

MIND & BODY

ROMAN PURTOV/UNSPLASH

NATURE AS MEDICINE

Rediscovering the Healing Power of the Great Outdoors

We ignore our scientifically proven (and once acknowledged) link with nature at our own peril

CONAN MILNER

It's called vitamin D, but it really isn't a vitamin at all. Today, researchers see it as more of a hormone than a nutrient. A major source of this so-called vitamin is unique: Unlike other vitamins, we get far more vitamin D from sun exposure than from food. This compound is made in your skin, activated by your liver and kidneys, and fueled by the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays.

When scientists first discovered vitamin D, they saw it as a cure for a disfiguring childhood bone disease called rickets. The connection earned vitamin D a reputation for bone health, but researchers have since found many more health benefits linked to the sunshine vitamin, such as improved immune function and metabolism, as well as acting as an anti-inflammatory agent.

The most recent connection to vitamin D's virtues may be as a treatment for COVID-19. Several observational studies conducted over the past year have revealed a striking correlation between vitamin D deficiency and COVID-19 severity. As a result, some doctors who treat COVID-19 patients often include it in their protocol.

To anyone familiar with vitamin D, the news comes as little surprise. Low vitamin D levels have previously been associated with

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Doctors today have become far less likely to prescribe the great outdoors.

On Living and Dying

Advice from a doctor who deals with terminally ill patients

PAMELA PRINCE PYLE

The COVID-19 pandemic may finally be slowing, but it has shone a stark light on one human problem that we'll never escape. One day, books analyzing the pandemic will fill whole rows in libraries, but no analysis can dim the glaring human condition that we must face—the fact that we're all going to die.

A patient dying from ALS said it best, "No one makes it out alive." Many of us have thought more



Being proactive about end-of-life discussions can make the difference between emotional upheaval and peace between loved ones when a health crisis arrives.

about death this past year than ever before. Psychologist Ronnie Janoff-Bulman says, "Once you know that catastrophe dwells next door and can strike anyone at any time, you interpret reality differently." As we reinterpret the reality of today in light of our future death, let us take a hard look at just exactly how we're going to let loose of this earth.

As a doctor who deals with terminally ill patients, I know four things are true:

1. Most of us assume we are going to live to a ripe old age.

However, no one is guaranteed tomorrow. There is no time like the present for making preparations, regardless of age or health status. It can provide a surprising comfort to think through and write out your final wishes. Many online resources

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Obstacles to a Healing Mindset

Understanding these 3 blocks can open a wider path to health

BRANDON LAGRECA

Our mindset is key to how we face any disease. And there are certain elements to mindset that can help with virtually any health challenge. Similarly, there are three very common obstacles to adopting a foundational healing mindset.

Not Knowing Enough

This is the simplest (but not always the easiest) block to rectify when adopting a healing mindset. It entails not having the proper diagnosis with which to align one's efforts. Finding the right course of treatment takes a combination of a patient's insights mirrored by the experience of a trusted health care provider.

Let's take for example someone who wakes up with acute wrist pain. Perhaps it's carpal tunnel syndrome, a median nerve impingement in the wrist. But it could be thoracic outlet syndrome, a nerve and circulatory obstruction in the shoulder girdle. It might also be cubital syndrome, or ulnar nerve entrapment in the elbow. Each of these diagnoses has differentiating signs and symptoms, and they can be present at the same time.

The trick is finding the right medical provider who can ferret out the proper diagnosis or diagnoses. Dr. Google can help, but that also leads to the next obstacle to adopting a healing mindset.

Knowing Too Much

This is a harder nut to crack, personified by someone attached to their diagnosis. It matters little if that diagnosis was issued from a medical doctor or from Dr. Google. If the diagnosis is incorrect (or incomplete), and attachment to it prevents considering other lines of treatment, then knowing too much is a liability.

This can be particularly frustrating for practitioners of traditional medicine, when a patient who has been through the medical wringer has arrived at a "conclusive" diagnosis that, although comforting, fails to address the root cause of disease. Diagnoses such as irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome, and fibromyalgia are helpful labels to describe a group of symptoms that rarely correspond to successful treatment options.

Not Knowing What You Don't Know

This is the trickiest obstacle to a healing mindset; it is the diagnosis that eludes patient and practitioner alike. An example of a poorly understood and seldom acknowledged diagnosis is chronic Lyme. With limited testing for tick-borne illnesses, it's the rare medical provider who can derive the correct antimicrobial course of treatment based upon clinical presentation alone.

Silent infections get their name by being insidious, often presenting with symptoms months or even years after the initial exposure. Environmental toxicants pose a similar burden, not presenting with symptoms loud enough to diagnose acutely, but robbing one of life chronically. I have witnessed patients bear a mysterious and slow degradation in their health over years from undetected radon or mold exposure.

Think Outside the Box

Healing takes time, and it takes the right trajectory. A healing mindset maps the



ANDREA PIACQUADIO/PEXELS

Our minds can empower—or obfuscate—our path to health.

Researching our own illnesses can lead to fear and fixation on a misdiagnosis.



The road to wellness begins with good information and a healing mindset.

course ahead, providing guidance on treatment options and lifestyle changes that will most effectively help you arrive at your destination of optimal health. Awareness of the obstacles clears that path so you don't waste time, energy, and money on medical red herrings.

Now that you understand the foundation of mindset, build upon it with nuanced concepts of healing specific to your needs. Do you need to be empowered to make better dietary choices following a diabetes diagnosis? Perhaps a growth mindset around exercise is the top of the pyramid for moving through chronic muscle pain? Is fear of death preventing you from living your life to the fullest after a cancer diagnosis? Ask yourself these leading questions, but only upon a bedrock understanding of a healing mindset.

Brandon LaGreca, LAc, MACOM, is a licensed acupuncturist in the state of Wisconsin. He's the author of "Cancer and EMF Radiation: How to Protect Yourself From the Silent Carcinogen of Electropollution" and "Cancer, Stress & Mindset: Focusing the Mind to Empower Healing and Resilience." He shares his thoughts at Empowered Patient Blog.

Tips for Balancing Freedom and Safety

Parenting out of fear can undermine making well-reasoned decisions

ANTHONY RAO

Allowing your child more freedom often feels linked to concerns for their safety. Younger kids want to ride their bikes beyond their streets. Preteens want to hang out with friends after school in the town center. Teens want to go to parties. Older teens ask to borrow the car to drive with friends.

A child's job is to become more independent, push limits when appropriate, explore the world, and gain knowledge through direct experiences. Your job is to encourage this process of growth and development, but safely and smartly.

But parents can easily freeze up when they face these parenting situations. They run the latest news headlines through their mind and feel fear. When you allow fear and worry, or even anger, to surface during your parenting, you aren't your best. You're leading your kids with your emotional brain centers—you're parenting via your primitive limbic system.

When emotional, you lose access to the most important parts of your thinking apparatus, your executive functions and decision-making abilities. You want to parent with your frontal cortex.

Here are a few tips.

Don't make parenting decisions while emotional.

Decision-making should always be a logical task. Follow basic steps to slow the process down and follow procedures and rules. Never make important decisions on the fly. Enlist other viewpoints, such as checking in with spouses, trusted relatives, friends, other parents, or maybe even teachers and coaches.

Watch less cable news.

Studies show that watching news events on screens too long, particularly 24/7 cable news, can leave you with more traumatic feelings than people who were actually at those events. You aren't getting the news or staying informed as much as overstimulating your limbic system. You believe the world is far less safe than it actually is.

Stop over-communicating your fears to your children.

Tell them how you think and feel based on what you know rather than proclaiming that some activity is dangerous, like "Kids get killed all the time doing that." When you communicate what you are fearful of more calmly, it helps to keep your child or teen calm as well.

Plan additional freedoms ahead of time.

Devise a simple plan that rewards greater freedom for small steps of compliance. Keep moving your kids further out into the world in graded steps, tied to them showing small gains.

Anthony Rao is a nationally known child psychologist. For more than 20 years, he was a psychologist at Boston's Children's Hospital and an instructor at Harvard Medical School. He is the co-author of "The Power of Agency: The 7 Principles to Conquer Obstacles, Make Effective Decisions & Create a Life on Your Own Terms."

Decision-making should always be a logical task.



Parents wondering the best age to give their children a smartphone may be asking the wrong question.

WHAT'S THE BEST AGE TO GIVE MY TEEN A Smartphone?

Finally, a simple answer that makes perfect sense and is based on the most robust research

MELANIE HEMPE

If you're looking for confirmation that smartphones and social media are good for your kids, this is not one of those posts.

The "best age" question is a trick question. Here's why. We don't stress about the "best age" for things that are inherently good for our kids. Are there hundreds of opinions on the best and safest age to give your kids a book, a Rubik's Cube, or a baseball? What about a vacuum cleaner? Do we have to seek medical guidance from counselors when our teens are spending too much time doing the dishes, playing outside, or cleaning the garage? Is there such a thing as teens becoming depressed because they are spending too much time riding bikes? No, because those activities aren't harmful to your child's brain and emotional development. The "best age for a smartphone" question is flawed. Perhaps a better question would be: Do teens even need smartphones?

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Enjoy These 9 Foods for a Late-Spring Detox

Help your body flush out benzene, arsenic, lead, carbon tetrachloride and more

Even though spring has almost passed, it's still a great time to lighten up and start fresh. This is the season to clean things out, whether that be your home or the sluggishness that comes from eating poorly the previous year. Now is the time to favor seasonal fruits and veggies over meat and starches. Incorporating these nine foods into your diet will help you purge the detritus of the past year in preparation for lighter, brighter days ahead.

Cleanse Your Body and Mind
 Detoxifying the body has been practiced throughout recorded history. Roman baths, sweat lodges, and mineral springs have long attracted people wishing to rid their bodies of toxins, both mental and physical. Cleanses are meant to be engaged whole cloth, by the body and the mind, through stillness and attention.

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Chlorella is a versatile supplement made from freshwater algae.

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A Dozen Ways to Get a Better Night's Sleep

If you're not sleeping well, there are many things you can do to help you slumber

LYNN JAFFEE

You've had a long day and you're exhausted. You finally call it a night and get into bed for a restful eight hours. You try to relax, but all of a sudden your mind is in overdrive. It's rehashing the day and planning for tomorrow, next week, and next year. In short order, any thoughts of restful sleep have flown out the window.

Whether it's falling asleep, waking in the wee hours of the night, or not sleeping deeply—or at all—throughout the night, sleep issues have a huge impact on your life. That's because your body rejuvenates, heals, and resets itself while you're asleep. Not getting enough shut-eye leaves you exhausted, distracted, forgetful, and prone to mistakes and accidents. Poor sleep can also increase your risk for other health problems, such as heart disease, obesity, depression, and ulcers. The bottom line is that you need to get sleep, and you need to get enough of it to maintain your health.

The good news is that, in many cases, you don't need to reach for prescription medications or an over-the-counter sleep aid. Some tweaks to your lifestyle and before-bed rituals may be all you need. If you have a hard time falling asleep or struggle with getting enough hours of good quality sleep, here are some things to try:

1. Make sleep a priority—as important as eating well, exercising, or taking medications. If you're a super-busy person, this may actually translate into putting sleep into your schedule.
2. Do something relaxing, such as reading a book, meditation, stretching, or taking a warm bath before bedtime. These activities help you unwind and over time your body will associate them with sleep.
3. Finish eating two or three hours before you go to sleep. Digesting your food and sleeping don't mix. Also, avoid over-stimulating food late in the day. Coffee, spicy foods, and alcohol all can play a role in sleep disturbances.
4. Keep the room where you sleep cool, as feeling warm can interrupt your sleep.
5. Be sure the room you sleep in is dark. Even a little bit of light is enough to wake you up.
6. Step away from the computer, phone, and TV screens at least an hour before you go to sleep. The light emitted from these screens is as bright as those used in seasonal light therapy lamps, which can keep you awake.
7. Exercise during the day to help you sleep better. Just don't do strenuous

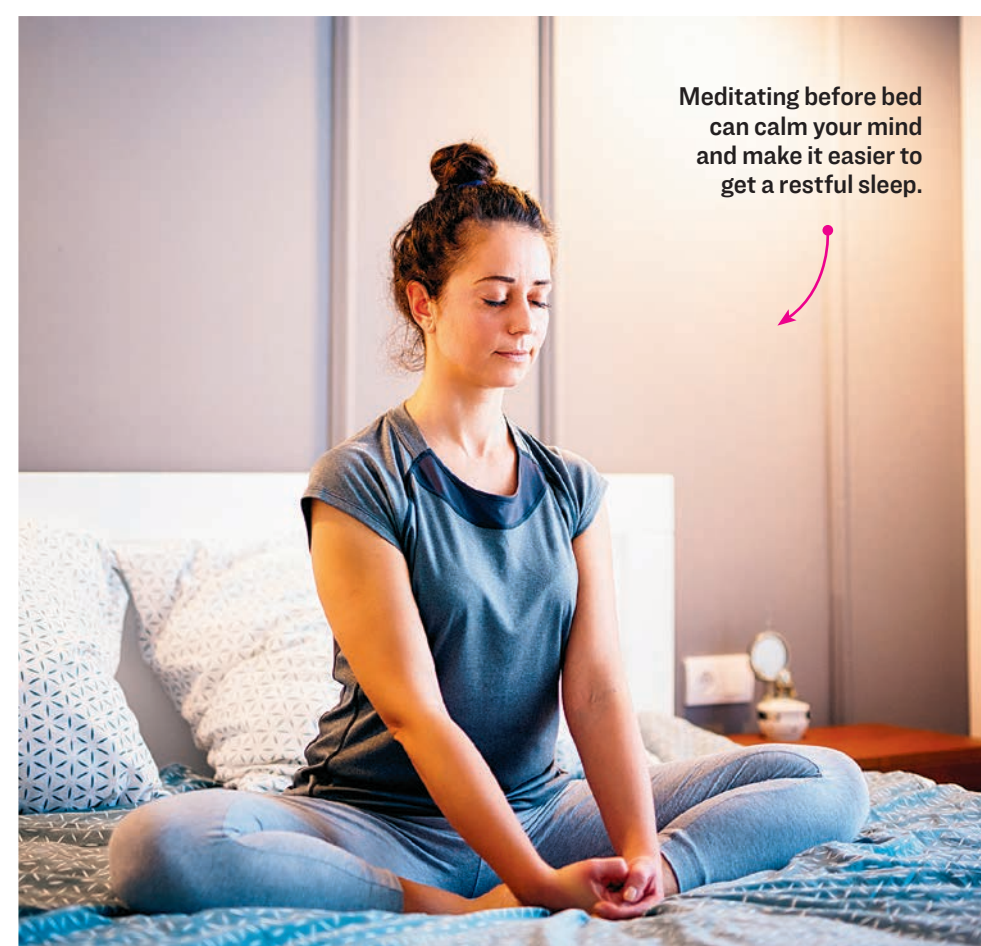
workouts right before bed.

8. Try to get to sleep at around the same time every night. After a couple of weeks, your body will get the message that it's time to sleep and begin to feel tired at that time. Also wake up at roughly the same time every day, including on the weekends. Setting consistent times for sleeping and waking helps your body sleep better at night.
9. Meditate. If you're tossing and turning, try concentrating on your breathing. It's a little hypnotic and may help you fall asleep. If you need help, there are a number of apps for meditation and visualization, and there are some really good ones that are free—check out Insight Timer.
10. Wind down before you actually get into bed. Stop working, watching TV, or any other activities that stimulate your mind. This helps your body move into the mindset of slowing down for sleep.
11. Go to sleep when you're drowsy. Your body releases melatonin, a hormone that makes you sleepy. However, the surge of melatonin only lasts for a short time. If you ignore your sleepiness, it's harder to nod off when you finally do go to bed.
12. Get some help in the form of acupuncture or massage. Acupuncture and Chinese medicine have been used for thousands of years to help people sleep. In China, it's one of the first treatments used for patients to improve the quality of their sleep. Also, scheduling regular massages helps to reduce muscle tension, relieve stress, and promote relaxation.

How much sleep do you need? It actually depends on your age. Interestingly, the older you are, the less you need. While babies and small children need anywhere from 12 to 17 hours, teenagers need 8 to 10 hours, adults under age 64 need 7 to 9 hours, and those over 65 need about 7 or 8 hours per night. If you're regularly sleeping considerably less than is recommended for your age, you're likely not functioning at your best, and your health may be suffering.

The bottom line is that if getting enough sleep feels like a challenge, there are some things you can do. You don't need to lie there night after night looking at the ceiling. By making sleep a health priority and switching things up a bit, you can set the stage for getting a better night's sleep.

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.



Enjoy These 9 Foods for a Late-Spring Detox

Help your body flush out benzene, arsenic, lead, carbon tetrachloride and more

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A proper cleanse includes ceasing productive life for a time, to direct one's focus toward processing and releasing that which no longer serves. Spring is a traditional time for cleansing, which serves as a reboot for the system.

"Spring clean" by ridding closets of worn and unused items and donating excesses to charitable causes. Don't forget to purge your pantry as well, making room for a bounty of fresh garden produce, especially greens, asparagus, and cruciferous vegetables that mark the early harvest.

When it comes to cleansing methods, most people can't afford to take a week off from their routines to detox. So, how can a busy person safely and efficiently remove toxins and reboot their system while living an actual life? The key is to eat more—not less—of these nine detoxifying foods.

1. Broccoli Sprouts

Sprouted broccoli seeds, along with the sprouted seeds of other cruciferous vegetables like Brussels sprouts and cabbage, produce a sulfur-based nutrient called sulforaphane. Studies on sulforaphane have linked it to such effects as reducing inflammation, slowing tumor growth, blocking cancerous DNA mutations, and detoxifying the body by neutralizing toxic free radicals.

One of the most notable effects of sulforaphane is how fast it clears toxins from the body. And while eating whole broccoli has significant health benefits, broccoli sprouts may be even more powerful. At just three days old, the sprouts contain nearly 100 times more sulforaphane per gram than the mature plant.

Another study of broccoli sprouts demonstrated their powerful detoxifying ability by rapidly enhancing the elimination of benzene, acrolein, and crotonaldehyde—three common airborne pollutants.

2. Whey

Whey protein, a byproduct of the cheese-making process, is an amino acid-rich supplement long favored by bodybuilders and the health-conscious. Associated with improving body weight and reducing fat composition, whey can be an effective aid in the treatment of certain metabolic conditions such as high blood pressure, insulin resistance, and lipid metabolism.

In a 2008 study on whey supplementation for weight loss, subjects consuming whey protein drinks twice daily lost significantly more body fat than control subjects consuming a calorically equivalent placebo. While both groups lost weight, the whey protein group lost significantly more fat while preserving more lean muscle than those who took the placebo.

3. Chlorella

Chlorella is a versatile nutritional supplement derived from freshwater algae. Used to support health and wellness, chlorella is a good source of vitamins and minerals, but this supplement's superpower may be its detoxifying properties.

Numerous studies demonstrate chlorella's ability to purify different chemical contaminants. In a study published in the journal Experimental and Toxicologic Pathology, researchers explored chlorella's detoxifying effects on carbon tetrachloride, a chemical known to cause acute liver failure at high exposures. Dosing with chlorella extract produced a protective action through antioxidant effects, markedly reversing disease phenotypes in test mice.

Another study was performed to estimate the effects of chlorella on certain carcinogenic chemicals commonly found in the Western diet. Dosing human female subjects with chlorella resulted in significantly lower amounts of heterocyclic amines (HCAs) in the urine

Children receiving pectin experienced a reduction in body burden of Cesium-137, a deadly radioactive isotope.



Broccoli sprouts demonstrate a powerful ability to eliminate benzene, acrolein, and crotonaldehyde.



Ginger's detoxifying properties may be due to the compound zerumbone, which has exhibited chemoprotective properties.



Garlic has demonstrated its effectiveness at reducing lead concentrations in the blood and tissue.



than control subjects. HCAs are a class of carcinogenic chemicals formed by cooking muscle meats at high temperatures. Chlorella is only available in supplement form and can be added to a fruit smoothie to aid palatability. Green algae are a rich source of iodine that may also help remove fluoride from the body.

4. Apple Pectin

Apples aren't only delicious and convenient—nature's fast food—they're a rich source of pectin, a beneficial plant fiber associated with gut health. Pectin causes homemade jams and jellies to thicken and gel, and more importantly, it chemically binds to toxins in your body, allowing your gastrointestinal (GI) tract to flush them out.

In 1990, research was published on children of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor disaster in Russia. Considered at high risk for contamination, these children were closely monitored for long-term development of radiation poisoning. As part of a strategic intervention, apple pectin was administered to test subjects for a two-week period under supervision.

Compared to placebo subjects, children receiving pectin experienced a reduction in body burden of Cesium-137, a deadly radioactive isotope. Consuming whole organic apples is a great way to get more pectin in your diet, but it's also available as a supplement. In powder form, apple pectin makes a pleasant addition to smoothies, but you should consume it immediately after mixing, lest it thickens too much.

5. Coffee

If you're not already a coffee drinker, you may want to reconsider during a detox. Coffee is a superfood that provides sharper focus and can rid your body of xenobiotics, substances that are foreign to your body.

A study published in the journal Cancer Research found that green coffee beans fed to mice produced glutathione (GSH) S-transferase, a major detoxification enzyme. Consumption of green coffee beans promoted GSH S-transferase activity in the small intestine and liver of mice, lending support to research that has uncovered coffee's anti-tumorigenic effect on the liver.

6. Garlic

Garlic is another plant-based detoxifier that is probably already in your kitchen. Garlic contains the organosulfur compound allicin, which boosts the number of detoxifying enzymes that are present in your body. A 2010 study identified that these compounds, found in high concentrations in onions and garlic, may induce phase II detoxifying enzymes that bind to reactive metabolites in the bloodstream, thus facilitating their elimination.

Other studies on garlic have demonstrated its effectiveness at reducing lead concentrations in the blood and tissue, including a 2012 study published in Basic Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology that determined garlic may be clinically safer and just as effective as d-penicillamine at removing lead from the body.

7. Turmeric

Curcumin, one of the active polyphenols in the spice turmeric, is a super-supplement with an array of health-promoting properties, including its ability to detoxify your body through antioxidation.

Curcumin's detoxification and antioxidant effects were observed in an animal study on rats exposed to mercury. Oral curcumin treatment, at a dose of 80 milligrams per kilogram of body weight daily for three days, was found to have a protective effect on mercury-induced oxidative stress parameters, namely lipid peroxidation and catalase activities in the liver, kidney, and brain. Catalase is an important enzyme that protects cells from oxidative damage by free radicals.

Curcumin treatment was also effective for reversing mercury-induced serum biochemical changes, which are the markers of liver and kidney injury. Mercury concentration in the tissues was also decreased by the pre- and post-exposure treatment with curcumin.

8. Ginger

If you plan to incorporate smoothies into your spring detox, consider adding ginger and turmeric for additional detoxifying effects. A 2016 study found that turmeric and ginger were effective at eliminating arsenic, a highly toxic metal, from the body.

Results showed that the combination was not only useful in increasing the amount of arsenic eliminated via feces and urine, but it also provided a protective effect against damage caused by arsenic exposure.

Ginger's detoxifying properties may be due, in part, to the compound zerumbone, which has exhibited chemoprotective properties that may help protect the body against certain cancers.

9. Green Tea

A cool glass of fresh green tea may sound purely indulgent as temperatures climb, but did you know that you may also be providing a boost to your detox efforts? Consumption of green tea has been clinically shown to reduce the adverse effects of lead and may even help to increase fertility.

An experimental study of 70 rats exposed to lead showed that rats given green tea extract retained more body-weight than other test subjects and showed reduced effects of lead poisoning. Male rats in the green tea group also had the highest sperm counts and lowest rate of sperm abnormalities, helping to reduce lead's damaging effects on fertility.

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Can This Natural Sweetener Lower Blood Sugar?

No-calorie sweeteners come with consequences, but this one may be different

JOSEPH MERCOLA

Many people have a sweet tooth. For some, it can become an addiction, fueled by a food industry that continually creates an abundance of highly palatable, inexpensive, ultra-processed foods. As some companies cash in on a market for lab-created, low-calorie sweeteners, one natural sweetener may help curb your sweet tooth without raising your blood sugar.

In fact, it may have the opposite effect. While manufacturers seek out “perfectly engineered food,” the incidence of obesity and obesity-related health conditions has skyrocketed. Type 2 diabetes is one of the obesity-related conditions that has a significant impact on many of your bodily systems.

People with diabetes have a higher risk of also having heart disease, stroke, glaucoma, kidney disease, and high blood pressure. It follows that if you could lower diabetes and obesity rates, you could reduce rates of these other conditions. That could save many people’s lives, given that heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and kidney disease are all in the top eight causes of death in the United States.

The obesity epidemic is one of the most important global public health challenges. Obesity was linked to 4.7 million premature deaths worldwide in 2017, and according to the National Diabetes Statistics Report, 34.2 million people, or 10.5 percent of the U.S. population, have diabetes. By using this sweetener, you may reduce your risk of insulin resistance, a primary symptom of diabetes.

Not All Sugar Is Created Equally
Sugar is a carbohydrate found in fruits and vegetables and added to food products. Added sugars are usually sucrose (table sugar) and high-fructose corn syrup. Evidence shows that no matter what type of sugar you’re consuming, it has a significant effect on your metabolism, even in the healthiest people. But while the sugars occurring in fruit come with nutrients we need and fiber that dulls blood sugar spikes, added sugars in processed



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Allulose is one of the few low-calories sweeteners without serious side effects, unless you overeat it.

High-fructose corn syrup can contribute to impaired glucose tolerance, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. It can disrupt your sense of hunger and satiety.

or high-fructose corn syrup on nutrition labels. Before this, anytime it was added to a processed food, it was simply listed as an added sugar.

Therefore, there was little incentive to include allulose in products. Since allulose has 95 percent fewer calories than sucrose, the FDA allowed manufacturers to exclude it from the total and added sugar counts on nutrition labels.

In one animal study, researchers found that allulose contributes a fraction of 1 percent of the energy (calories) of sucrose. The researchers called the energy value “effectively zero” and suggested that this “rare sugar providing zero energy ... may be useful in sweeteners for obese people as an aid for weight reduction.”

In addition to contributing little to no calories, allulose elicits a physiological response in the body that may lower your blood glucose and reduce abdominal fat and fat accumulation around the liver. This may reduce the rising number of people who have nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). Allulose can also decrease insulin resistance and reduce the potential risk for Type 2 diabetes.

Natural Compound May Reduce Glucose With Few Side Effects

In an analysis of 40 human trials, allulose demonstrated the ability to significantly reduce after-meal insulin response, which the researchers believe leads “to modest improvements on postprandial glucose and insulin regulation.”

Another study engaged 30 people who didn’t have diabetes. They were given a loading dose of sucrose and then randomized to receive 2.5, 5, 7.5, or 10 grams of allulose. Plasma glucose and insulin levels were measured at 30, 60, 90, and 120 minutes after ingestion. The researchers found that in a dose-dependent manner, allulose reduced plasma glucose and insulin levels.

In other words, allulose not only contributes very little to caloric intake or blood glucose, but also may help to improve insulin regulation. While there aren’t yet allulose-specific human studies regarding safety, animal studies have not found toxicity even at high doses.

In one nonrandomized controlled trial using 30 healthy individuals within a normal body mass index range, researchers discovered that individuals experienced gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms when the dose reached 0.4 grams per kilogram of body weight (g/kg*BW). Gastrointestinal tolerance testing didn’t indicate severe diarrhea or other symptoms until the dose read 0.5 g/kg*BW.

This means a person who weighs 160 pounds could eat 29 grams of allulose in one serving, which is equivalent to 7.25 teaspoons of sugar, without experiencing GI symptoms. For reference, a can of coke has about 9.75 teaspoons of sugar.

While there is no immediate toxic effect on the body, evidence suggests that consistent use may affect the weight of your kidneys and liver, the two organs through which the natural sweetener passes. In a study published in 2019, researchers noted that using allulose can prevent obesity, but continuous consumption may increase the weight of the liver and kidneys “without apparent pathological and functional abnormalities.”

The study investigated the potential that these parameters could change after the participant no longer consumed allulose. Using an animal model, the researchers fed allulose for four weeks and then a controlled diet without allulose for another 10 weeks. At the end of four weeks, the weights of the liver and kidney were higher, but the difference disappeared after the animals were no longer fed allulose.

High-Fructose Corn Syrup Is Worse Than White Sugar

High-fructose corn syrup (HFCS), aka corn sugar, is another common form of sugar found in processed foods. While it’s often

cited interchangeably with fructose, HFCS and fructose are not the same. Fructose is a simple sweetener found naturally in many fruits and vegetables. HFCS, on the other hand, is artificially produced from corn, through a process that involves first turning it into corn starch and then back into a mixture of fructose and glucose.

But whether it’s simple fructose or HFCS, there is evidence to show this type of sugar causes greater damage than simple glucose or table sugar. This is because fructose doesn’t act like glucose in your body.

In one study, a group of postmenopausal overweight or obese women consumed fructose beverages with their meals for 10 weeks. The data showed that this practice increased fasting glucose and reduced insulin response. The researchers concluded that the “present results suggest that long-term consumption of diets high in fructose could lead to an increased risk of CVD [cardiovascular disease].”

Unfortunately, because HFCS is cheaper and 20 percent sweeter than regular table sugar, it’s used by many food and beverage manufacturers. Numerous studies have shown, however, that not only can it contribute to impaired glucose tolerance, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes, but also HFCS can disrupt your sense of hunger and satiety.

Regarding diabetes, in one global analysis of 43 countries, researchers found that in areas where HFCS was highly available, the prevalence of diabetes was 20 percent higher. The results suggested that increased consumption of HFCS increased the risk of Type 2 diabetes, which was independent of obesity.

In another study, men and women were given a 24-ounce beverage sweetened with either HFCS or sucrose. Blood and urine samples were collected over six hours, and a variety of metabolic biomarkers were measured. The researchers found that HFCS led to significantly different acute metabolic effects compared to sucrose.

Initially, experts thought fructose would be a better choice because it has a low glycemic index. However, only the liver can metabolize fructose. And, as mentioned, consuming fructose also increases your appetite, which ultimately contributes to obesity, diabetes, and NAFLD.



Studies have found artificial sweeteners can have serious side effects, including destroying healthy bacteria that your body depends on.



The obesity epidemic is one of the most important global public health challenges.



Sugar can also affect your brain, mood and behavior.

The Toxic Effects of Artificial Sweeteners

Many sweeteners have side effects, and those from artificial sweeteners are more toxic than others. Research in 2008 revealed that sucralose, also known as Splenda, reduces your gut bacteria by 50 percent and increases the pH level in your intestines. A study from 2018 found that sucralose is metabolized and accumulates in fat cells.

Research published in 2016 from the Ramazzini Institute linked Splenda to leukemia. Not long after this study was published in a peer-reviewed journal, the company hired a public relations firm to dull the impact of those findings. By 2017, the market for Splenda reached \$697.4 million worldwide and was projected to increase 3 percent through 2025. Most of it was sold in North America and Asia-Pacific.

It was originally hoped that artificial sweeteners would help curb cravings for sweets in people who have diabetes. Yet in one small study using healthy participants, researchers found that it took only two weeks for the noncaloric artificial sweeteners to trigger adverse effects on blood sugar levels.

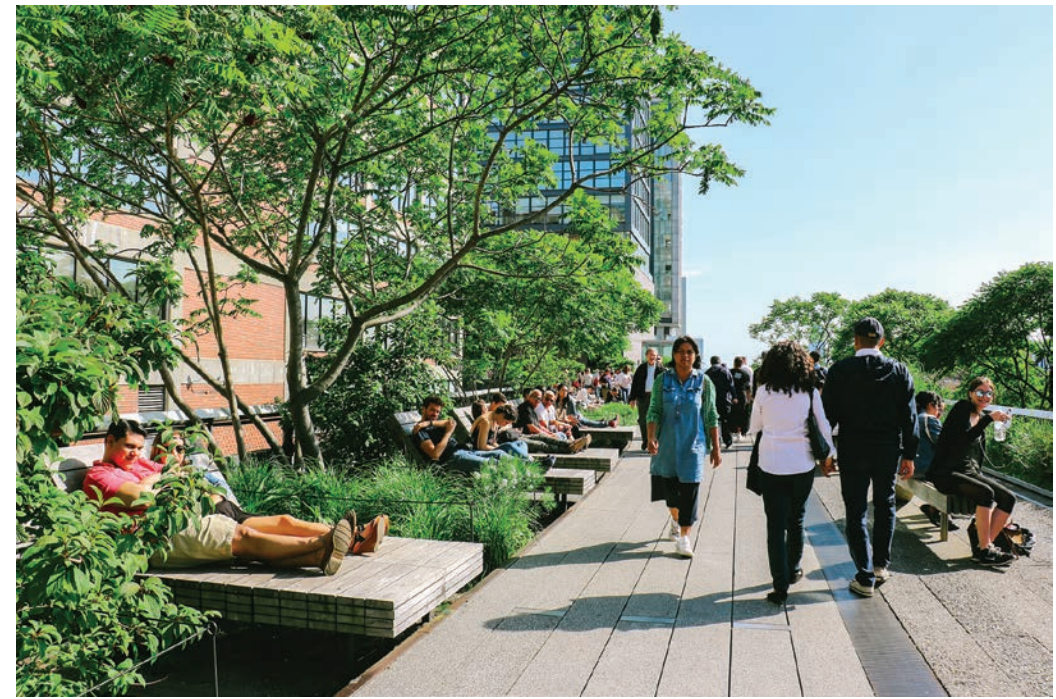
A 2017 study concluded that these sweeteners actually exaggerated post-meal glucose absorption in users, “which could predispose them to developing Type 2 diabetes.”

Artificial sweeteners may also increase your risk of weight gain, obesity, metabolic syndrome, and other related problems such as Type 2 diabetes by inducing “metabolic derangements,” according to a report published in the journal Trends in Endocrinology and Metabolism.

Further research found that the artificial sweetener aspartame (NutraSweet) is associated with greater glucose intolerance in people with obesity. These are only some of the side effects of artificial sweeteners, which increase your risk of challenging health conditions and are not a safe alternative to table sugar.

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

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



New research gives city planners more incentive and insight into how to incorporate green spaces into urban design.

Nature Can Boost Health of People in Cities

New research draws attention to cognitive, emotional, and spiritual benefits of urban nature

SARAH CAFASSO

Your local city park may improve your health, according to a new study.

The research shows how access to nature in cities increases physical activity and, therefore, overall health.

Lack of physical activity in the United States results in \$117 billion per year in related health care costs and leads to 3.2 million deaths globally every year. It may seem like an intuitive connection, but the new research closes an important gap in understanding how building nature into cities can support overall human wellbeing.

“Over the past year of shelter-in-place restrictions, we’ve learned how valuable and fulfilling it can be to spend time outdoors in nature, especially for city-dwellers,” said lead author Roy Remme, a postdoctoral researcher at the Stanford University’s Natural Capital Project.

“We want to help city planners understand where green spaces might best support people’s health, so everyone can receive nature’s benefits.”

In cities, nature provides cooling shade to neighborhood streets, safe harbor for pollinators, and rainwater absorption to reduce flooding. It’s widely understood that physical activity improves human health, but how parks, lakes, trees, and other urban green spaces boost physical activity and overall wellbeing is an unsolved piece of the puzzle.

Nature Has Many Health Benefits

For the study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers combined decades of public health research with information on nature’s benefits to people in cities.

They considered how activities like dog walking, jogging, cycling, and community gardening are supported by cities’ natural spaces. They also factored in things like distance to urban greenery, feelings of safety, and accessibility to understand how those elements can alter the benefits of nature for different people. From tree-lined sidewalks to city parks and waterfronts, the team created a model framework to map out urban nature’s physical health benefits.

The researchers’ framework explores how people might choose to walk an extra few blocks to enjoy a blooming garden or bike to work along a river path, reaping the health benefits of physical activity they may have missed if not motivated by natural spaces.

In Amsterdam, city planners are currently implementing a new green infrastructure plan. Using the city as a hypothetical case study, the researchers applied their framework to understand how Amsterdam’s plans to build or improve new parks might affect physical activity for everyone in the city. The researchers also looked at the effects on different sub-populations, like youth, the elderly, and low-income groups. This example illustrates how the city could invest in urban nature to have the greatest physical activity benefits for human health.

The research will ultimately serve as the basis for a new health model in Natural Capital Project software—free, open-source tools that map the many benefits nature provides people.

The software was recently used to inform an assessment of 775 European cities to understand the potential of nature-based solutions for addressing climate change.

Eventually, the new health model software will be available to city planners, investors, and anyone else interested in new arguments and tools for targeting investments in nature in cities.

Nature’s contributions are multidimensional—they can support cognitive, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing, as well as physical health. Previous work from the Natural Capital Project has shown many of these connections, but the new research adds an important link to physical health that had been missing from the equation.

“Nature experience boosts memory, attention, and creativity as well as happiness, social engagement, and a sense of meaning in life,” senior author Gretchen Daily, faculty director of the Stanford Natural Capital Project, said.

“It might not surprise us that nature stimulates physical activity, but the associated health benefits—from reducing cancer risks to promoting metabolic and other functioning—are really quite astonishing.”

In cities, nature provides cooling shade to neighborhood streets, safe harbor for pollinators, and rainwater absorption to reduce flooding.

Where Urban Nature Is Missing

As our world becomes more urbanized and city-centric, the ability to easily access outdoor natural spaces becomes increasingly challenging, especially for overburdened communities.

Identifying where urban nature is missing in such communities—then working to fill those gaps—could provide people with valuable new opportunities to improve their health. Researchers hope the new study will equip urban planners with a more complete understanding of the benefits nature can provide their communities.

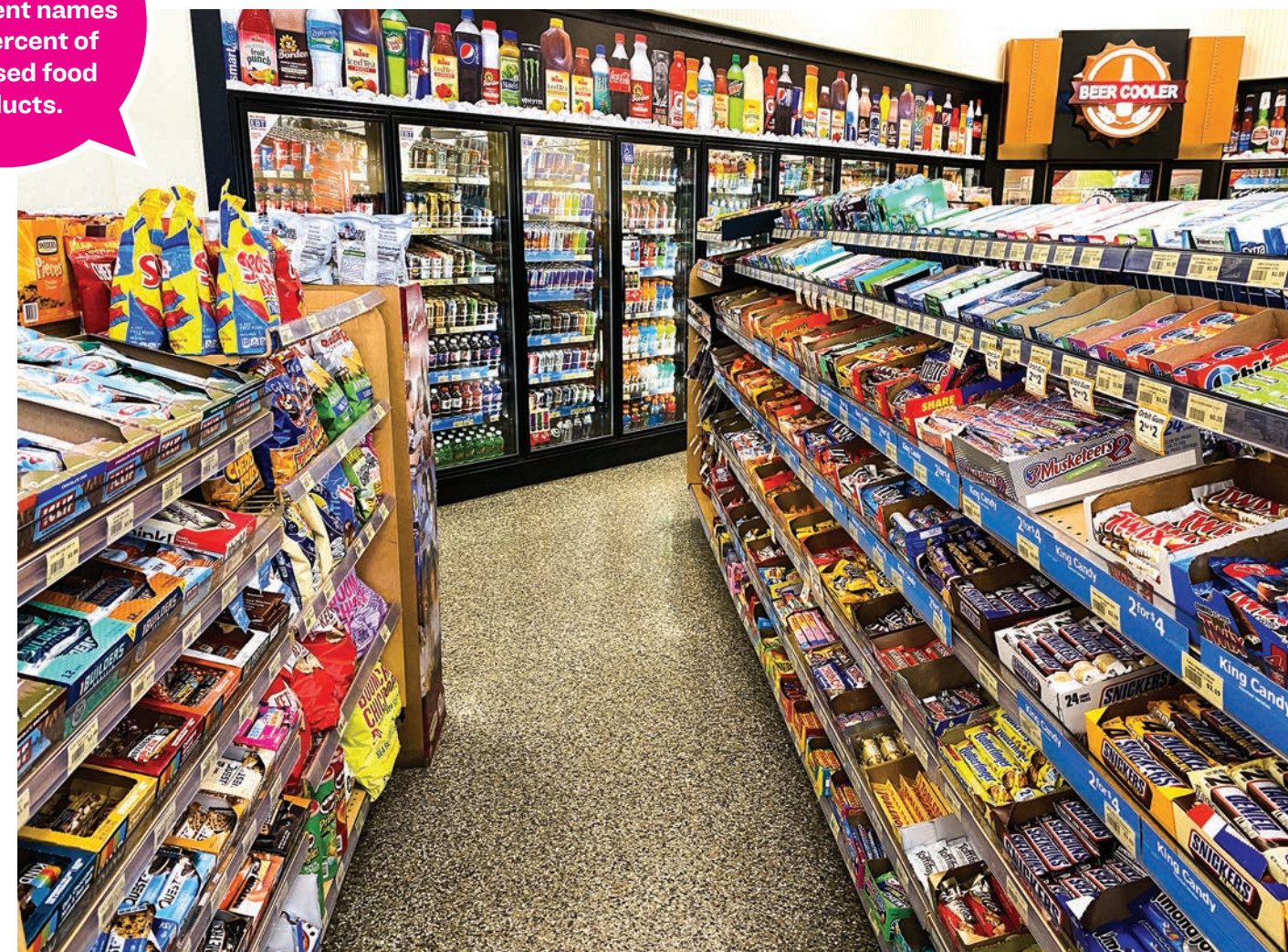
“Our ultimate goal is to create more healthy, equitable, and sustainable cities,” said co-author Anne Guerry, chief strategy officer at the Natural Capital Project. “This research is actionable—and gets us one big step closer.”

Additional co-authors are from Stanford; Leiden University; the University of Washington; RMIT University; Nanyang Technological University; the Chinese Academy of Sciences; Harvard Medical School; the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute; and the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health; the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and Stockholm Resilience Centre; the City University of Hong Kong; Maastricht University; Australian Catholic University; the University of Southern Denmark; Wageningen University; and the University of Exeter.

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Sugar hides under as many as 61 different names in 74 percent of processed food products.



Advice for the High School Graduate

Here are 18 pieces of 3-word advice for young people about to face the world

4 PM PRODUCTION/SHUTTERSTOCK

Continued from Page 15

10. Make New Friends.

I know this may be hard to hear just days after finishing high school, but most likely, you still haven't met the greatest friends you'll have in life. Appreciate your relationships from high school, but don't let them get in the way of the new friends you're about to meet.

11. Own Less Stuff.

Excess possessions steal our time, money, and energy. They add stress and burden, and keep us from accomplishing greater dreams. Don't believe the messages of a consumeristic society that you need a lot of possessions to be happy. Be different. Own less and live more.

12. Pursue Your Dreams.

Your whole life is in front of you. If you have a dream career or passion, pursue it. Nobody is going to hand it to you. It's going to take hard work and dedication to achieve it. But victory usually belongs to those who work the hardest to achieve it. So go be the person you want to be.

13. Push Yourself Harder.

A good coach will always get more out of you than you thought you had. He or she will always reveal that you had more inside of you than you ever thought. That remains true of your potential every day. You have more potential inside you than you realize. Push yourself to be the best you that you can be.

14. Think of Others.

Don't live life looking out only for your own interests. Look out also for the interests of others.

15. Try New Things.

Try new hobbies. Try new foods. Learn a new skill. Experience new cultures. I didn't become a writer until the age of 34. You never know for sure the things in which you're going to excel. So keep trying new things.



Graduation marks a transition to new experiences and responsibilities. Face them with kindness, courage, and integrity.

Don't live life looking out only for your own interests. Think of others also.

16. You'll Mature More.

The best piece of advice concerning college I ever received was from a friend named Barbie. She was a few years older than me, and shortly after my high school graduation, she said to me, "You'll mature more these next few years than you think." I remember being offended at the time, thinking I was already pretty mature. But she was entirely right. I matured and grew up as much during those four years of college as maybe the previous 12 years combined. You're going to mature and grow more in the next few years than you realize. Look forward to it.

17. Value Physical Health.

Your physical body is the instrument through which you will make your difference and mark in the world. Be disciplined in caring for it. Eat well, exercise, and rest sufficiently. Your future accom-

plishments will thank you for it.

18. Wash Your Bowl.

There's a famous Zen story that goes like this:

A monk told Joshu, "I have just entered the monastery. Please teach me." Joshu asked, "Have you eaten your rice porridge?" The monk replied, "I have eaten." Joshu said, "Then you had better wash your bowl." At that moment, the monk was enlightened.

Learn what it means to wash your bowl.

Joshua Becker is an author, public speaker, and the founder and editor of [Becoming Minimalist](http://BecomingMinimalist.com), where he inspires others to live more by owning less. Visit BecomingMinimalist.com

Virtue of the Brush in a Time of Chaos

"When things are chaotic to the extreme,
order must be restored."
- "The four books" by Zhu Xi

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