want to take care of yourself so you don't get injured, acupuncture can help. A few sessions on the table can get you balanced, pain-free, and back in the game.

The bottom line is that summer is nearly here and if you're like most people you want to go outside and burn it up. The trick is to do your sport and have fun, but take care of your body at the same time.

Lynn Jaffee is a licensed acupuncturist and the author of "Simple Steps: The Chinese Way to Better Health." This article was originally published on AcupunctureTwinCities.com

Week 23, 2021 THE EPOCH TIMES

LEO BABAUTA

t's human nature to desire comfort and security. Unfortunately, that tendency is what causes most of our problems.

We humans tend to not like uncertainty, discomfort, fear, instability, drastic change, or chaos. That's natural and understandable. But our habit of running toward secure and comfortable choices can lead to some fairly common difficulties.

Procrastination is one common response. This usually means running from the uncertainty, discomfort, and fear of a difficult task to the comfort of distractions.

We may also put off exercising, eating healthy, meditating, decluttering, and other healthful habits because they push us into discomfort. Instead, we seek comfort.

One of the more severe consequences of running from discomfort is addiction. Addiction results from constantly using pleasurable—comfortable—things as a crutch when we're facing discomfort.

We might put off adventures, doing the work we love, and learning new things because they bring uncertainty and fear, and instead opt to stay in our comfort zones.

Sometimes, we even lash out at people when we're angry because of fear—of being criticized, of losing our good self-image. Or we withdraw from them. This hurts our happiness and our relationships.

Avoiding discomfort or uncertainty may also manifest as putting off connecting with other people because we're afraid of opening our hearts to strangers. This leads to loneliness, a craving for connection, and

Financial problems, health problems, work problems, relationship problems, happiness problems—all can stem from this tendency to run from discomfort, uncertainty, and instability to comfort and security.

What if we were able to try a different way? What if we explored the "Way of Openness"?

It could open up a world of change and possibilities for us, helping us to find freedom from our addictions and procrastination, and tame our lashing out and our fears.

The Way of Openness

The opposite of running to comfort and security is ... not running. Instead, it's about the following:

- being open to uncertainty
- · being curious about discomfort

- getting in touch with fears, and staying with the physical feeling of fear
- front of us with openness embracing the unknown—the unstable—as being full of opportunity and

• being present and facing the moment in

- finding curiosity in every moment
- welcoming all feelings with friendliness, rather than running from them
- smiling at fear—at other people's fears with an open heart
- stepping into uncertainty with courage

The Way of Openness is about embracing, welcoming, and being curious about whatever is in front of us, staying in touch with our feelings, and being open to the constantly changing nature of what comes at us.

This way isn't easy, but neither is the life of running from discomfort and uncertainty, as we've seen.

This path takes practice. It takes courage. It takes love.

But the result, I've been finding—and I'm still a beginner—is that we're capable of any kind of change, that we can open our hearts to people in a way we never were able to before. And once we do so, we realize we're free from having to run and find something to keep us busy. So how do we cultivate this Way of

Practices for Being Open

This is a lifelong practice, to be honest. But here are some things you can practice. Pick one each day instead of trying to do them all at once, and constantly come back to practices you've tried before.

Identify Patterns

Recognize when you're procrastinating, seeking distraction, going to addictions, lashing out, withdrawing, or doing any kind of harmful action toward yourself or others. Try to see the fear or discomfort that you're running from. Notice what your go-to distractions or comforts are.

Stay in Touch

problems, health Once you understand your mental patproblems, work terns, notice when they're starting up, and instead of allowing yourself to run to problems—all comfort, stay with the discomfort. Locate can stem from the physical feeling in your body, and stay with it for as long as you can. Get in touch this tendency with the feeling of fear—not the mental story about fear—and keep your attention to run from on it. See if the fear relaxes once you give it discomfort. curiosity and loving attention. Welcome it

as you would a friend.

Be Open to the Present Moment

As you go about your day, check in on the moment in front of you and notice if you're rejecting it for any reason. If you are, see if you can embrace it instead. Be curious about it. Be friendly toward it. See the moment as it's changing, and develop an open

Step Into Uncertainty

Make an immediate

change and pause to

tune into your feel-

ings before you flee

to comfort.

BRETT JORDAN/PEXELS

Financial

Can you challenge yourself to move into uncertainty and discomfort each day? Staying in meditation, learning something new and difficult, facing difficult tasks or projects, putting yourself in a vulnerable place with others—these are all great practices. As you do them, use curiosity, an open heart, and a friendly smile as your tools for staying present with the uncer-

Open Your Heart to Others

For many of us, our habit is to reject things about other people, to lash out or withdraw from them when we reject things about them. Instead, practice not rejecting—and practice curiosity. Embrace the things about them you would normally

reject, and find gratitude for them. Open your heart and be vulnerable, and see what happens. Be open to seeing their rejection, their anger, or their fears. Stay with the feelings of fear or anger that might arise in you, and practice letting them go.

Find Gratitude for Everything

Instead of rejecting things about others and the present moment, find a way to be grateful. This helps us to embrace and be open to everything. And keep at it.

I'd say that's a good start. You could spend a year practicing with these ideas. Once you're good at them, find other areas where you're blocked or holding back, and practice opening up there too.

In the end, this is about whether we want to go through life running from what we find, or discover the courage to be open to everything and finally be free of the running. In the end, we'll likely discover that there was nothing to be afraid of after all. It's a wonderful place to be, this changing, uncertain, uncomfortable, and miraculous world.

Leo Babauta is the author of six books and the writer of Zen Habits, a blog with over 2 million subscribers. Visit ZenHabits.net

Boost Dopamine Naturally for Better Motivation and Focus

If you're not eating the right foods to produce this neurotransmitter, you might not even care-but you should

ANDREA DONSKY

It's time to get the scoop on dopamine, a substance in your brain that is also known as the motivation molecule. Your body is home to about 60 different molecules known as neurotransmitters that transfer information between your brain cells and your body. We're writing about dopamine because, well, we were motivated!

What Are Neurotransmitters?

Dopamine is just one of the many neurotransmitters (aka transmitters) that impact and help regulate every cell, tissue, and organ in the body. Each neurotransmitter is important, and even more significant is maintaining a balance among your brain transmitters. When the neurotransmitters are in balance, you're better able to think clearly, experience joy, and have a sense of well-being.

Certain foods and nutri ents are important for maintaining a healthy dopamine balance.

What Is Dopamine?

This neurotransmitter is associated with the ability to focus, experience pleasure, maintain attention span, follow-through, and feel satisfaction when learning something new, finishing a task, receiving praise, or playing sports.

Although dopamine has a good side, like other things in life, too much of a good thing can be harmful. It's important to If it's not, it can cause significant functional

problems in your brain.

Signs of an unbalanced dopamine system can include apathy, fatigue, forgetfulness, sugar cravings, sleep disturbances, moodiness, less motivation, poor motor control, and an inability to focus. Fortunately, there are healthy ways to help bring dopamine levels back into balance.

Increase Dopamine Levels

pamine levels, you can also do detrimental things and cause dopamine overactivation, which increases the risk for addiction to things such as nicotine, alcohol, sugar, caffeine, and other substances. Therefore, we encourage moderation when enjoying natural nutrients (and foods discussed below) to increase dopamine levels and bring them into balance.

- the body needs to make dopamine is beta-phenlethylamine (PEA), and raw cacao, used in dark chocolate, is a good source. PEA crosses the blood-brain barrier and helps stimulate the release of dopamine. Dark chocolate (not milk chocolate) contains cocoa flavanols, which can help boost blood flow to the brain, boost mood, and improve the ability to think clearly. Chocolate contains salsolinol, which attaches to dopamine receptors and is believed to help enhance mood. This tasty treat also contains tryptophan, which is converted to serotonin (another neurotransmitter) in the brain and helps with mood.
- Magnesium: Approximately half of Americans may be deficient in magnesium, which is essential for brain function, including neurotransmitters. Magnesium also is involved in regulating blood sugar, blood pressure, blood flow, and heart rhythm, as well as promoting sleep, memory, immune function, and healthy aging.
- nave a dopamine system that's in balance. Vitamin D: Maintaining optimal vita-

Natural Nutrients to

Although it can be beneficial to boost do-

- Raw cacao: Among the key ingredients
- Curcumin: Curcumin, which is a bioactive ingredient in turmeric, has powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Results of animal studies indicate that curcumin's impact on mood may be associated with dopamine levels.

function and promoting the actions of

dopamine in particular. Healthy levels

of vitamin D are also necessary for a

positive mood and general well-being.

A simple blood test can reveal your vi-

tamin D level and whether you need a

supplement, which many people do.

• Fish oil: The two main omega-3 fatty acids

found in fish oil—eicosapentaenoic acid

(EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)-

are necessary for the functioning of all

cells. In particular, DHA is critical for the

brain's messaging system to work proper-

ly, which means the actions of dopamine and other neurotransmitters depend on

the brain having enough DHA available.

Along with nutrients, there are some foods

you can add to your diet that will raise do-

pamine levels. These foods are typically

high in the amino acid tyrosine, which is

what dopamine is made from, or they pro

• Almonds: These nuts, as well as many

others, contain high levels of tyrosine.

Use them as snacks, a topping for salads

• Brazil nuts: These nuts are extremely rich

• Cheese: Dairy cheese can be added to so

many foods and enjoyed as a snack on its

own. Anyone who is lactose intolerant

· Cruciferous veggies: Broccoli, cauliflow-

er, kale, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage

contain sulfur compounds that enhance

glutathione levels, which are needed for

startruit, apricots, elderberries, cranber-

in selenium, which is necessary for do-

Foods to Boost Dopamine Levels

mote dopamine in other ways.

and yogurt, or in casseroles.

should skip this suggestion.

optimal release of dopamine.

pamine production.

Signs of Dopamine Imbalance

- min D levels is essential for overall brain

Dopamine is associated with the ability to focus, experience pleasure, and maintain attention span.

- and figs. Seeds: Although sesame seed flour is very high in tyrosine, the seeds that top the list are pumpkin, squash, and watermelon, unless you can get your hands on breadfruit seeds. Further down the list are sesame seeds, sunflower, and black walnuts.
- Oatmeal: A great source of tyrosine you can enjoy every day!
- Green tea: Green tea is helpful in Parkinson's disease, which is characterized by a loss of dopaminergic brain cells. The use of green tea can help boost tyrosine and dopamine levels.

When neurotransmitters are in balance, you're better able to think clearly, experience joy, and have a sense of well-being.

Bottom Line

Healthy levels of dopamine are critical for various reasons: dopamine is necessary for brain health, motivation, our ability to focus, think, make decisions, concentrate, and experience pleasure. It plays a role in sleep, heart rate, pain, kidney function, and movement. Certain foods and nutrients are important for maintaining a healthy dopamine balance.

Andrea Donsky is an author, registered holistic nutritionist, editor-in-chief of NaturallySavvy.com, and co-founder of The Healthy Shopper Inc. and Naturally Savvy Media. • Fruits: The fruits highest in tyrosine are This article was first published on Naturalries, strawberries, kiwi, guava, avocado, Healthy Living Blogs for 2019.

If You Want to Be Happy, Try to Make Someone Else Happy

A new study shows that doing kind things for others is an important path to happiness

Continued from Page 9

Those who had done something to make another person feel better were much happier themselves than the participants in the other groups, and their greater happiness was tied to a stronger feeling of connection to that person.

This finding wasn't too surprising to lead researcher Milla Titova, who said that it fits with prior research on happiness that found that giving to others makes you happier than giving to yourself—and that pursuing happiness directly for yourself sometimes backfires.

"Making others happy is more meaningful for people than just socializing with them or doing something to improve our own happiness," she said. "When we aim to make others happier, we feel connected to them. Our relatedness needs are better met, which is important for us."

In another part of the study, she and her colleague tried to rule out the possibility that making someone else happier makes you happier because of the other person's happiness, as emotions can spread between people, which is known as the contagion effect. To do this, they repeated their experiment but this time asked participants to identify the recipient of their kindness and to say how much happier that person appeared to be. Then they contacted the recipient and measured his or her actual happiness levels.

The researchers found that a recipient's happiness level didn't seem to be related to the increased happiness of the person trying to make them happy, which suggests something beyond emotion contagion had taken place. However, if the participant perceived that their efforts made a differ-



them happier.

other people's feelings."

help out. You'll feel better.

play out between strangers. People parked on a city street were approached by researchers and given two quarters for filling out surveys about their well-being. In some cases, they were simply given the quarters to keep or were given the quarters to feed their parking meter before filling out the surveys. In other cases, they were told to feed another person's parking meter, with some being asked to leave a note on the dashboard of the stranger's car explaining what they had done. Afterward, the researchers compared

the four groups' happiness and how fulfilled they felt. Those who had put money in someone else's meter were significantly

"If we think another person is feeling

pretty good, that's enough for us to feel

pretty good ourselves," Titova said. "We're

just not always accurate about assessing

They also looked at how this effect might

happier than those who had put money in their own meter or just kept the quarters. Leaving a note increased a person's happiness even more. Titova thinks this makes sense, given that

> to them. But it could also be that people like getting credit for a good deed, too—or that the note is actually another act of kindness, augmenting connection further. Whatever the case, it appears that dong something kind for anyone is better

> making someone else happier makes us

happier through increasing our relatedness

for our happiness than getting something for ourselves. "It doesn't require you know the person you're trying to make happy, nor does it

require an actual physical interaction with that person," she said. "It still works—even with a stranger." This is a preliminary study, mostly done with a limited population, and Titova cautioned against applying the finding to other

translate to other cultures. Still, the study does suggest that focusing on making others happy may be a key to happiness worth considering.

cultural contexts. This is wise, as studies

have found that not all happiness practices

"It's counterintuitive for some people, but if you're not having the best day, you should think about doing something nice for your significant other or your roommates instead of concentrating on yourself," she said. "That may not be what comes to mind naturally, but it's probably more effective."

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



Having a rough day? Look

What if happiness comes from aiming to make others happy instead of doing nice things for yourself?

MIND & BODY Week 23, 2021 THE EPOCH TIMES

When Posting Online Becomes Our Lives

Has trying to show your value on social media made your forget what you're worth?

NANCY COLIER

n a visit to the Museum of Modern Art with a friend and her daughter, meandering through the museum's exhibits, I was struck by how often my friend's 13-year-old daughter asked us to take photos of her in front of the artwork.

Her head tilted, she gazed contemplatively at the pieces, the photos of which she would then feverishly post on Instagram, Snapchat, and all the rest. She wasn't the only young (or older) person doing this; it seemed everyone was busy taking photos of themselves "experiencing" the museum.

This is by no means a criticism of my friend's daughter (or anyone else). What was concerning, at least to me, was that in between being photographed and posting, my friend's daughter had no interest in the artwork. This fact didn't seem to matter or have any relationship with posting herself as someone enjoying the experience.

Social media has turned life and its experiences into an exercise in narcissism.

The only time that she looked at the artwork, in fact, was when we were photographing her looking at it. Even then, she was mostly gazing in the direction of the art, with a soft focus that didn't seem to take in the art itself. When I asked her why she wanted to put up photos of herself in the museum when she clearly didn't like being there, she smiled, shrugged her shoulders, and asked me to take another photo.

When I was her age, I had no interest in going to museums either, and when I did get dragged there, I couldn't wait to get out of the building. Having no interest in art is completely normal and not disturbing in the least. But what is disturbing is how much of a young person's energy now goes into creating an image of the life they're living and the character they play in that life.

Mistaken Identity

While creating a self-image has always been a big part of growing up and figuring out our identities, social media seems to have changed the rules of the game. Social media hasn't just intensified the pressure and possibility to create a self-generated self-image, but also distorted the process by which we become who we are.

Young people now seem to be creating an image of who they are instead of becoming who they are—posting their life rather than living it. The effort that goes into creating an identity and getting it noticed or "followed" has replaced the effort of actually getting interested in the life they are posting.

Social media has turned life and its experiences into an exercise in narcissism. No matter what the experience is actually about, it becomes about you, the person who is living it. A concert isn't about the music, a restaurant not about the food, a sporting event not about the sport; it's all about you, the doer, and what the event says about you.

For those who tie their identity closely to their social media feeds, life experiences aren't lived directly so much as they are used as opportunities for announcing what kind of person they are. Life is now a product through which to promote your image, with little connection to whether that image accurately reflects the inside you.

This relationship with social media is one of the most disturbing ways that we are changing in the face of new technology. For too many of us, it seems that our experiences now only have meaning when they say something about us. And it's a double-edged sword: As we feel more separate and disconnected from our lives, meaning feels harder to find.

The more we use life to create an identity, the more cut off from life we feel. Instead of being part of it, in the flow of life, we feel as if we have to keep generating new "life material," which will announce us, establish us, and ultimately, prove our existence. In the meantime, the chasm between us and life grows wider and wider.

are inclined to post your story, pause for a moment and instead experience where you are. Feel what it feels like to live without doing anything with it. Just be, without the narrative. While it may feel like this could

to establish your value, in fact, the benefits it can offer to your true self will far outweigh any loss incurred.

Many of us put significant energy into creating an image of the life we're living in hopes of getting

Nancy Colier is a psychotherapist, interfaith minister, author, public speaker, workshop leader, and author of several books on mindfulness and personal growth. She is available for individual psychotherapy, mindfulness training, spiritual counseling, public speaking, and workshops, and also works with clients via Skype around the world. For more information, visit NancyColier.com



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