

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND &

BODY

ELIZAVETA GALITKAIA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Naturally Acquired Immunity Versus Vaccine Acquired Immunity

Science and public policy seem to disagree over which one is better

The benefits of naturally acquired immunity may go beyond protection against COVID.

JENNIFER MARGULIS

“He’s got a pass!” said the dad sitting across from me at the airport in Bismarck, North Dakota, where we were both stranded due to flight delays. He gestured to his 5-year-old son.

“Had a slight fever and tested positive for COVID. We had to keep him home from school for a couple weeks. Then, he tested negative and was good to go. I got the vaccine. My wife did, too. But he can

Given the natural protection provided to people who recover from COVID, why is the CDC so eager to get every eligible American vaccinated?

travel anywhere without any testing, and there’s no vaccine for his age anyway.”

In Germany Natural Immunity Counts Since the beginning of July in Germany, where that family lives, if you can demonstrate proof of being COVID-recovered and then have a subsequent negative COVID test, you are considered immune. For six months anyway, according to the German government.

But in the United States, where my family lives, even those who are COVID-

recovered (and show high protection via either antibody or T-cell testing) are being told they also must get vaccinated. Indeed, the CDC has been actively urging Americans who have already had COVID to get the vaccine.

America’s federal and state health officials, via the mainstream media and social media, as well as on their official channels, insist that COVID vaccines offer better protection than natural immunity alone.

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AGE WELL

Top 5 Longevity Foods to Postpone Aging

These foods pack a long list of incredible health benefits

ANN LOUISE GITTLEMAN

As I was researching my newest book “Radical Longevity,” I took a good hard look at the longest living populations from Okinawa, Japan, and Sardinia, Italy, to Costa Rica, Greece, Loma Linda, California, and the Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe.

What were they doing differently? Was it just good genes? Apparently not, because, according to a Danish population-based Twin Study on health, genetics only accounts for about 20 percent to 30 percent of longevity factors.

So, as I like to say, “your DNA is simply not your destiny!”

What could be easier than eating your way to a longer, more vibrant life?

Long life is all about diet and lifestyle. Super-agers, people who live notably long lives, tend to eat fewer calories but enjoy nutrient-dense, wholesome, unprocessed foods. They stop eating when they feel about 80 percent full, eat more slowly, and enjoy meals as a time to pause and relax during the day. So, what could be easier than eating your way to a longer, more vibrant life?

Here are my top five longevity foods that super-agers enjoy on a daily or weekly basis. You should be incorporating them as much as possible, which isn’t hard because they’re also delicious.

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People who live notably long lives tend to eat fewer calories and enjoy unprocessed foods.

SIMONA PILOLLA/SHUTTERSTOCK



A Minimalist Guide to Health

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Living well for decades to come is simple—and often delightful

MIKE DONGHIA

Minimalism is intentional living. It's stripping away what isn't needed, in order to focus on what matters most. It's a framework that can be applied to just about any area of life, including your own personal health. I approached writing this article with two questions in mind:

- 1. What are the essential factors in promoting a long, healthy life?
- 2. What is the value of good health and how much time and energy should I invest in pursuing it?

I am by no means a medical professional, but I've done my best to stick to the essentials without being overly prescriptive. The truth is, living well isn't all that complicated and despite the never-ending saga on whether eggs are good or bad for you, living a healthy life is a pretty well-understood formula. That being said, be smart and talk to your doctor before making drastic changes.

Minimalist Diet

- Eat more whole grains, fruits, veggies, nuts, and legumes.
- Eat less "junk" food ... i.e. food with very little nutritional value.

I think a lot of people get hung up on what exactly is a good diet. They're overwhelmed by the endless theories and fad diets. My approach has always been to keep things simple and focus on what is almost certain to still hold true 100 years from now.

There's an overwhelming consensus that foods such as whole grains, fruits, veggies, nuts, and legumes are good for our bodies in many ways. Eat more of these nutritious foods by finding simple and tasty recipes that incorporate them into meals your family already enjoys.

Foods such as meat and dairy bring out a wider range of opinions, but most agree that they can be part of a healthy diet when enjoyed in moderation. No need to overthink this one—there's no bonus points in life for the "perfect" diet.

Now, when it comes to "junk" food, I don't think we need a very sophisticated definition. I think most of us know intuitively that some foods are tasty, but don't necessarily make our bodies stronger. No need to deprive yourself of your favorite foods and treats. Instead, adopt your own reasonable limits and boundaries. Over time, you'll likely find that you need less and less to deliver the same enjoyment.

Minimalist Exercise

- Get more gentle movement like long walks, gardening, playing with young kids.
- With some occasional vigor such as sprinting, lifting weights, or hard physical labor.

We all know that moving our bodies more often is good for us. We wonder what exercises we should be doing or how many minutes we ought to be moving. Far better to direct that curiosity toward finding new ways to move your body that you enjoy. Movement can be a gift and a reward to yourself, not just something to be endured for the sake of better health.

The more you move, the better—but that's no reason to start off with an audacious goal. That's a recipe for burnout and disappointment. Instead, start incredibly small and build a daily habit. You'll find, over time, that you'll want to move more and more. You won't have to force yourself at all.

I recommend a mix of lots of gentle movement with something occasionally more vigorous. For me, that means a



Focus on the big picture of diet, exercise, and a good life to take the simplest approach to health.

Movement can be a gift and a reward to yourself, not just something to be endured for the sake of better health.

Research suggests those who practice a faith, maintain close friendships, find meaningful work, and cope with stress in a healthy way age far better than their peers.



long, daily walk and evening playtime with my kids. I sprinkle in a sprint workout once or twice a week. I go to the park or track and warm up and then I run as fast as I can for about 20 seconds. After four or five sprints, I am feeling both physically tired and mentally invigorated. There are lots of fun ways that I mix up this routine: uphill, downhill, length of time, or even with a friend.

Important Lifestyle Factors

When it comes to health outcomes, there's an enormous range of possibilities, and that range is largely correlated to just a few factors. Consider the following stats, based on U.S. adults:

- 10 percent will have a drug-use disorder at some point in their lives
- 13 percent are currently abusing alcohol
- 15 percent currently smoke cigarettes daily
- 34 percent have uncontrolled high blood pressure
- 42 percent are considered obese

One of the most powerful steps you take for your health is to avoid falling into one of those categories, or to get out as soon as you can. That can be very difficult. Whatever it takes in terms of time, effort, and money is almost guaranteed to be worth the investment if a healthier life is your aim. In all the cases listed above, I recommend that you get the support of someone you love, and reach out to a medical professional who can provide help and guidance.

Add Life to Your Years

After tending to the above, your investments of time and energy into healthier living may reach a point of diminishing returns. Once you are eating well, exercising regularly, not smoking, at a healthy weight, and have a good blood pressure level, you are likely already among the healthiest 10 percent of Americans.

The average American has a life expectancy in the high-70s. But if you are still in good health and following these health principles, there's a good chance your life expectancy is into the mid- to upper-80s (or beyond).

At some point, you have to stop and ask yourself—how much greater of a reward is it to extend your life from 88 to 91? Are those three extra years so valuable that you would devote even more time, energy, and money to the pursuit? In my opinion, there is far greater joy to be had in determining how to best add life to your remaining years, rather than a

few extra years to your life.

I know, we're only dealing with statistics, not guarantees. But I think the logic is sound. At the age of 32, I may have another five-plus decades on this earth. I think that my own personal sense of the good life would be much better served by thinking about how to best "spend" those years, rather than trying to tack five more years on to the end. Here are some ways that I'm deliberately trying to add "life to my years":

Close relationships. I try to make as much space in my life for unrushed time with the people I love most. I doubt very much else matters more in your old age than if your life has been filled with warm, intimate friendships.

Personal faith. For me, the practice of my faith gives meaning and purpose to the ordinary days of my life. It also motivates and enables me to love others better.

Meaningful work. It's not enough to just pay the bills, I want to fill my days with work that is good and useful. A huge bonus if my work is interesting and stimulating.

Well-rested. I have grown to place a huge value on the simple power of a good night's rest. Without it, I feel like I'm playing the game of life in "hard" mode.

Avoid chronic stress. This one is a little vague, but for me, it means developing the right routines and habits of mind that allow me to operate mostly from a place of ease and calm.

Perhaps ironically, research in recent years suggests that the very kinds of activities that I included on my "add life to my years" list, are also likely to add even more years to my life. Those who practice a faith, maintain close friendships, find meaningful work, and cope with stress in a healthy way tend to age far better than their peers.

For me, that is all just icing on the cake. The real goal behind my minimalist health philosophy has always been to take care of my body so that I can live out my days in as good of health as possible, while filling my days and years with all types of beauty.

Mike (and his wife, Mollie) blog at *This Evergreen Home* where they share their experience with living simply, intentionally, and relationally in this modern world. You can follow along by subscribing to their twice-weekly newsletter. This article was originally published on *This Evergreen Home*.



(MAIN PHOTO) HALFPPOINT/SHUTTERSTOCK. (INSET) CANDE WEST/UNSPLASH. PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES

As we age, we grow as people, but some relationships bring us right back to where we were.

When an Old Friendship Needs to Change or End

The role you're playing in the friendship is no longer who you are. Now what?

NANCY COLIER

Nothing stays the same, including us. We change and grow over our lifetimes—thankfully. And often, our longest and dearest friendships need to change as well, in order to keep up with who we are. However, the process of changing a long-term friendship isn't usually an easy one, and sometimes, the friendship doesn't survive. Sometimes the friendship can only be what it was when we were—or were willing to be—someone else.

Liza met Callie when they were college freshmen, and they quickly became best friends. After graduation, they both got jobs in New York and lived as roommates for the majority of their 20s. Eventually, they both married and built families, and they ended up living in different cities. But the friendship remained strong. After 38 years, they had a lifetime of shared history, and Liza had considered Callie to be one of her most important and dearest friends.

But then, something changed. An incident occurred that made Liza aware of an unspoken dynamic in the friendship that she had been participating in for decades. What also became clear was that Liza wasn't willing to engage in this pattern and to play this role any longer.

The incident was triggered because, in a rare moment, Liza was honest with Callie—about her experience with her. She told her dear friend that something Callie was doing in the relationship was painful for her. She asked Callie if she would consider a different way of doing things.

But what Liza's honesty instigated in her oldest friend was exactly what Liza now understood had always been underlying and, to some degree, controlling the friendship, or at least her role in it. Callie's response to hearing Liza's experience was to go silent. She pulled away from the friendship without explanation. As Liza put it, it was "radio silence, with a distinct aroma of punishment."

When Liza then requested that they talk about what had happened, she was pummeled with a litany of things she had done to Callie over the years that Callie hadn't been OK with, but never said anything about. Liza's inbox was soon filled with long, well-documented lists of her aggressions and issues, evidence for why she was a bad friend, guilty and deserving of Callie's rage.

In fact, there had been numerous episodes in the friendship when Callie had unexplainably disappeared and stopped responding—once for several years. There had been a number of times when Liza had said something minor or misunderstood something Callie had said, with no ill in-

tent, and had later come to find out that Callie had been enraged about the comment, stewing in it and building a case against Liza in her head.

But in this most recent episode, Liza became acutely aware of the rules of the bond with Callie and the role that she had been playing to keep the friendship intact. Simultaneously, she became aware of her own truth: She had always walked on eggshells and had always had to work hard to get it right with Callie and not misstep. She realized that she had been living in fear for decades of Callie's anger and of her friend disappearing because of something "bad" that she had done. The unspoken rules were that Liza behaved as Callie wanted her to behave. So, too, Liza knew at a visceral level that she wasn't allowed to say anything about how Callie's behavior affected her and how she felt about Callie.

What the two old friends shared was a belief that Liza was guilty, responsible for whatever had ever gone wrong in the friendship. She needed to be what Callie had deemed to be OK, so as to keep the friendship and not reaffirm her own guilt. Ultimately, Liza became aware of the role she had unconsciously agreed to play in the friendship.

But Liza also recognized how her friendship with Callie, which formed when they were just 18 years old and fresh out of their childhood homes, was a carbon copy of the relationship she had with her own mother. Like Callie, her mother had been emotionally erratic and would periodically withdraw her love because of something Liza had said or done.

The narrative on Liza in her relationship with her mother was similarly that she was guilty, a selfish daughter who deprived her mother of the kind of love that she deserved. At the same time, there was an understanding that she was never to bring up her mother's behavior or call her mother out on how she was affecting Liza. And most certainly, Liza must not discuss what she herself might need from her mother as a daughter. Not surprisingly, the role she played in her longest friendship was precisely as it was in her childhood home, where the nature of love and attachment is born.

In this relationship with her best friend, Liza had been playing the same role as the guilty one—the one who wasn't allowed to have her own experience. Now aware of it, she knew this dynamic was over. The friendship couldn't exist as it had existed. She wasn't willing to walk on eggshells anymore, to behave so as not to be judged. Ultimately, she wasn't willing to abandon herself to maintain the bond.

We all do this: We form relationships that mirror our early experience and keep us in the same roles that we played with our

We are not who we were when some of our oldest friendships began, and yet we behave as if we still are, often at our own expense.

early caretakers or other important people. Until we become aware of it, we're acting from underlying assumptions about what an intimate relationship demands and who we have to be to feel loved. As a result, we end up in long-term friendships that are often unsatisfying at the deepest level and keep us stuck in old patterns, not getting what we really need.

Start paying attention to the roles you play in your long-term friendships and who you have to be to maintain them, to keep being loved. Consider if this version of you is an outdated or limited one. Then, with compassion for yourself, consider who you are now, who you want to be in relationships at this point in your life, who you are willing to be, and who you aren't willing to be.

The truth is, we aren't who we were when some of our oldest friendships began, and yet we behave as if we still are, often at our own expense. Some friendships can survive our authenticity and evolution and others can't. But if not, it makes one wonder if they're worth saving.

It takes courage to unpack the rules of the bond, the unspoken agreements about who we are and who we're supposed to be in our longest friendships. But ultimately, this process sets us free from our old patterns and allows us to experience new and more real and satisfying friendships. Bringing light to a relationship always includes risk. But in this case, it's worth it.

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With compassion for yourself, consider who you are now, who you want to be in relationships at this point in your life, and who you are not willing to be.

TATIANA BOBKOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK



The Importance of Finding Beauty in Ordinary Things

Life offers mundane experiences that have something to appreciate –if you’re willing

JOSHUA BECKER

Last week, I attended an event at my daughter’s high school. She was receiving an award for academic success.

The awards ceremony took place in the school gymnasium. There were two folding tables on one end of the gym for the principal and guidance counselors who read off the names and explained the significance of the award.

In the middle of the gym floor were two simple folding chairs set up to mark where the students were to walk. The parents sat on bleachers on one side of the gym.

Before the ceremony, we ate a dinner of ground turkey tacos. On our way home, we got some ice cream. Nothing fancy, just a small treat to celebrate. After returning home, I watched a few innings of the World Series before going to bed at 10 p.m. (which is about as late as I can seem to stay up these days).

In almost every imaginable way, there was nothing extravagant about the night. It seems to me there are three approaches I could have taken during the evening: begrudging, appreciating, imagining.

Begrudging

I could have entirely unappreciated the night, begrudgingly attending the school event and complaining about the whole thing.

I could have been upset that I had to go out another night of the week. I could have thought about how tired I was from work, how many things needed to be completed around the house, or how I just didn’t want to attend another thing.

Rare is the parent who would choose this option and begrudgingly complain about attending the night (although they do exist).

It’s a gift to yourself to see the beauty of ordinary things rather than dwell on all the ways your life would improve if it were upgraded.

Appreciating

A better option would have been to have appreciated the beauty and meaning of the night for what it was. I could have taken a moment to mark the success of my daughter, the efforts of everyone that worked to acknowledge something good in our community.

The night was simple, but there is a

lot of beauty to be found in ordinary things.

Imagining

I could have daydreamed about how much better the night could have been with a few upgrades.

We could have gone out for a steak dinner before the ceremony; that would have made the night even better.

They could have hired a professional speaker, local media personality, or special music for the event. They could have had a fancier queue line for the students. That would have been better.

We could have sat on more comfortable chairs than bleachers. That would have been better.

We could have chosen a fancier dessert, driven a newer car, or returned home to a bigger screen television. Certainly, any of those upgrades would have made the evening even more luxurious and enjoyable, right?

I could have spent the entire night looking for all the ways it could be better.

But what benefit does it give my life to do that?

How does it increase my happiness or joy in life to constantly think my life would be better if I just had x?

None, whatsoever. Nor would more comfortable chairs, a newer car, or a fancier meal have changed the accomplishment and meaning of the evening.

Too often, we miss the beauty of ordinary things by wishing for something better.

It’s a gift to yourself to see the beauty of ordinary things rather than dwell on

all the ways your life would improve if it were upgraded.

Our world encourages discontent at every turn and our minds too often embrace it. We are compelled to want what is new, resent what could be better, and expect perfect convenience and comfort at every turn.

Even though it seems unwise to discount the beauty right in front of us, we do it all the time. We turn what’s good into not good enough. We wish the house was bigger, the restaurant was fancier, the vacation was more exotic, or the television was larger.

We wish the furniture was fancier, the clothes were more fashionable, the phone was upgraded, or the mode of transportation was more luxurious.

We wish the boss was more understanding, the weather was warmer, the stomach was flatter, or the bank account had more zeroes.

But when we live life constantly desiring more and better, we miss the beauty of the ordinary right in front of us. We miss out on the contentment that comes with appreciating.

It’s one thing to work to improve your lot in life. It’s something completely different to miss the beauty and blessings of the life you are currently experiencing.

Wise is the man or woman who chooses to see them.

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

As children, we naturally knew how to seek contentment. Then we were taught to constantly desire more.

PHOTOGRAPHEE/SHUTTERSTOCK



The assumption that all older people are frail and helpless is a common, incorrect stereotype.

Seniors Decry Health Providers’ Age Bias

‘They treat me like I’m old and stupid’ recounts one senior sharing a common experience

JUDITH GRAHAM

Joanne Whitney, 84, a retired associate clinical professor of pharmacy at the University of California–San Francisco, often feels devalued when interacting with health care providers.

There was a time several years ago when she told an emergency room doctor that the antibiotic he wanted to prescribe wouldn’t counteract the kind of urinary tract infection she had.

He wouldn’t listen, even when she mentioned her professional credentials. She asked to see someone else, to no avail. “I

was ignored and finally I gave up,” said Whitney, who has survived lung cancer and cancer of the urethra and depends on a special catheter to drain urine from her bladder. (An outpatient renal service later changed the prescription.)

Then, earlier this year, Whitney landed in the same emergency room, screaming in pain, with another urinary tract infection and a severe anal fissure. When she asked for Dilaudid, a powerful narcotic that had helped her before, a young physician told her, “We don’t give out opioids to people who seek them. Let’s just see what Tylenol does.”

Whitney said her pain continued un-

abated for eight hours.

“I think the fact I was a woman of 84, alone, was important,” she told me. “When older people come in like that, they don’t get the same level of commitment to do something to rectify the situation. It’s like ‘Oh, here’s an old person with pain. Well, that happens a lot to older people.’”

Whitney’s experiences speak to ageism in health care settings, a long-standing problem that’s getting new attention during the COVID pandemic, which has reportedly killed more than half a million Americans age 65 and older.

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Nearly **20%**

of Americans age 50 and older say they have experienced discrimination in health care settings, which can result in inappropriate or inadequate care.

How Your Gut Health Impacts Your Disease Risk

A recent scientific review states all inflammatory disease begins here—including ADHD, autism, learning disabilities, diabetes, and Parkinson’s disease

JOSEPH MERCOLA

More attention than ever is being put on your gut health, and understandably so, considering a significant proportion of your immune system resides in your gastrointestinal tract. As such, optimizing your gut microbiome is a worthwhile pursuit that will have far-reaching effects on your physical health and emotional well-being.

Mounting scientific evidence also continues to suggest a large component of nutrition centers on nourishing health-promoting bacteria in your gut (and elsewhere in and on your body). In doing so, you keep harmful microbes in check and shore up your protection against chronic disease.

Some researchers believe the gut microbiome may actually end up being a game changer for cancer prevention and treatment.

ADHD, autism, learning disabilities, obesity, diabetes, and Parkinson’s disease are but a few of the conditions found to be influenced by your gut microbiome. One 2020 scientific review published in F1000 Research goes so far as to say that all inflammatory disease begins in the gut. Part of the blame is laid on excessive hygiene. In other words, we’re “too clean” for our own good.

But your diet also plays a crucial role. The paper specifically addresses the role of zonulin-mediated gut permeability in the pathogenesis of chronic inflammatory diseases (CIDs).

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A significant proportion of your immune system resides in your gastrointestinal tract so optimizing your gut microbiome will have far-reaching effects.

SIAM FUKAT/SHUTTERSTOCK



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Probiotics can boost immune function if you find quality sources and don't let them spoil.

Maximize Your Probiotics for Immune Health

ANDREA DONSKY

Recent concerns about immune health have prompted many people to want to know how to boost their immune system in the best ways possible. One of those ways is with good bacteria, or probiotics—but not just any probiotics. The big questions are: How effective are probiotics for immune health, and how can you be sure to get the most bang for your buck when taking beneficial bacteria supplements?

Taking the wrong probiotic is like flour through a sieve: it's going to pass on through and leave little to nothing behind.

What Are Probiotics?

Probiotics are also commonly referred to as good or beneficial bacteria, but the term also includes some beneficial yeasts as well. These substances are called "good" and "beneficial" because they play a vital role in keeping your gut and entire body healthy. That's because you are a vessel of both good and not-so-good bacteria that are associated with disease and other health hazards. Taking probiotic supplements and eating foods rich in beneficial bacteria can help you keep the balance of bacteria in the healthy zone.

Probiotics fall into two general categories:

- Lactobacillus, which is found in some yogurts, kefir, and other fermented foods. Dozens of strains of this bacteria can assist with digestion, diarrhea, and immune health.
- Bifidobacterium, which is common in dairy products such as milk, yogurt, and cheese. This genus of bacteria can help with irritable bowel syndrome and other conditions, as well as help with immune system function.

In the yeast category, we have *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* var. *boulardii*, which may help with diarrhea and other issues associated with digestion.

What Are Probiotics Good For?

Probiotics have a number of health advantages. For example, you might try probiotics for problems affecting your digestive tract, such as irritable bowel syndrome, diarrhea, urinary tract infections, and inflammatory bowel disease.

Numerous studies have also found probiotics can be helpful in supporting immune health function and issues.

Probiotics and Immune System Function

Dozens of studies have demonstrated that various probiotics have the ability to boost immune function and/or reduce symptoms associated with immune-related conditions. Here are a few highlighted examples.

A 2019 article review published in the *Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism* looked at several previous studies and reported that probiotics "improve the behavior of the immune system and the host's health."

In a 2017 study, investigators reported that "there is high-quality evidence the probiotics are effective for acute infectious diarrhea, antibiotic-associated diarrhea, *Clostridium difficile*-associated diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome, functional gastrointestinal disorders."

Which Probiotics Are the Most Effective?

If you want to get the most from your probiotic supplement, then you need to choose ones that meet certain criteria. Taking the wrong probiotic is like flour through a sieve: it's going to pass on through and leave little to nothing behind.

Your probiotic should be refrigerated. All probiotic strains are susceptible to heat, especially those in the genus *Bifidobacterium*. According to Consumer Labs, and independent test lab, "Many probiotic bacteria are naturally sensitive to heat and moisture. Heat can kill organisms and moisture can activate them within pills, only to die due to lack of nutrients and a proper environment." Therefore, be sure to put your probiotic supplement in your fridge.

An enemy of all probiotics is stomach acid (aka, gastric acid). The job of this acid is to break down food, but it also destroys bacteria, both good and bad. To protect against the destruction of your probiotic supplement, be sure to buy those that have an enteric coating. The probiotic supplement should have been tested to guarantee the beneficial bacteria capsules will survive and make their way to your intestinal tract, where they can release their contents and aid the healing process.

Bottom Line

Probiotics can be a potent management and treatment tool when you want to support and enhance your immune system function. Be sure to choose a probiotic supplement that will provide the most benefit for the buck.

Andrea Donsky, who holds a bachelor of commerce, is an international TV health expert, best selling author, and founder of NaturallySavvy.com—a recipient of Healthline's Best Healthy Living Blogs for 2019. This article was originally published on NaturallySavvy.com



Eating beneficial bacteria through probiotic supplements and fermented foods can help you maintain a healthy balance of bacteria in your body.

Reversing Death: The Weird History of Resuscitation

Before CPR and defibrillators, people did some pretty strange things to the apparently dead

CAITJAN GAINTY

Most of us probably know—more or less—how to resuscitate one of our fellow human beings. Even if you haven't taken a course in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), you've probably seen the technique many times on television or in the movies.

The early history of resuscitation was in many ways also the stuff of drama. On June 1, 1782, for example, a Philadelphia newspaper carried news of the latest resuscitative miracle: A 5-year-old child had been restored to life after drowning in the Delaware River.

Little Rowland Oliver was playing on one of the busy wharves that industrialization had brought to Delaware's banks when he tumbled into the water. He struggled for 10 minutes, then went limp. Finally, a worker fished him out and carried him home.

Although Rowland was delivered lifeless to his family, the paper reported that his parents recognized he was only "apparently dead." This energized them into action. They "stripped off all his clothes immediately, slapped him with their hands" and "rubbed him with woollen cloths dipped in spirits."

The doctor who arrived shortly afterward did more of the same. They also immersed Rowland's feet in hot water and thrust an emetic agent down his throat. After about 20 minutes, life returned to the little boy. A little blood-letting eased any after-effects, and Rowland was soon his usual playful self.

Humane Societies

This account was but one of many stories of resuscitative success seeded into the newspapers by the period's newly minded humane societies. These societies had originated in mid-18th-century Amsterdam, where an increasing number of people were drowning in the city's canals. The societies sought to educate the public that death—at least by drowning—wasn't absolute and that passersby had the power to keep the apparently dead from joining the actually dead.

In Philadelphia, Rowland's resurrection gave credence to these ideas, inspiring the local humane society to install along the city's rivers kits containing medicines, tools, and instructions to revive the drowned.

Methods changed over time, but well into the 19th century, resuscitative efforts were understood to require the stimulation of the body back into mechanical action. Humane societies often recommended warming up the drowning victim and attempting artificial breathing. Whatever the method, most important was jumpstarting the body-machine back to function.

External stimulation—the rubbing and massaging practiced by little Rowland's parents—was essential. So was internal stimulation, typically via the introduction of rum or some rousing concoction into the stomach. Probably most exciting—for the body's interior—was the "fumigation with tobacco smoke" of a drowning victim's colon that humane societies also proposed.

Yes: good resuscitative efforts demanded the blowing of smoke up an apparently



dead person's bum.

The 20th century brought its own potentially fatal hazards. Just as drownings multiplied in the 18th century because of the increased industrial use of waterways, the advent of widespread electricity, power lines, and personal-use machinery, such as automobiles, added electrocution and gas poisoning to the causes of apparent death.

A New Locus of Stimulation

Methods also changed. Resuscitative efforts now focused increasingly on stimulating the heart. This might involve manipulating an apparently dead body into a variety of positions. Chest compressions and artificial respiration techniques became increasingly common, too.

But even as techniques shifted, resuscitation retained its democratic bent—almost anyone could undertake it. Its applications, however, remained specific to certain circumstances. After all, only a limited number of situations could render someone apparently dead.

In the mid-20th century, these two consistent themes began to give way. Resuscitation increasingly gained a reputation as a miraculous and widespread treatment for all kinds of death. And the people who could perform these treatments narrowed to medical or emergency practitioners only. There were many reasons for this shift, but a critical precipitating event was the recognition of a new set of causes of apparent death: accidents of surgery.

In his explanation of his own attempts to remake resuscitation over the mid-20th century, American surgeon Claude Beck frequently invoked a story from his training in the late 1910s. Back then, he recalled, if a patient's heart stopped on

Modern resuscitation techniques have come a long way from the time doctors prescribed literally blowing smoke up someone's rectum.

the operating table, surgeons could do nothing but call the fire brigade and wait for them to deliver a "pulmotor," the precursor to the artificial respirators familiar today. Suddenly, it seemed that everyone except medical practitioners could perform resuscitation. Finding this unacceptable, Beck joined the hunt to find a resuscitative method suitable for the particular hazards of surgery.

The new techniques that Beck and other surgeons experimented with still rested on stimulation. But they relied on access to the body's interior, which the surgeon more or less exclusively enjoyed. Applying electricity directly to the heart (defibrillation) was one method. Reaching into the chest and massaging the heart manually was another.

Beck viewed his early successes in the operating theatre as an indication of the more widespread promise of his techniques. Accordingly, he expanded his definition of who could be resuscitated. He added to the relatively limited category of the "apparently dead," all who weren't "absolutely and unquestionably dead."

Beck made films that testified to his successes. One, the *Choir of the Dead*, featured the first 11 people he had resuscitated standing awkwardly together, while a jarringly jovial Beck asked each in turn: "What did you die of?"

Though initially contextualized as merely the extension of resuscitation into medical spaces, it soon became clear that methods that privileged access to the body's interior weren't easily democratized. That's not to say that Beck didn't try. He imagined a world where those trained in his methods would carry the surgeon's tool—the scalpel—with them, always ready to whip open a chest to massage a heart back into action.

Concerned by the specter of civilian-surgeons and keen to maintain their professional monopoly over the body's interior, the medical community revolted. It was only with the advent of the less unseemly closed-chest compression method several years later that resuscitation's democratic imprimatur was restored.

But Beck's view of death as generally reversible stuck, reaching its zenith in 1960, when a landmark medical study declared resuscitation's "over-all permanent survival rate" as 70 percent. Subsequent studies corrected this overly optimistic finding, but resuscitation's reputation as both widely applicable and wildly successful had already been secured. Recent reports suggest that this is a reputation it retains to this day.

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Before CPR, the apparently dead would be massaged in an attempt to revive them.

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WISE HABITS

Everything Is a Practice

Every frustration and challenge becomes a precious opportunity



One of the most powerful ways to change yourself is to view hardships as opportunities for growth.

LEO BABAUTA

I have a client who has completely changed his life—it's been a complete transformation, and it's breathtaking.

One of the most powerful things he's brought into his life is the practice of self-compassion. It changed everything.

But one of the next most powerful things he created for himself is the view that everything is a practice.

Man, what a ridiculously valuable way to frame our lives!

Every difficulty that comes up is simply something to practice with.

Every frustration with another person is a practice ground, and the other person becomes your teacher. Bow to them with gratitude!

Normally, we think of these difficulties and frustrations as something wrong with us, the other person, or the world. With this kind of view, every failure is another

Every frustration with another person is a practice ground, and the other person becomes your teacher.

reason to feel bad about ourselves. Every frustration with someone else is a reason to shut down to them or lash out at them. Everything wrong with the world is another reason to feel discouraged.

But what if, instead, we just took it as something to practice with?

Some examples:

My work is overwhelming. OK great, let's bring awareness to the feeling of overwhelm, be with it mindfully, and examine the view that has you creating this feeling of overwhelm. Can we practice shifting the view? Getting in touch with our inner peace? With this kind of practice, every time we feel overwhelmed is an opportunity to get in touch with our inner peace.

Other people can be so frustrating! Absolutely ... and also, can we practice being with this feeling of frustration (even expressing it fully as an emotion), noticing what view we have of others that creates

our frustration, and maybe finding a more expansive view that lets us feel compassion for the other people? Maybe even seeing them with love and wonder? Then every frustration with others becomes a way to practice compassion and wonder and expansiveness.

This task is too hard, I don't want to do it. Yep, I have that too! So can we practice being with our resistance, noticing the view that has us thinking of it as a burden, and instead finding a more open and joyful view of the task? Can it become a place of play and curiosity and adventure?

Every challenge, problem, frustration, failure becomes a place of beautiful practice.

Life becomes a playground and place of exploration.

What a magical place this world is!

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



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