

MIND & BODY

JOZEF POLC/500PX/GETTY IMAGES

COVID-19

Who's Really Being Hospitalized?

Breakthrough cases reach majority levels in some jurisdictions but numbers elude CDC

JENNIFER MARGULIS

"I'm not going to arm wrestle with the administration about where to put you," Dr. C., a highly skilled gastroenterologist, said gently to my friend who was in bed in a triage room in the ER. "We just want to get you into a bed so we can figure out what's wrong and get you treated."

We were at our small town's hospital. No one was sure why, but my friend had not been able to keep anything more than a handful of raspberries down since a complicated surgery for a chronic health condition three weeks before. Dehydrated and unable to eat, my friend had been violently vomiting after taking just a sip of water or sucking on an ice chip, and had lost nearly twenty-five pounds.

I was by my husband's side when he had a gallbladder attack so severe that it left his hands shaking. I've had three unmedicated childbirths and attended many more, both as a journalist and a patient advocate. Still, I've never seen a human in so much pain.

Continued on Page 4

Mainstream media is reporting that severe COVID cases are mainly among unvaccinated people, but who is counted as having COVID, and who is counted as being unvaccinated muddy the waters.



Overcoming Cancer With Hope and Natural Medicine

We've come to believe the routes to healing cancer are paved in pain and chemo—but that isn't always true

CONAN MILNER

Death by cancer is one of those ominous threats that hovers over many people. Cancer has been a leading cause of death for decades. But surviving the disease can be brutal as well.

If caught early enough, the ab-



You've got to make changes in your life.

James Templeton

normal cell growth that characterizes cancer can be isolated and removed. But the disease often spreads silently throughout the body, and once an advanced case is finally found, it may be very hard to treat.

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HIKOPHOTOGRAPHY/SHUTTERSTOCK



Our body has a powerful ability to heal itself when we stop poisoning it and provide critical nutrition.

THE EPOCH TIMES

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The lungs are called “tender organs” in traditional Chinese medicine because they are fragile and dislike when the weather is either too hot or too cold.

CHINESE WISDOM FOR SEASONAL LIVING

Strengthening Our Respiratory System Can Also Improve Our Skin

Solar Term: ‘White Dew’ (Sept. 7–22)

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: White Dew

2021 Date: Sept. 7–22

“White Dew” is the 15th solar term and typically holds the single largest daily temperature changes. It begins when the sun reaches the celestial longitude of 165 degrees and ends when it reaches the longitude of 180 degrees. Although it is already the 3rd solar term in the autumn, the heat within earth still remains strong while Yin energy is taking over. The result is a dramatic drop in temperature between day and night.

During this solar term, birds begin to adapt for the season. Wild geese and swallows begin to migrate southward while other birds stock their hoards in preparation for winter.

For the crops that can be grown in both spring and autumn, like rice, it's their time to yield. If it rains, the crops may be damaged and unable to ripen or be properly harvested. The name of this solar term describes air vapors that have condensed into white dew overnight. It's the ideal amount of water for crops during this solar term.

According to traditional Chinese medicine, our lungs and skin correspond to each other, as the lungs and our pores both release air and moisture. Because of this, they're both sensitive to the temperature changes that mark this solar term. And the results are similar, we tend to have irritated skin or respiratory systems due to the frequent and significant changes in temperatures during White Dew.

The lungs are called “tender organs” in traditional Chinese medicine because they are fragile and dislike when the weather is either too hot or too cold. The lungs are closely linked with our immune system, thus taking good care of them and the respiratory system is particularly important in the pandemic season.

Living in Harmony With White Dew

- Protect your neck, nose, and mouth by covering them up in the early morning.
- Press firmly into the acupressure point “Qu-Chi” (Pool at the Bend, number LI11). It is at the end of the joint line when we bend our elbows to our upper arms. It also helps those with skin problems, such as dry or sensitive skin, pigmentation, acne, and so on.

- Press firmly into the acupressure point “Tan-Zhong,” which is in the center of the chest, between the nipples. It can help with congested lungs, coughing, or shortness of breath. You can also use a hair blow dryer to warm the point.
- Consider getting moxibustion treatments, as the heat can repel the chill hidden in our bodies and be prepared for an energetic start in the coming spring.
- Deep cleanse by inhaling warm steam, with or without essential oils, which helps to loosen up and dilute congestion inside our respiratory system and can help rinse our cells and tissues.
- Burn essential oils near the front door of the house to purify the air we bring in from outdoors. This can also help to calm and balance our senses each time we go in or out.

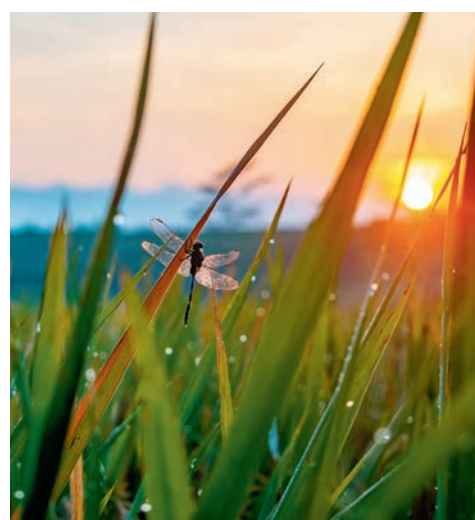
Seasonal Foods and Scents

Foods to Eat: Chicken, walnut, yogurt, onion, ginkgo berry, potato, pear, tofu, mushroom, coconut, and eggs. Avoid deep-fried foods, pickles, shellfish, and chiles.

Essential Oils to Use: Chamomile, niaouli, eucalyptus, cypress, pine, jasmine, frankincense, peppermint, neroli, and rosalina.



Deep cleanse by inhaling warm steam, with or without essential oils, which helps to loosen up and dilute congestion inside our respiratory system.



The air vapors that condense into white dew overnight give this solar term its name. According to traditional Chinese thought, it's the ideal amount of water for crops during this time.

MEDICALLY CORRECT

Meditate Twice and Call Me in the Morning

It's easy to prescribe drugs, but as time goes by, I prefer to avoid it

PETER WEISS

There was a scene in a movie from about 30 years ago, in which a woman is having what appears to be a panic attack in a department store. She starts to sweat and become jittery as she lies down on the floor. Her concerned partner leans over her as a crowd gathers around.

The partner looks about and anxiously asks, “Does anyone have a Valium?” About 10 people reach into their purse or wallet and each hands the man a pill.

Around 9.7 million Americans take anti-anxiety medications, according to the health research firm IQVIA. Some 29.7 million Americans take antidepressant prescriptions such as Lexapro and Prozac.

There was a 34 percent increase in anti-anxiety medication prescriptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Express Scripts, an online pharmacy and pharmacy benefit manager. Compare that to a 14.8 percent increase for insomnia aids and an 18.6 percent increase for antidepressants.

B.R. is a 42-year-old mother of two teenagers, married, and in what seems to be a strong relationship. She was referred to me because she was suffering from decreased libido. She loves her husband, finds him attractive, but she still has no desire. Her exam was normal, except for the fact she was taking an antidepressant. She's been on it for almost 10 years. Mind you, she isn't depressed. She was told to stay on them because she was under a lot of stress. COVID-19 just made things worse.

I gently confronted her with this and suggested she find a better mechanism for coping with her stress and wean herself off. She became quite defensive and was afraid to stop. She wanted her “testosterone” levels checked first. She read on the internet that low testosterone levels are the cause of low libido.

I admit, one of the problems with all of these antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications being written is that it's easy to do just that. We physicians tend to have a low threshold to prescribe them. It's just so easy to prescribe, and we don't need to play therapist. Over the years, I have become much more resistant and try other measures first. I am a firm believer in the power of one's mind and its ability to treat and heal oneself for stress-related issues. There is definitely a place for medication and



One of the problems with antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications is they are just so easy to prescribe.

Some studies have shown that meditation can reduce anxiety levels by as much as 60 percent.

a need to help alleviate anyone suffering, but it's my job to help find the best solution, not necessarily the quickest and easiest.

Depression is different from anxiety. There are all sorts of depression, all of which need to be evaluated by someone who knows what they are doing. Situational depression, such as getting fired, going through a divorce, or worse, is a short-term problem that needs attention. Endogenous depression needs even more work and involves long-term treatment. Many of these issues do require short-term medication in conjunction with therapy.

Anxiety issues can be multifaceted and every patient wants a quick fix. Taking Xanax because you are in a stressful job won't treat or help alleviate the situation. You're still in that stressful job. COVID is an obvious major stress factor. Confusing guidelines with no end in sight compounds the situation. For situational stress, I have written on a prescription pad “meditate twice a day and call me in the morning.”

Now, my meditation isn't what you're thinking, it's a simple way to take a deep breath, and find a “tool” to help you control the situation. Sometimes just leaving the room, and walking outside for five minutes can do the trick. Getting up and getting a glass of water, or just breaking the mental cycle you find yourself in can be helpful. Exercise or yoga also can be very effective.

B.R.'s blood tests all came back normal. Her hormone levels were perfect. She still didn't want to taper off her antidepressants. However, she agreed to see a psychiatrist I work with. She finally was able to taper off her meds and, funny thing, her sex life came back. Antidepressants can lower one's libido; she didn't believe me at first. She is still under stress, but found a way to take control. Now, not every case has such a simple solution. It just shows how dependent we can become on medication to treat everything.

Most antidepressants and anti-anxiety

medications were originally for short-term use of about six to 12 months. Some people do need long-term therapy, but that isn't for most of us. The overprescribing of all these psychotropic medications is harmful. The discontinuation syndrome of quitting can be very powerful and is the reason for so many failed attempts to get off these addictive drugs.

Meditation in one form or another can be extremely beneficial for one's health. Very little was taught about it in medical school. Meditation doesn't have to be in a formal setting; find a form that works for you. You're never too old to start. About 14 percent of Americans say that they have meditated in one form or another. In 2019, some 52 million Americans downloaded a meditation app.

I have always used my own personal method of meditation to get me out of an uncomfortable stressful situation. I hate tight spaces, but have had several MRIs for chronic migraines. I find what I call my “Zen mode” before entering the MRI. I still hate the close space, but I'm able to get through the process with very little anxiety. I've even found my “Zen mode” at dinner parties I just don't want to be at. Sometimes, my wonderful wife has to elbow me back to reality. Why should she have to suffer alone?

The benefits of meditation are numerous, including improved sleep and decreased insomnia.

Some studies have shown that meditation can reduce anxiety levels by as much as 60 percent. It also reduces depression relapse by about 12 percent. The positive benefits are on both mental and physical well-being, such as lowering blood pressure in the majority of those who meditate in one form or another.

I am one physician who hates psycho-babble, but also I am one who isn't afraid to write a prescription for you to “meditate twice, and call me in the morning.”

Steady Heart, No Drugs

6-month exercise program helps patients with atrial fibrillation maintain normal heart rhythm

SARAH COWNLEY

For patients with atrial fibrillation, a new exercise program has been found to help restore normal heart rhythm. This specialized six-month exercise program was presented at the European Society of Cardiology Congress 2021.

This new lifestyle treatment suggests that some patients can control their arrhythmia through physical activity, eliminating the need for complex interventions such as medications or ablation.

Symptoms of Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is a condition that causes an irregular, often rapid heart rate that can lead to poor blood flow. Some common symptoms include shortness of breath, heart palpitations, lightheadedness, and fatigue. AF patients often have significant risks of heart failure and stroke.

Patients in the exercise group maintained a normal heart rhythm without needing continued use of drugs.

Sarah Cownley earned a diploma in nutritional therapy from Health Sciences Academy in London, and she enjoys helping others by teaching healthy lifestyle changes through her personal consultations and with her regular contributions to the Doctors Health Press. This article was originally published on Bel Marra Health.

Recommendations for exercise-based rehabilitation are often given to patients with coronary heart disease and heart failure. However, few studies have examined the benefits of exercise in AF. This is what led researchers to develop the ACTIVE-AF program for patients with atrial fibrillation.

The ACTIVE-AF trial assessed the outcome of a six-month exercise program combining home-based and supervised activities on the recurrence and symptom severity of AF. The study included patients with short AF episodes (paroxysmal AF) or longer episodes who required intervention to restore normal rhythm (persistent AF). Patients who had permanent AF, whose normal heart rhythm couldn't be restored, were excluded.

For the trial, 120 patients with symptomatic AF were randomly allocated an exercise intervention or usual care for six months. The intervention included supervised weekly exercise and an individualized weekly plan to follow at home. The target was to increase aerobic exercise by up to 3 1/2 hours per week over six months. The usual care group received advice about physical activity, but no active intervention.

The study found that after 12 months, the AF recurrence rate was significantly lower in the exercise group (60 percent) compared to the control group (80 percent). This meant that patients in the exercise group could maintain a normal heart rhythm without needing invasive interventions or



For patients with atrial fibrillation—an irregular and often rapid heart rate—a new exercise program has been found to help restore normal heart rhythm.

the continued use of drugs. “Our study provides evidence that aerobic exercise should be incorporated into the treatment of patients with symptomatic AF,” study author Dr. Adrian Elliott said. “This should sit alongside the use of medications, as guided by a cardiologist, and management of obesity, hypertension, and sleep apnoea. As a general guide, patients should strive to build up to three and a half hours per week of aerobic exercise and incorporate some higher intensity activities to improve cardiorespiratory fitness.”

Why We Need Hobbies

These creative outlets give us a way to unwind and re-energize

DONNA MARTELLI

Filling out various questionnaires and applications in life, there is often this one nagging question:

Hobbies? _____

I never had real hobbies, so I when I came across that annoying question, I would write in something nondescript like reading or decorating. I've always wanted to make lovely things but that is a vague concept that can cover many activities that might be classified as hobbies.

The COVID-19 quarantine of 2020 transformed by hobby situation. "Making things lovely" was still the foundation but now I had two new bona fide hobbies that were born during the pandemic.

Somewhere along the way, a proverbial light bulb illuminated my brain and I realized how hobbies enrich our lives like nothing else can. I feel happy and at peace when I am working in these newly beloved hobbies. I have friends with this same testimony of discovery during 2020. Many people took this unsettling time to weigh what matters most in life and get rid of frills, embrace a healthier lifestyle, and start something new, be it course, business, or hobby.

There's nothing like creativity. In fact, the literal definition of being creative is to bring forth something new and unique. I used to think that hobbies were for retirees who had nothing more to look forward to in life. With their quiet and relaxed lives, maybe hobbies could fill the hours and even add a little flavor to their days. I've since discovered my view of hobbies was shallow indeed.

Even busy people, with mega-stressful lives, need hobbies—maybe even more than the average person. Why? People who engage in an interesting hobby for at least twenty minutes a week tend to be more energetic for their other activities. That's small investment for the rewards that a hobby promises.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Even busy people, with mega-stressful lives, need hobbies—maybe even more than the average person.

Our hobbies give us a desperately needed break from routines and let us connect with something life-affirming inside us.

Donna Martelli, formerly a professional dancer with the Harkness Ballet of New York, served on the dance faculty at Butler University, Indianapolis, and is now also a certified personal trainer, and certified Pilates instructor in Indianapolis, IN. She conducts classes, seminars, and workshops in the U.S. and Europe. She is the author of "When God Says Drop It" and "Why the Dance," available on Amazon and wherever books are sold.

Hobbies give us permission to relax in the present and engage all our faculties.



It is delightful to be in the zone and lose track of time, totally removed from the stressors of life and fully engaged in what we are doing.

Need your batteries recharged? Work in your hobby and let it strengthen you even as it fills your heart and mind with something you genuinely enjoy. Our hobbies give us a desperately needed break from routines and let us connect with something life-affirming inside us. Hobbies give us permission to relax in the present and engage all our faculties. Hobbies can provide a break with a purpose as we use our downtime to do something productive. And hobbies come with wonderful side-effects, besides a new winter hat or box of cookies to share (depending on your hobby), we gain immense satisfaction and overall joy. Hobbies can give us quiet time to relax our minds as we occupy our hands, or social time to connect and create with like-hearted people who share our passion.

For people with somewhat dull, uninspiring lives, hobbies break up the monotony without feeling like work. They can provide a little challenge and excitement about life without being overbearing.

Hobbies are gratifying to our souls. It is delightful to be in the zone and lose track of time, totally removed from the stressors of life and fully engaged in what we are doing. This has happened to me more times than I can remember.

When I was quarantined in 2020, I learned about landscaping and gardening and began my new outdoor adventure. I had to be creative where I was, and I was at home. Pulling weeds, clearing my yard of sticks, arranging stones, and adding mulch and

borders became my new hobby and it gave me such pleasure.

Hand-in-hand with landscaping and gardening, I am also delighted to have discovered "rockhounding." If you are unfamiliar with the term it means "the activity of searching for and collecting rocks, fossils, or minerals." I have done this since childhood. I remember my mom was often frustrated with all the rocks I brought home from my adventures and hoarded in my bedroom.

During lockdown, I fell in love with rocks again and began collecting any that seemed interesting or odd in some way. Then I made displays and pretty things with them. Déjà vu! I heard the words of my mom but this time they were coming from my husband, "You know if we move, those rocks stay!" I just looked at him, like I had looked at her.

So, what is your hobby? If you have one that you love, see where it will take you. Try new ideas or approaches and develop that hobby to the hilt! You can discover new potential in it right where you are.

If you are like I was and think that you don't have, or even need a hobby, think again. Hobbies give you a rejuvenating and uplifting outlet for creativity. What do you love? What are you especially good at? What brings you pleasure? Don't be afraid to experiment. If something sounds interesting, take a class, learn something new, or try some previously unknown activity each week. I am confident that you will find a fulfilling hobby that will bring your soul peace and joy.

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