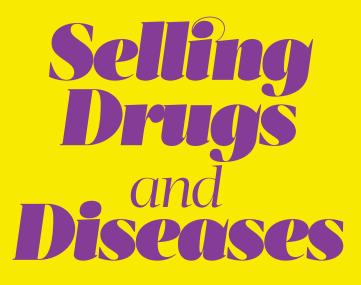
WEEK 9, 2022 THE EPOCH TIMES (MAN) CSA IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; (PILLS, SPIRAL, TV) SHUTTERSTOCK; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES

Directto-consumer advertising inflates demand for new and more expensive drugs.



Direct-to-consumer drug ads sell people on a cure for a disease they might not even have





MARTHA ROSENBERG

any people like direct-toconsumer (DTC) "askyour doctor" drug ads on TV. They enjoy the drama of the mini "sitcoms," such as a woman with severe asthma who can finally go out again or a man whose depression lifts, and he starts playing with his puppy again. People can feel empowered by knowing the symptoms of diseases they might have and the treatments availableinformation that only doctors used to have. Few are dissuaded by the long list of drug side effects, such as "low white blood cell

Drug ads have become a mainstav for news and entertainment media outlets.

counts that may cause serious infections and death" or "severe inflammation of the lungs that can lead to death."

DTC ads have become a mainstay for news and entertainment media outlets, constituting a big part of their advertising revenue. And of course, DTC ads and their related online "symptom checkers" have arguably been the biggest boon for drug makers ever—pharma companies increased their advertising fivefold in the decade after DTC advertising began in the United States in 1997, spending \$5.4 billion in 2007, according to the Boston Globe. Rather than relying solely on sales reps to sell a drug to harried doctors, drug makers have enlisted suffering patients to "sell" the drug after seeing a DTC ad by asking a doctor for it.

Many drugs that people take daily in the United States-from statins to acid-reducing proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) to SSRI antidepressants-owe their success and name recognition to DTC advertising. No other country except New Zealand allows it. In fact, in 2022, Georgetown University reported that 66 percent of the U.S. population takes prescription drugs, and Aging Care reported that 39 percent of seniors take five or more prescriptions per day.

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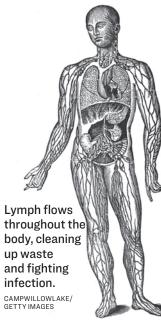
Critically Important and All but Ignored: Lymphatic Flow

The lymphatic system is profoundly important and barely understood by the vast majority of people

GERALD M. LEMOLE

Evidence is rapidly growing that chronic inflammation plays a large part in causing chronic diseases such as cancer and cardiac, neurologic, and gastroenterological disorders. Various diets, including vegetarian, lowfat, saturated fat, Paleo, vegan, lectin-free, and others are recommended to reduce inflammation. However, proponents of good health also suggest that in order to minimize the risk of these diseases and optimize one's health, we must include exercise, stress modification, plenty of green vegetables, and smoking cessation in our lifestyle.

Isn't it interesting that the same lifestyle changes are beneficial for all the chronic diseases? I believe that if we understood



the how and why of these recommendations, we would more readily use them, and these recommendations would become commandments rather than suggestions.

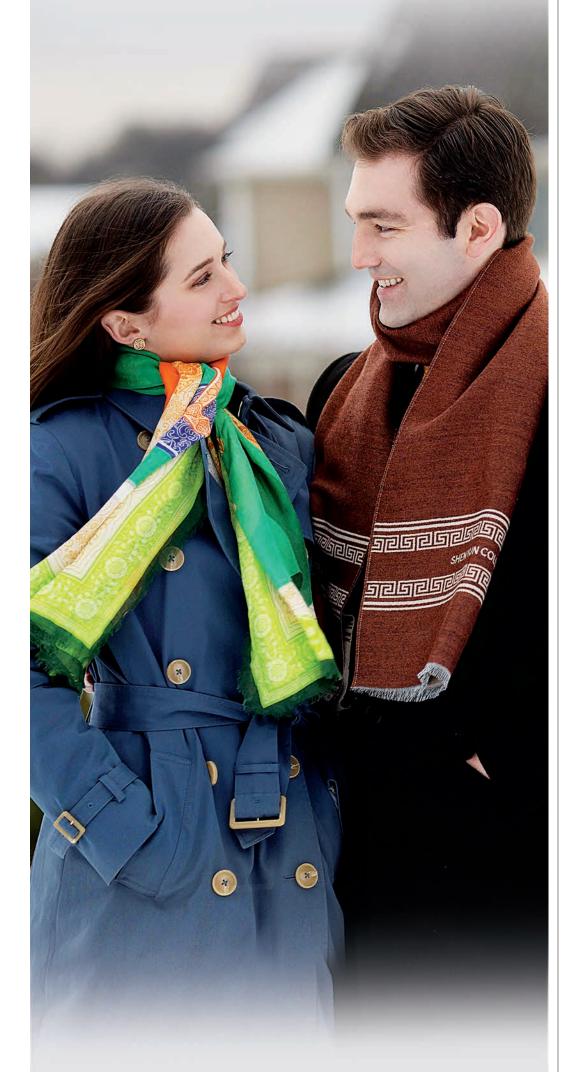
This is why I wrote "Lymph and Longevity"-to explain how these recommendations help improve lymphatic flow by decreasing inflammation in all systems. I believe that when we understand a process, it's much more likely to be incorporated into our life. So let's go with the lymph flow on a short journey to see how it optimizes the health of all of the systems of the body, including the heart and vessels, the immune system, the nervous system, and the gastrointestinal system.

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How Your Neighborhood Affects Your Health

Exercise, diet, and daily habits are all influenced by the community we live in

LYNN JAFFEE

A couple of decades ago, I worked for a nonprofit that promoted girls' and women's health through physical activity. One project in particular still resonates with me, in which a neighborhood alliance contacted us regarding a local park that was being renovated by the city. The alliance wanted to ensure that the park was as accessible to girls and women in the neighborhood as it was for boys and men, and they wanted our help.

In its original form, the park featured several basketball courts, a baseball diamond, and an aging playground. Through our research and feedback from residents living near the park, we recommended a walking trail around the park, more girl-friendly components to the playground, and safety features Communities that have such as landscaping that was more open, with mature trees rather than thick shrubbery, and better lighting.

The renovation of this park is a great example of how your neighborhood can either support or discourage your efforts to be healthy. In its original condition, the park's basketball courts were used as a hangout and were covered with litter and broken glass. There were few reasons for neighborhood residents to use it.

Beyond clean drinking water and regular trash removal, there are a number of factors related to where you live that have a very real effect on your health.

Walkability and Heart Health

It's well-known that a lack of exercise can raise your risk for health conditions such as heart disease, obesity, and Type 2 diabetes. However, living in the suburbs, safety issues and the absence of sidewalks can be deterrents to getting outside and walking in your neighborhood—a simple and easy way to be active.

As communities expand outward into the suburbs and beyond, the distances between people's homes, stores, and workplaces make driving or riding public transportation unavoidable. Urban communities without sidewalks or safe places to walk reduce easy opportunities for residents to do physical activity, forcnan waiking in their neighborhood.

A number of communities are creating mixed-use neighborhoods.

Green Space and Overall Health There has been a great deal of research about the health benefits of spending time in green places, such as the woods or a park. Exposure to green space has been associated with decreased blood pressure, improved immunity, and lower levels of stress and the stress-related hormone cortisol. Some doctors now prescribe time in a local park to their patients. Working out in green space can lower your level of perceived exertion, which means that a hard workout done in a park may feel easier, making your workout more effective. In addition, being active or having access to green or wooded areas feels good—it's more relaxing and enjoyable than being outdoors in areas that are devoid of trees and greenery.

Health Impact of Blue Space Living near water can also be a positive when it comes to your health. Whether you live near a pond in a city park, a

small creek, a fountain, or the ocean, nearby blue space in the form of water can be good for you. A research study involving 18,000 participants in 18 countries found

that people who live near water report better mental and physical wellbeing. And other research has found that people who live near water have a lower risk of premature death, a decreased risk of being obese, and better mental health than subjects who don't live near the water.

access to local grocery stores, especially within walking distance, promote good nutrition.

Blue space is beneficial because the sight and sound of water are relaxing, but more importantly, living near a lake or the beach promotes physical activity in the form of walking, swimming, and paddling.

Grocery Stores and Nutrition

Communities that have access to local grocery stores, especially within walking distance, promote good nutrition. However, many poorer urban communities tend to have more fast-food restaurants and fewer grocery stores, which has a very real effect on the nutritional status and overall health of residents.

A study in Sweden found that when people moved from an area with few fast-food restaurants to one with more, their risk for Type 2 diabetes rose significantly. Communities that lack grocerv stores and local food markets also tend to be less walkable and contain fewer parks.

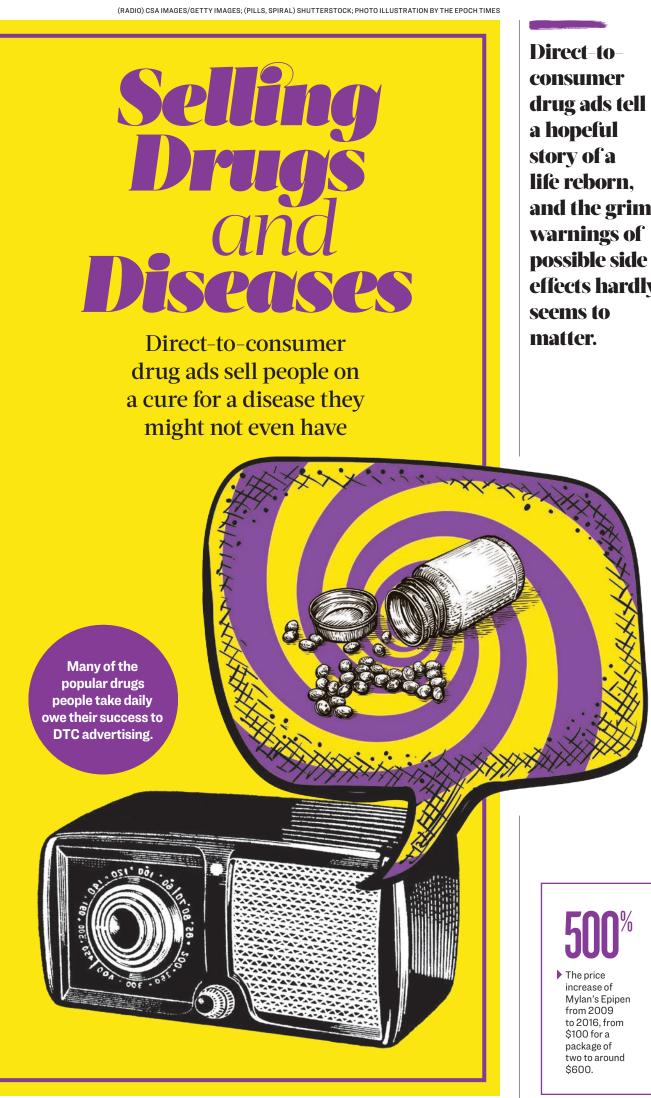
These are just a few examples of how your neighborhood can have an influing them to find ways to exercise other ence on both your physical and mental health. To some extent, cities are responding.

A number of communities are creating mixed-use neighborhoods. Some are building apartments that contain retail space on the ground floor, and others are creating pockets of retail and residential space. Some suburbs and even larger cities are recreating "main streets" that are near homes, but walkable to stores. Bike lanes, walking paths, and local parks are being built; water features are being added; and empty lots are being repurposed into gardens.

Whenever I drive by the city park that I played a small part in renovating, I smile—not because of my role, but because even 25 years ago, there were neighborhood residents who recognized the importance that a patch of green space could have on the health of the people who lived nearby, and they did something about it.

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





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Some doctors and medical groups oppose DTC advertising. In 2015, the American MedicalAssociation (AMA) called for a ban on consumer ads. The vote at the Interim Meeting of the AMA reflected "concerns among physicians about the negative impact of commercially driven promotions, and the role that marketing costs play in fueling escalating drug prices," AMA Board Chair-elect Dr. Patrice A. Harris said.

"Direct-to-consumer advertising also inflates demand for new and more expensive drugs, even when these drugs may not be appropriate," Harris said.

Drug prices have gotten so high that in 2019, the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform launched an investigation into the pricing practices of 12 drug companies that sell the most costly meds. In 2021, the committee zeroed in on AbbVie's blockbuster Humira, as its price has been raised 27 times, costing \$2,984 per syringe this past May, or \$77,586 per year. AbbVie also did well during the COVID-19 pandemic—making \$1.3

billion in the second quarter from COVID-19 test sales.

Questions Beyond Cost

There are other reasons besides cost that make some question DTC advertising. Can a public that lacks medical training really judge the appropriateness of a treatment? And are the ads, so full of "spin," even truthful? Certainly exaggeration and untruths happen. In the four years after DTC started, the Food and Drug Administration wrote 564 letters to drug makers charging them with "false, misleading, or unsubstantiated drug claims; inadequate, incorrect, or inconsistent labeling information; omission or minimization of side effects; unsupported superiority claims; and promotion of off-label uses."

Other critics of DTC ads have accused them of "disease mongering"—that drug makers are expanding markets for new products by extending the boundaries of treatable illness. In a Hofstra University law school paper, Dr. Marvin M. Lipman wrote: "We all know that, for many illnesses, especially those for which



and the grim effects hardly no tell-tale markers exist, there is a huge gray zone between the normal and the abnormal. Bipolar disease, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, restless-leg syndrome, erectile dysfunction, and premenstrual dysphoric disorder are good examples of 'diseases' ... [that are] fair game for pharmaceutical hucksterism to persuade people with barely a suggestion of one of those disorders to demand a prescription for the advertised drug." Lipman served as chief medical adviser for

Consumer Reports for 51 years. Some have objected to the changed dynamics between a doctor and patient that DTC advertising creates-sometimes reducing a doctor to an "order taker" or "gatekeeper" despite his or her superior knowledge compared to the patient.

DTC advertising also creates pressure on doctors to comply with patient demands because they-and the institutions they work for-want to keep patients and make them happy. Thanks to DTC ads, some medical schools have had to offer "refusal skills" training for practitioners to cope with selfdiagnosing patients who demand a drug on the basis of a TV commercial, sometimes clutching a coupon.

Unbranded Ads-

Selling a Disease Not a Drug

All advertising relies on subliminal messages and innuendo, but selling prescription drugs is a lot more consequential than selling shampoo-it can lead to overdiagnosis, overutilization of the health care system, and overtreatment. Ads that "raise awareness" of a disease are especially problematic; called "unbranded" advertising, they don't mention the name of the drug being marketed and can appear to be important messages from the government, perhaps the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Patients may "not be able to attribute that this information is coming from a company with a clear profit motive," according to Ameet Sarpatwari, an epidemiologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital and, since no drug is mentioned, neither are the drug risks and side effects outlined.

One example of a well-funded unbranded drug campaign is the drug company AbbVie's promotion of awareness for exocrine pancreatic insufficiency, which it dubs "EPI." No doctor I've interviewed has treated someone with EPI, yet the ads imply that the condition is a major public health issue.

After many radio ads-including one with a man and woman suggestively asking in unison "Could I have EPI?"—a drug that treats EPI was rolled out. This is commensurate with the unbranded advertising game plan of establishing "demand" prior to marketing the related drug. Creon, the EPI drug that contains pancreatic enzymes, can cost "upward of \$1,000 per refill," according to SingleCare, a price comparison site.

Unbranded drug ads can also use scare ta tics. To sell a heart drug, an unbranded Novartis TV ad depicts a man with rising waters around his armchair and the narrator saying, "With heart failure, danger is always on the rise. ... About 50 percent of people die within five years of getting diagnosed."

The Celebrity Sell

Drugmakers have hired many celebrities as pitch people, and the campaigns are also often unbranded. Tennis star Monica Seles raised awareness for "binge eating disorder," Marcia Cross has done so for migraine headaches, and race car driver Danica Patrick has done so for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Other endorsers have included singer LeAnn Rimes raising awareness of eczema, Paula Deen doing so for diabetes, and Adam Levine, the lead singer of Maroon 5, doing so for ADHD.

Sarah Jessica Parker stumped for Mylan's EpiPen in an unbranded "Anaphylaxis: for Reel" awareness campaign, CBS news reported (though the actress resigned the account when the pen's price went from \$100 for a package of two to around \$600 in 2016). Kathleen Turner, star of the movie Body Heat, plugged the arthritis drug Enbrel on CNN, not disclosing that she was actually a paid spokesperson.

Because DTC advertising is a cash cow for media outlets and drugmakers, it's not likely to go away anytime soon-despite the concerns of doctors and the AMA itself. However, the many people now taking prescription drugs for diseases that they weren't aware of before DTC advertising shouldn't blind us to the significant effects of this powerful mode of advertising.

Martha Rosenberg is a nationally recognized reporter and author whose work has been cited by the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Mayo Clinic Proceedings, Public Library of Science Biology, National Geographic, and Wikipedia. Rosenberg's FDA exposé, "Born with a Junk Food Deficiency," was widely praised and established her as a prominent investigative journalist. She has lectured widely at universities throughout the United States and resides in Chicago.

Critics of direct-toconsumer drug ads have accused them of "disease mongering" to expand markets for new products.

It used to be that patients learned about the medications they needed from doctors and

pharmacists.

Critically Important and All but Ignored: Lymphatic Flow

The lymphatic system is profoundly important and barely understood by the vast majority of people

Continued from Page 1

You can think of the lymphatic system like the cardiovascular system, in that there's a fluid—lymph—that's transported to and from various locations in the body. However, unlike the cardiovascular system, it doesn't have anything similar to a heart to pump it. Your movement and the contractions of your muscles are the main cause of lymph flow.

Tending to the flow of lymph addresses chronic dysfunctional conditions such as cancer, arthritis, autoimmune disease, diabetes, and obesity. Aging could also be included in these chronic inflammatory conditions.

Let the Lymph Flow

What is the flow? Every biologic system has a function that delivers essential nutrition, important cells, and chemical messages, but also takes away waste, cells, and cell signals. During this process, some fluid, cells, protein, and fat stay in the tissue and must be removed by the lym-

phatic system. Lymph flow is necessary to return excess tissue fluid to the blood, deliver fat and proteins to the liver and kidneys, and transfer immune cells and immune messages to the lymph nodes. The key element here is the flow of lymphwhich includes the rate and quality of movement of fluid throughout the system.

Lymphatic flow is a major part of the holistic biologic process, yet few know how it works, why it's important, and how it could hold the secrets to overall health. It really is the secret river of life!

the lymphatic system explain the biggest threats to our health, including diseases of hearts and widely open channels in paour blood vessels, brain, and immune tisto reduce heart disease can also work to fight cancer, infections, and Alzheimer's dementia.

The best, most respected preventive health strategies just happen to strengthen lymphatic drainage as well—so we can identify a common pathway to health. Understanding lymph is empowering to you.

An Overlooked System

Despite its importance, this area of medicine has been overlooked because doctors don't have diagnostic tools to directly assess its anatomy and function, so we

struggle to diagnose "blocked lymph." In medical school, we learn of the "neurovascular bundle" composed of a nerve, artery, and vein. But in that bundle is also a lymph vessel—which is never mentioned.

In all fairness, it's hard to measure such a low-pressure system that's small and colorless, but great strides have been made in the last two decades, identifying the functions and interconnections of the lymph cells. That said, on some level, the medical community does understand the basic role of the lymph: We all need strong lymph flow to move toxins out and make room for the nutrients desired by our body. Failure to maintain good flow manifests as swelling (especially of the ankles) and eventually the failure of our more important organs, such as the kidneys, heart, or liver.

Health Through Lymph Flow

The lymphatics are where our daily biological battles are won and lost. Lymph has a hand in virtually every major problem that can happen in the body. Because of this, it's been called the "Cinderella of

medicine"—unappreciated, but doing all the heavy lifting. The lymphatic system touches every other system in the body. Let's look at how

the lymphatic system nourishes and protects the major organs of the body. Its major objective is to eradicate chronic inflammation by removing toxins, balancing fluids, and signaling and transporting messages throughout the body. This is performed in subtly different

NENSURIA/GETTY IMAGES **Cardiovascular System**

Being a cardiac surgeon, this is where I In fact, the function and dysfunction of first observed living lymph tissue. I saw scarred lymph channels in arteriosclerotic tients with no artery blockage. In the labosue. Therefore, the same tactics that work ratory, we were able to create hardening of the arteries by identifying and tying off the lymphatic channels of the heart. In 1981, after a decade of scientific observation and experimentation of the lymphatic system, a paper that I wrote was published in the Annals of Thoracic Surgery. This article was the first to posit that oxidized cholesterol taken up by the HDL exits not back to the arterial blood, but travels through the entire arterial wall, and then by way of the lymphatics, to the liver via the veins.

> **Neurologic System** Until recently, it was taught in medical

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schools that there's no lymphatic system for the brain and spinal cord. However, research has presented new evidence that, in a special way, the lymphatic system clears substances from the nervous system.

Intracranial fluid is increased to carry toxins such as beta-amyloid (Alzheimer's) and Alpha-synuclein (Parkinson's) out of the skull to protect the neurons. A newly identified double "sleeve" around the brain's arteries allows cerebrospinal fluid to flow into the brain substance while the nerve cells shrink to allow greater space for the new fluid. The increased flow carries the toxins across to the midbrain where similar sleeves surrounding the venous system pick up the unwanted molecules. These are then delivered to the lymphatics of the dura mater (a thick membrane hat surrounds the brain and spinal cord) and on to the liver via deep cervical lymph channels.

More than 70 percent of the cleansing is done during sleep, which is why sleep is so essential.

Gastrointestinal System

The gastrointestinal system is intimately involved with the lymphatics. In fact, the gut has more immune cells and lymphatic tissue than the rest of the body. In addition to the lymph system's standard function of fluid balance and immune surveillance, it has a special role in the intestine. It carries all the dietary fat and large proteins from the intestines to the liver. In fact, when unwanted toxic cells, fats, and proteins

Sweating Out What Ails Us

Sweat is the most effective way to excrete some of the most common toxins we encounter

DEANNA MINICH

Your body has a natural, powerful, built-in system for detoxification that doesn't require trendy juice cleanses or expensive protocols. All you have to do is sweat.

Doctors, health experts, and fitness gurus tell us that we should break a sweat every day—and for good reason. While sweating has a host of benefits simply because it's a result of health-boosting exercise, the act of sweating itself also heals the body. Whether you're sitting in a sauna, walking on a warm day, or working out, sweating is a necessary bodily function with powerful healing effects.

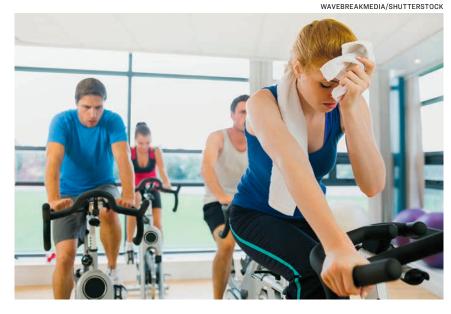
Specifically, more studies are emerging lauding the detoxifying effects of sweat. By clearing out a range of toxins, from persistent organic pollutants (POPs) to heavy metals, sweat plays an essential role in your body's natural detox function. Sweat will help your body push out

toxins, but it will also include minerals your body needs. Let's look at some of the toxins and minerals that are cleared from your body when you sweat:

Persistent Organic Pollutants

This category includes solvents, fumigants, and insecticides. A clinical study with 20 participants found that sweat samples contained a range of toxins, including pesticides DDT/DDE, endosulfan, methoxychlor, and endrin. In fact, nearly all parent compounds of pesticides were found in the samples studied, which shows that sweating is an effective way of diminishing your body's toxic burden.

Additionally, the sweat sample contained some pesticides—including DDT, methoxychlor, and endrin—that were not present in the blood or urine samples collected from the same participant, suggesting that some pesticides are only mobilized and excreted through sweating.



While sweating has a host of benefits because of the exercise that caused it, the act of sweating

itself also heals

the body.

Phthalate

Phthalate, found in plastic products, is another toxic chemical that is removed through sweat. In one study, researchers evaluated blood, sweat, and urine samples from 20 individuals, and discovered that all subjects had mono (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (MEHP), a common phthalate, in each of the samples. The concentrations of this compound in sweat were more than twice as high as urine levels, showing that sweating may be the most

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enter the body through a "leaky gut," the lymph channels and cells carry these potential attackers to the lymph nodes to be destroyed or to have antibodies made to neutralize them.

Disease and the Lymphatic System Obesity and diabetes are particularly dam-

aging to the lymphatic system in that these dysfunctions increase porous holes in the lymph channel walls where the nourishment, antibodies, and cellular messengers leak out into the free abdominal fat so they can't perform their proper function. In chronic inflammatory situations such as Crohn's disease, lymphatic obstruction can be demonstrated before obvious changes in the surface of the colon.

The lymphatic system is the home of immunity. Cancer cells travel by way of lymphatic channels and are destroyed by natural killer cells and other powerful weapons in our defense system. Success of the immune system is dependent upon accurate information, rapid responses, and an overall healthy system.

If messages are delayed, misdirected, or corrupted by a failed lymphatic system, then the cancer, infection, or winding down of the body (aging) will progress. If the signals to turn off the pro-inflammatory cells and proteins are delayed or not sent because disturbance of the lymphatic pathways occurs, arthritis or autoimmune disease can develop from chronic inflammation.

How to Improve Lymphatic Function As previously stated, all chronic degenerative disease is related to chronic inflammation and lymphatic dysfunction. Fortunately, because of epigenetics, our bodies respond positively to wise life choices. Epigenetics is a relatively new scientific theory that states that the results of one's DNA output aren't predetermined. DNA is more like an architect's file cabinet with different plans that can be opened or closed depending on the choices one makes.

You're the architect, and your choices select which positive or negative cell messengers are created by your DNA. Harmful genes can be downregulated and good genes can be encouraged or upregulated

Cardiovascular, neurologic, gastrointestinal, immune, and autoimmune disease, cancer, infection, arthritis, and aging are all profoundly influenced by lifestyle choices such as exercise, food, and stress modification. Let's review some of these modalities as they apply in general to all these biologic systems.

Exercise

Since lymphatic flow is low-pressure, it requires outside force from the muscle activity and arterial pulsations to move the fluid forward. Concomitantly, there are one-way valves in the lymphatics that prevent the fluid from refluxing.

In effect, more muscle contractions create greater lymph flow. This is especially true for the diaphragm. By deep breathing, the progress of the lymph accelerates through the largest lymph vessel, the thoracic duct, which carries 80 percent of fluid to the venous system.

Exercise can increase flow by four- to seven-fold, which not only increases the volume, but also the amount of cellular and protein messages that are sent back and forth to instruct the tissue to either promote inflammation or facilitate repair and regression.

Many forms of exercise can be utilized. One should choose according to those that

effective way of ridding your body of this endocrine-disrupting compound.

Heavy Metals

One study with 20 patients reported that when compared to urine, sweat contained about 24 times more cadmium, 19 times more nickel, 16 times more lead, and almost three times more aluminum. Overall, sweat proved more effective than urine at removing 14 out of the 18 heavy metals studied. It also contained larger quantities of 16 out of the 18 metals than the blood samples did.

Of all the metals, aluminum (a toxin) was found at the highest concentrations in sweat, with zinc, copper, and nickel also occurring at relatively high amounts in the studied samples.

Bisphenol A (BPA)

Researchers examined the blood, urine and sweat of 20 participants for BPA, an endocrine-disrupting toxin found in canned foods and plastic water bottles, among other things. Of the 20 sweat samples collected, 16 contained BPA, while only 14 urine and two blood samples tested positive for the toxin.

Not only does this reveal that sweat is the most effective way of removing BPA buildIt's hard to measure such a low-pressure system that's small and colorless, but great strides have been made in the last two decades, identifying the functions and interconnections of the lymph cells.

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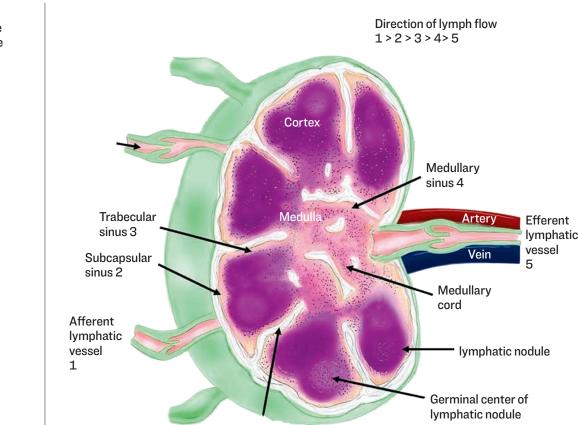
the body.

throughout

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Trabecula

are most enjoyed, because they won't last if they're not enjoyable. Walking one to two Lymph's major miles at three miles per hour three to five days per week is highly recommended. One can try a program of 10 to 15 deep breaths three times per day (discontinue or limit to your tolerance level if dizziness develops). According to NASA, one of the best ways to burn calories and get lymph flow is to use a trampoline. Start with a few minutes per day, then gradually increase. Since lymphatic channels are next to your arteries, increasing your pulse rate and intensity will help improve lymph flow. Also, according to one study from Italy, jumping decreases pain severity by 88 percent by flushing pain triggering inflammatory compounds through the lymphatic system. We would recommend 10 to 20 minutes, but even five minutes or 50 to 100 jumps can be powerful. Additionally, although not exercise,

massage and yoga are powerful ways to promote lymph production and flow. External pressure on the skin is transmitted to the muscles, which then allows the lymph to flow. Yoga is termed an internal organ massage and can increase lymphatic flow. Enjoying the sauna can act like exercise by dilating the vessels, increasing the heart rate, and removing bodily toxins from lymph through the sweat glands in the skin.

Stress Modification

This category covers more than our response to negative circumstances. It also includes spirituality or the sense of a connection to God, a higher power, deeper consciousness, to community, the Earth, a righteous spirit, or having a meaningful place in the universe.

Meditation is the process of training the mind to become quiet and more peaceful. Even a few minutes of meditation in the morning and evening can allow for better lymph flow and has been documented to lower stress levels.

Meditation, with acceptance and gratitude, can calm the anxious mind and decrease the adrenaline and cortisone that abound in stressful circumstances. Overproduction of these "flight or fight" hormones causes lymph vessel spasm and eventual obliteration.

up in the body, it also shows that testing blood or urine for toxicity levels may not present the whole picture.

Ways to Sweat

When it comes time to break a sweat, there are a host of activities you can choose from. The majority of exercises and sports will get you sweaty: running/brisk walking, swimming, Bikram yoga, tennis, basketball—the list goes on. A low-impact option is spending time in a sauna. When comparing an infrared sauna to a steam sauna, researchers found that the sweat from the infrared sauna contained more bismuth, cadmium, chromium, mercury, and uranium. The steam sauna caused higher levels of arsenic, aluminum, cobalt, copper, manganese, nickel, lead, tin, thallium, and zinc to be excreted.

It's important to note that hydration is essential in maximizing the health benefits listed above. Sweating has powerful effects on your health, but not drinking enough water during and after sweating will lead to a host of separate health problems. An easy rehydration guideline to follow is to weigh yourself directly before and after sweating: The weight lost is the amount of water you should drink after to rehydrate yourself. For reference, one pound of water is slightly less than 18 fluid ounces (.5 liters).

the presence of stress. The gentle stretching of yoga and tai chi systematically move our blood and lymph fluids through our circulation pathways. This has been shown to directly lower blood pressure and stress hormones so that your lymph vessels will dilate and perform their functions more efficiently.

Yoga and massage can also be a benefit in

CHRIS SULLIVAN/CC BY-SA 4.0

Food

Most healthful diets include many fruits and vegetables. That's because they're the primary source of polyphenols and flavonoids, which are nature's best stimulators of good lymphatic flow.

Plant-based foods, including dark leafy vegetables such as arugula, kale, spinach, and Swiss chard, provide an array of vitamins and minerals, including magnesium, potassium, calcium, vitamin K and others needed for blood and lymph vessel repair. Fruits are high in vitamin C and flavonoids such as hesperidin. Blueberries contain the most powerful polyphenolic antioxidant, pterostilbene.

Certain spices and herbs have a medicinal effect on lymph flow because they contain compounds that relax lymph vessels to accentuate flow. These include garlic, onions, cloves, cayenne, cinnamon, oregano, curry, and turmeric, which all contain compounds that assist in tissue maintenance and repair.

By contrast, vegetable oil, fried foods, sugar, a high animal fat diet, chemically sprayed food, and industrial toxins should be avoided because they all cause lymphatic vessel spasm and sluggish lymph flow.

Be mindful that the consistency of the lymph, whether it's easy-flowing or sluggish, depends on a healthy supply of clean pure water.

Gerald M. Lemole, MD, is the former medical director of Christiania Care's Preventive Medicine and Rehabilita tion Institute and Center for Integrative Health and former chief of cardiovascular surgery at the Medical Center of Delaware. He has written more than 150 articles, book chapters, and editorials. Besides "Lymph & Longevity: The Untapped Secret to Health," he has written several books on integrative medicine.

Additionally, sweat contains minerals that are essential to keeping your body functioning optimally. After activities in which you sweat excessively, it's important to replace the minerals lost, especially zinc, copper, selenium, chromium, and potassium. Coconut water is a great source of potassium, and nuts, seafood, whole grains, and legumes generally contain relatively high levels of zinc, copper, selenium, and chromium.

Next time you feel yourself tempted to stay on the couch instead of going for a run, or opt to stay in the air conditioning instead of spending time in a sauna, think of all the "sweaty" benefits that you're not getting. Breaking a sweat might seem like a pain, but it's worth it to keep your internal detox systems healthy and well-functioning.

Dr. Deanna Minich is a wellness and lifestyle medicine expert who integrates ancient healing traditions with modern science. Her unique "whole self" approach to nutrition looks at physiology, psychology, eating, and living within what she calls the "7 Systems of Health." Founder of Food & Spirit, she also leads online detox programs. Her latest book is Whole Detox: A 21-Day Personalized Program to Break Through Barriers in Every Area of Your Life (HarperCollins, 2016). This article was first published on GreenMedInfo.com

study with 20 participants found that sweat samples contained a range of toxins, including pesticides

DDT/DDE, endosulfan, methoxychlor, and endrin.

A clinical

Moving Forward in a Pandemic

Our lives can get caught in a loop and recovering takes a mindful watch on what's going on inside us

EMMA SUTTIE

Before a few years ago, a worldwide pandemic seemed more likely to be the plot of a best-selling novel than the dystopian reality it has become.

COVID-19 and all its variants have become an uncomfortable part of life. Just as things seem to settle down and we get back to living normally, another memory, interrupts brain processing variant comes along and the disruption abilities, and contributes to fatigue, clinibegins again. This time of mas-

sive upheaval has spurred us to reevaluate how we do things as a community and a country. For instance, we've realized that having food, medical supplies, and essential goods come from halfway around the globe is risky, and there has been a surge in local production as a result.

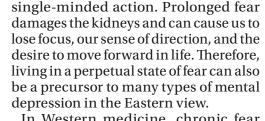
Producing essential goods in our local communities fortifies us, making us more resilient and self-reliant

But beyond issues with our supply chain, there are grand patterns in daily life that erode our well-being, from

what we fill our minds with to how we tance to disease called psychoneuroimspend our days. While most of us are munology. more aware than ever of how important diet and exercise are to our overall health, there are several other factors Sometimes it's difficult to see the posithat also play a major role. Tending to the tive when we seem to be drowning in bad issues that follow below will help you be news. The information we allow into our more resilient in the face of an ongoing psyche profoundly affects our mental pandemic and all the disruptions that come with it.

Fear

Fear, particularly when prolonged, us more susceptible to illness. Fear is a natural human emotion and a primary survival mechanism. It's a reaction to a perceived threat. Fear serves an essential function in the moment by keeping us away from danger, but living in a state of fear for weeks, months—or years—has consequences. In Eastern medicine, fear corresponds to the kidneys, which are the source of our body's constitutional energy, similar to our genetic makeup in Western science. The kidneys are also responsible for our willpower: our ability to focus on goals and pursue them with



In Western medicine, chronic fear impairs the immune system, affects cal depression, and PTSD (post-

traumatic stress disorder). An article published by the American Psychological

Association discusses the connection between stress and decreased immune esponse. Two pioneering researchers in the early 1980s were intrigued by the link they observed between stress and infec-

tion in animal studies. This finding caused an explosion of research into the connection between stress and the imto see the positive when mune system. There's even a we seem to be drowning field of psychology dedicated to how the state of mind af-

fects one's health and resis-

Limiting Negativity

Sometimes it's difficult

in bad news.

health. One of the ways we can begin to heal is to be aware of what we're letting in.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, consider taking a break from the news. Put your damages the immune system, making social media accounts on pause and go outside. It's easy to get stuck in a loop of negativity when it's being pushed on us from every direction. If you need a boost in morale, call a trusted friend or, even better, have coffee with them. Read a book with your children or take your dog for a walk.

One of the ways I foster positivity is by being mindful about my interactions with people when I'm out in the world. When I interact with someone, I make eye contact and smile. People are usually on autopilot, their heads down, lost in thought. When I smile and make eye **Prolonged fear** damages the kidneys and can cause us to lose focus, our sense of direction, and the desire to move forward in life.



contact, they're often surprised. I usually get a smile in return, and the gesture gives me a boost, and them as well, I suspect. We each get to enjoy a tiny boost of endorphins (the feel-good hormones). It's a small act of positivity, but it can be

Fostering Positive Relationships Scientific studies have demonstrated that the number and quality of healthy relationships in our lives keep us healthy, happy, and living longer. The pandemic has made maintaining those connections more challenging, but they're vital for our health. Focusing on nurturing, loving, supportive relationships strengthens us and helps us be more resilient when faced with adversity. You'll recognize positive, loving relationships because they're the ones that make you feel joyful, replenished, and grateful instead of depleted and depressed. These

You Have Permission to Like Yourself

There comes a time in your life when you can decline other people's efforts to fix you

NANCY COLIER

Is there someone in your life who frequently critiques you, and often points out what you're doing or have done wrong, and how you should improve? Is there someone close to you who gives you the feeling that maybe they don't quite like you as you are?

We all know people who seem to know how we should behave—better than we do—people we feel constantly judge us, who don't seem to approve of who we are.

As human beings, we're a fairly judgmental lot. We have a lot to say about each other, and a lot of it is critical. We come up with a lot of thinking about what other people shouldn't be doing, and should behave and feel. We tend to do this within our families more than anywhere else. In fact, families are a place where criticism and judgment can be a way of life. Often there's a running commentary on it could be all of those things, but it's far what's wrong with everyone and much of more likely that none of this is true.

it is shared, all in the name of good fun and wanting "what's best for you." When you're raised in a judgmental family, you get used to being criticized; it feels normal to be perpetually told what's wrong with you, how others perceive you negatively, and of course, how you should change.

No matter how much this judgment stings, you may feel reluctant to ignore or reject it. To do so would be to stop listening to those who know you the best, whose approval matters, and who, more than anyone else, want what's best for you. And furthermore, these people may see issues that you can't or refuse to see. Turning away from criticism and judgment from your familial jury would imply you think you're perfect or have no interest in improving yourself. It may feel akin to saying "This is who I am, take it or leave it." It could even be narcissistic, a declaration that you only want to be with fans, people who think you're great. Sure,

We can deeply care about another's person's experience and at the same time, not be terribly interested in fixing ourselves so they'll approve of us.

The fact is, sometimes even people who respect us, trust our judgment, and know that we're good tell us things about ourselves that are difficult to hear. But when people who are genuinely on our side, who like and respect us, offer such comments, their words land differently: kindly, gently. Criticism that comes from love, even when the words are hard to hear, feels loving.

This kind of feedback or advice usually contains a willingness to include us in the conversation, a curiosity about our experience. There is an effort to understand why we're doing what we're doing, and what our intention is. Such comments are offered with respect and contain a flavor of helping not harming, including not rejecting.

In truth, what we tend to consider "criticism" actually includes many different things: from advice to guidance to condemnation. If we check in with our own experience and intuition, we can almost always tell when a comment or commentary (on us) comes from kindness and a desire to help us. We know if the person sharing it wants to create more closeness and honesty in the relationship and intends to maintain our dignity and respect even as they point toward our shortcoming. We can also sense when a critique is

Make time every day to acknowledge how you feel, and then allow yourself to feel it.



Baking bread, planting a garden, and making things you would typically buy are all ways to bring power back into our lives, improve our sense of loss, and alleviate stress and anxiety.



One of the ways to foster positivity is by being mindful about your interactions and presence in the world.

the all-encompassing nature of the pan- The good thing is that you're not alone. demic and how it has affected every part We're all going through it together. Our of life, it can be hard to know where to unified experience is easy to forget somestart when it comes to dealing with our times because we've been so isolated. demic as a loss in different aspects of life. it comes to keeping our bodies resilient. feelings. Emotional intelligence—the You're not alone. Be kind to yourself. around you. There is love, goodness, and kindness in the world. It's all around you. Acknowledge and process what you're feeling and find joy wherever you can. We will all get through this, and the first step is to begin healing.

> Emma Suttie is an acupuncture physician and founder of Chinese Medicine *Living—a website dedicated to sharing* how to use traditional wisdom to live a healthy lifestyle in the modern world. She has lived in four countries and now works through her practice Thrive Consulting. She is a lover of the natural world, martial arts, and a good cup of tea.

healthy relationships are the ones you feel like you're in control of your life. want to nourish, especially now.

Becoming More Self-Sufficient

Many of us have felt the impact of the pan-This loss has manifested in different ways, losing a sense of safety and security due to uncertainty about the future.

One way to combat this feeling is to become more self-sufficient. Self-reliance brings us back into control of our lives. Baking bread, planting a garden, and making things you would typically buy are all ways to bring power back into our lives, improve our sense of loss, and alleviate stress and anxiety. Interestingly, these activities have all surged during the pandemic. Having extra food and water tucked away is another good way to ease concerns over food security and

Eating, Sleeping, and Exercising Eating well, exercising, and getting enough sleep are the fundamentals when When life becomes unpredictable, as it such as losing contact with loved ones, has throughout the pandemic, getting losing the ability to move about freely, and back to basics is an excellent way to stay strong. Eating a healthy, varied diet of fresh, natural foods, going outside every day to move your body, and getting restful, rejuvenating sleep will help us cope with whatever life throws at us. With a fit body, satiated belly, and good night's sleep, there's little you can't accomplish.

Processing Your Emotions

In Eastern medicine, attending to our emotions is considered vital to our overall health. Emotions are a normal part of the human experience, but in the Eastern view, unacknowledged or unexpressed

emotions can make us sick. Because of and nothing has been the same since. ability to perceive, control, and evaluate Take care of yourself and the people our emotions—is an important skill and something we all need in order to navigate the complex world of feelings. This need is amplified during the current upheaval. That said, try to keep it simple. Make time every day to acknowledge how you feel, and then allow yourself to feel it. Completely. This practice gives your feelings a place to go—simply by allowing them to be felt. Once felt, they can dissipate because they have served their purpose and no longer need to take up space.

A Shared Journey

The pandemic has been onerous. Our whole world changed almost overnight,

a condemnation, a blaming or shaming of us, and when the speaker is convinced they know how we should be different. We feel the difference when someone offers an opinion on us but owns it as their experience as opposed to some universal truth about who we are.

Judgments of this latter sort tend to be riddled with shoulds and also noticeably absent of curiosity.

But here's the thing, and the point of this article: It's OK to stop being interested in what other people think is wrong with you, and furthermore, to stop taking in their ideas about who and how you should be. It's OK to stop making yourself available to everyone's ideas about the validity and rightness of your choices and behavior, and the quality of you.

It's OK to turn away from judgment and criticism—in any form you choose—even when it's being presented as in your best interest. There comes a time in your life when you're allowed to stop being available and present for what everyone else thinks of you. Maybe that time is now.

Even if we stop taking on other's people's judgments and criticisms and decline to fix whatever behavior they think is wrong, it doesn't mean we pull the covers over our eyes or declare that we don't care how we come across in the world. We're not

saying we know everything and we're always right. It doesn't mean we're now bulls in a china shop, insensitive and immune to other people's feelings or experiences. What we are saying, however, with dignity and power, is that we are OK with our choices and who we are. We like ourselves. In reality, we can deeply care about another's person's experience and at the same time, not be terribly interested in fixing ourselves so they'll approve of us. We can, in fact, take ourselves off their list of those looking to be fixed. This article is a permission slip of sorts: I'm offering you

There comes a time in your life when you're allowed to stop being available and present for what everyone else thinks of you.

permission to surround yourself with people who genuinely like and respect you, trust your judgment, and fundamentally enjoy who and how you are. You're allowed to choose not to put yourself in the company of people who make you feel badly about yourself. And furthermore, you have the right to decide not to spend your time and not devote your energy to listening to what's wrong with you. You don't have to feel guilty for putting yourself in the company of people who appreciate you. To do so is not a cop-out, nor a free pass to ignore your own weak spots.

Starting today, you can decide that you want to be with people who are, at a core level, on your team.

This is your life and it's OK if it feels good. When it comes to the company you keep, it's OK to take the road of ease, of inviting in what actually feels good and loving, and rejecting what doesn't. Just because something is hard to hear doesn't mean it's good for you; it may be hard to hear because it's not good for you. To take yourself out of the company of people who disapprove, judge, and criticize you can be an act of supreme self-kindness and intentionality, which is good for you. We're not taught this, but it's actually OK to feel good about yourself, and also, to choose and keep company with people who also feel good about you.

Nancy Colier is a psychotherapist, interfaith minister, public speaker, workshop leader, and author of "Can't Stop Thinking: How to Let Go of Anxiety and Free Yourself from Obsessive Rumination" and "The Power of Off: The Mindful Way to Stay Sane in a Virtual World." For more information, visit NancyColier.com

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The Contending Forces Within

Cultivating virtue gives us a path toward happiness and self regard

DONNA MARTELLI

here's a crazy conflict within our souls. Everything can be going well, and then out of nowhere, we want to do the wrong

thing, whatever that might be. You know your weaknesses, and I know mine. That error could be any thought or action that would harm another person or deliver a sinful pleasure that lowers our self-opinion.

An underlying principle of life in our mortal bodies is this: When we want to do what's right, we inevitably, at some point, will want to do something wrong. In some cases, it seems the body itself wants things that our mind does not.

This internal dissension is precisely why we must pursue and nurture virtue in ourselves. Doing so gives us the power to disregard any thought or heart matter that challenges our virtuous living.

If we commit to the virtuous path, we will watch our contentment grow as our self-image lifts. As kindness, honesty, and other virtues guide our thoughts and actions, a sense of well-being eases in around us. Few things make us as truly content as knowing we did the right thing-especially when it was difficult.

Choosing virtue even has the power to banish the depression that comes from an unproductive and self-centered life. Our anxious thoughts about other people's opinions become light when we know we've based our actions on the well-being of those around us. Stress about what may come decreases when we rest assured that despite whatever life holds, we have our dignity and self-regard.

Virtue will not just happen to us; we have to nurture it in our hearts and minds.

What Is Virtue?

Virtue is the quality or practice of moral excellence. It includes character traits such as tolerance, faithfulness, compassion, integrity, and sincerity.

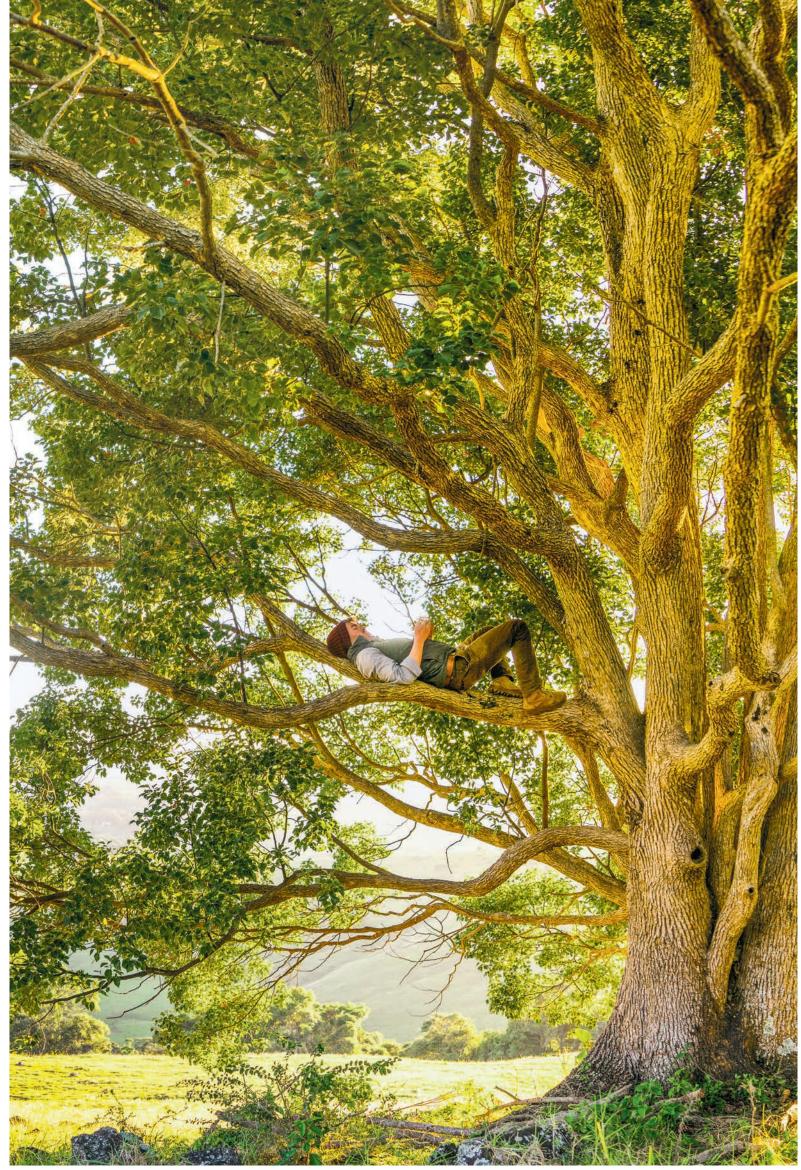
When we think of a virtuous person, we think of one with high moral standards and humility. We see them as honest, compassionate, and courageous. Virtue is a high calling, and it's a quality that we respect and admire in others.

How Can We Cultivate Virtue? Once we decide to live virtuously, we

need to nurture and support virtue in ourselves.

have to nurture it in our hearts and minds. Knowing there will be roadblocks, • Seeing a need, we do what we can to • Work on life-giving goals. we also know that we have the power to avoid and overcome the obstacles that would derail us. There are several habits and ideas that can help us on the path to virtue:

• Realize that virtuous living is a choice • Volunteer time to a worthy cause.



Virtue will not just happen to us; we Few things make us as truly content as knowing we did the right thing-especially when it was difficult.

- meet it. • Always treat people with kindness, no matter who they are or what they do.
- Think of others before ourselves. • Express gratitude wherever and when-
- ever appropriate.
- and decide to follow righteous living. Give of our resources to help others.
- Maintain a policy of constant honesty.
- Act only with integrity. • Seek always to deepen our compassion. • See our own relief in easing the suffer-
- ing of others. • Speak only what will be helpful to others.
- Share our hope and levity through a genuine smile.

Formerly a professional dancer with the Harkness Ballet of New York, Donna Martelli has written three books, as well as course manuals. book summaries. blogs, articles, and devotionals. She lives in Indianapolis, Ind., and is married with five children and 12 grandchildren. She is the author of "When God Says Drop It" and "Why the Dance."

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Some seniors are feeling worn out

and have a feeling of flatness that

is sapping

motivatior

As COVID-19 Slogs On, Seniors Suffer Growing Malaise

Many older adults report their fortitude is waning while others find new sources of support and determination

JUDITH GRAHAM

ate one night in January, Jonathan Coffino, 78, turned to his wife as they sat in bed. "I don't know how much longer I can do this," he said.

Coffino was referring to the caution that has come to define his life during the CO-VID-19 pandemic. After two years of mostly staying at home and avoiding people, his patience is frayed and his distress is growing. "There's a terrible fear that I'll never get

back my normal life," Coffino said, describing the feelings he tries to keep at bay. "And there's an awful sense of purposelessness."

Despite recent signals that COVID-19's grip on the country may be easing, many older adults are struggling with persistent malaise, heightened by the spread of the highly contagious Omicron coronavirus variant. Even those who adapted well initially are saying that their fortitude is waning or wearing thin.

Like younger people, they're beset by uncer-tainty about what the future may bring. But added to that is an especially painful feeling that opportunities that will never come again are being squandered. Time is running out, and death is drawing ever nearer.

Continued on Page 15



There's a lot of times I feel I'm just letting the clock run out.

Fred Axelrod, 66



FOOD AS MEDICINE

Best Vegetables for Your Heart

Promote healthy arteries and prevent plaque buildup by eating these delicious foods **JOSEPH MERCOLA**

Research has shown that the more vegetables you eat, the lower your risk of heart disease, with different types of vegetables protecting

your heart through different mechanisms. Leafy greens, for example, have high amounts of nitrates that naturally boost your nitric oxide (NO) level. Cruciferous veggies, on the other hand, lower your risk of stroke and heart attack by romoting more supple neck arteries and preventing the buildup of arterial plaque. In fermented cabbage, it's the fiber content that helps lower blood pressure and improve blood sugar control, thereby lowering your risk of heart problems. Phytonu- Continued on Page 12

trients in sauerkraut also help promote easy blood flow and flexible blood vessels, while veggies rich in magnesium and quercetin also provide important heart benefits.

The following is a summary of some of the top vegetable types for maintaining **magnesium** healthy heart function well into old age.

Nitrate-Rich Veggies Boost Heart Health Nitric oxide (NO) is an important biological signaling molecule that supports normal endothelial function and protects your mitochondria. A potent vasodilator, it also helps relax and widen your blood vessels, which improves blood flow.

The best way to maintain healthy levels is to make sure you're eating plenty of dark-green leafy vegetables.



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THE EPOCH TIMES



Gout, you came in the night and kept me in agony. I didn't invite you the way many people do, so why did you come?

A Breakup Letter to Gout

I've looked at my life Gout, and it's time to make a change

LYNN JAFFEE

Dear Gout, I'm breaking up with you. I appreciate the time we had together and everything I've learned from you, but it's over;

I don't want you in my life anymore. Before we met, I'd heard about you. I know you've been around, going from person to person-often a single night, but frequently returning to wreak havoc again and again. You came to me in the middle of the night-unannounced and unwelcome. You woke me out of a sound sleep, first showing up as a cramp at the base of my big toe, and then later as a pain so profound you had me wide awake and rolling around in bed.

Wherever you decide to roost and cause your own kind of hell, there's also stagnation.

I used to think you were kind of a joke, Gout. You really should change your name-bring it out of medieval times. I has shown that purines found in dairy know you're supposed to be the disease may actually decrease my risk for you. of royalty, what with all the rich food I concede that adding a little more ani and drink, but why me? I hardly eat any mal protein to my diet lately made me meat. And organ meats? Forget it-they complicit in this relationship-but no never pass my lips.

Somewhere during those two long a mostly plant-based diet. nights that you made my life miserable, I began to think about where you fit in Chinese medicine. After all, it's what I do. Most of the time, we think of you, Gout, as dampness and heat. The dampness is manifested by the swelling you cause at whatever joint you decide to harass-most commonly the base of the big toe, but pretty much any joint

on any extremity. The heat part is pretty apparent, showing up as redness and warmth around the joint.

Interestingly, the way you affected me was damp, as there was swelling, but it was more cold-there was no redness, and I wanted to put heat on where it hurt. In addition, wherever

you decide to roost and cause your own you away, so I'm back on board with kind of hell, there's also stagnation, in that nothing's moving, not the dampness, heat, cold, and certainly not me because of the pain. Needless to say, acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine will be on my team if you ever show your face again.

So, Gout, I'm writing this letter to thank you for what you've taught me. I now understand that you're not just a stereotype. You're not just for the rich, steak-eating, martini-drinking members of the one percent. You taught me that you can be attracted to just about anyone, given the perfect storm of circumstances. So, dear Gout, lesson learned. I don't need you anymore, and to make sure you stay Lynn Jaffee is a licensed acupuncturist away, here's my plan:

I will make sure I am better hydrated. I understand that you visit only article was originally published on when there is a build-up of uric acid in AcupunctureTwinCities.com

the body. I know I don't drink enough to flush it out, and when you came, I had been pretty dehydrated for a couple of days.

I'll drink less alcohol.

While I'm not a big drinker, I like a cocktail now and then. OK, maybe a little more frequently than every now and then. When you showed up, my defenses were down. I had had a little something to drink for several evenings in a row, which I know is a risk factor, and which contributed to me being dehydrated. Now I'm on the wagon ... sort of. I will continue to enjoy a glass of wine or microbrew every so often. And yes, I understand that beer is actually worse for those of us touched by you, but I will imbibe only occasionally.

Let's talk about purines, Gout. I know that purines are chemicals that are part of the structure of our genes. Unfortunately, they're found in high concentrations in certain foods, such as organ meats, oily fish, shellfish, yeast, beer, and even lentils. Basically, purines from animal sources tend to increase my risk for you, Gout. Meanwhile, purines found in most plant-based foods are pretty neutral, and some research more. I'm going back to my former love,

We also need to talk about the sweet stuff, Gout. I know sugar may not be a trigger for you, but high fructose corn syrup is. While I never drink pop, my occasional margarita or vodka gimlet has that lime juice that's mostly green high fructose corn syrup. I realize now that in those days before you showed

up, Gout, I had my share of that stuff, and I don't blame you; I know you love it ... how could you stay away?

And yes, I will be a little more regular with my acupuncture treatments. I know I've fallen off recently,

and I know how much acupuncture and herbs can help keep

regular sessions on the table.

WE'RE THROUGH

Gout, I'm writing this letter to thank you for

what you've taught me.

Finally, Gout, why me? I don't have any risk factors for you. No family history, I'm not overweight, not a man, and don't have any other conditions (cardiovascular disease, diabetes, renal disease). Yes, I'm in the age range you like (over 45), but

I'm pretty darn healthy. What's the deal? I'd like to think that our relationship was just a brief encounter, Gout. Just a flirtation caused by an unusual combination of circumstances. I certainly take some of the blame in our ill-fated time together, but Gout, it's over. I never want to see you again.

and the author of "Simple Steps: The Chinese Way to Better Health." This

The Gallbladder Flush

Removing gallstones and clearing the biliary tract of biliary sludge

ASHLEY TURNER

hen it comes to gallblad der health, many people are looking for a specific strategy to remove gallstones and clear the bili ary tract. Clearing biliary sludge and gallstones is foundational for optimal health

What Are Gallstones?

Gallstones are crystallized deposits of cholesterol and other bile constituents that are formed in the bile ducts and the gallbladder. When the gallbladder and bile ducts are congested with gallstones and biliary sludge, appropriate bile flow is hindered. Bile is an important part of physiology because of its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Proper bile function protects gut integrity, promotes effective detoxification, and ensures the digestion and assimilation of fat and fat-soluble vitamins. Ensuring proper biliary function is a vital piece of optimal health.

Women are far more likely to suffer problems with gallstones and biliary issues. Other factors that contribute to gallstone formation and biliary problems include obesity; pregnancy; standard American diet (SAD) high in refined sugars, carbohydrates, oils, and low fiber; gluten consumption; insufficient methylation; hormone replacement therapy (HRT); oral contraceptives; underlying liver disease; rapid weight loss; diabetes or metabolic syndrome; family history of gallstones; inflammatory bowel syndrome; being 60 years old or older; mold and biotoxin illness; leaky gut; and environmental toxins.

Identifying Gallstones

While there are many symptoms that arise because of gallstone formation, identifying them requires imaging through ultrasound or CT scans. While we usually recommend specific herbs and nutrients to shrink larger gallstones before a flush, imaging can be helpful in understanding gallstone status and monitoring progress in their removal.

There are various markers on blood work that can indicate poor gallbladder function, liver impairment, and risk factors for gallstones. Some of these include high ALT, AST, bilirubin, LDH, GGT, ALP, and 5 -nucleotidase. Good doctors check many of these, especially if biliary issues are susected. Our clinic includes them in routine functional and integrative lab testing.

If you're experiencing gallbladder symptoms or have known gallstones, it's important to facilitate the proper gallbladder function. Compounds including beetroot, taurine, phosphatidylcholine, lemon, peppermint, and vitamin Chave all been shown to reduce the repercussions of gallstones and help shrink and dissolve them. Sometimes, individuals feel better by flushing gallstones from the gallbladder. Contrary to conventional wisdom, a gallstone-laden gallbladder doesn't need to be removed in order to resolve symptoms. The human body wasn't designed with spare parts and the gallbladder plays an important role in

our optimal physiology. To flush out the gallbladder, you'll need to gather a few ingredients.

Healing Ingredients

Tart Cherry Juice

Tart cherry juice is high in malic acid. Malic acid is a helpful compound for softening and breaking down gallstones.

Magnesium Sulfate Capsules

Magnesium sulfate (Epsom salt) draws water into the intestines and has laxative effects. Additionally, it helps to dilate bile ducks for safe and effective gallstone removal. Some people dilute Epsom salts into water to take it instead of using the capsules. It has a bitter, unpleasant taste, so most choose capsules.

Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

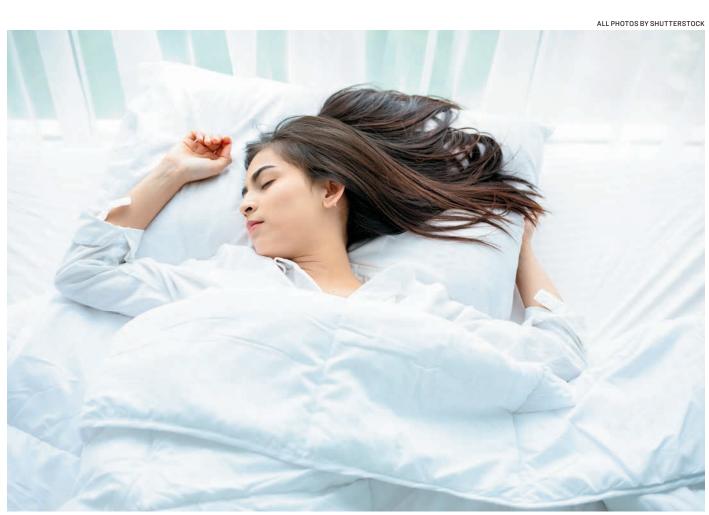
Be sure to source pure extra-virgin olive oil; 9:45 p.m. you will need 1/2 cup. When consumed, this will cause the gallbladder to speedily release bile.

Organic Grapefruit

Six ounces of freshly-squeezed grapefruit juice combined with the extra-virgin olive oil helps to aid the flush. If your body has an aversion to grapefruit, you can use equal parts of freshly squeezed orange and lemon juice instead.

Preparing for the Flush

One week before the flush, take two table-



Doctors car sometimes be too quick to remove the gallbladder. Take steps if you are at higher risk of gallstones and want to help your body remove them.

spoons of tart cherry juice concentrate daily. The malic acid in tart cherry juice helps to soften gallstones. It's delicious stirred into mineral water. Some people drink 32 ounces of organic apple juice in preparation because of its high malic acid content. While this is effective, it's also excessively more food sugar than most people need. There are also malic acid supplements available if you choose to not take tart cherry concentrate. Magnesium malate is also helpful in softening gallstones.

The gallbladder flush is best done over a weekend or at a time when you're able to rest and easily access the bathroom.

The Flush

Breakfast On the day of the flush, eat a complex carbohydrate breakfast with no fat. Oatmeal with fruit is a good choice. It's important to not eat fat, as that affects bile flow and could hinder the passing of gallstones. Also, fat consumption could lead to feeling ill throughout the night. Avoid protein food, nuts, avocado, butter, or oil on the day of the flush.

Don't take supplements the day of the flush, except for those indicated below. Consult with your doctor prior to the flush, especially if you're on prescription medication. Stay hydrated by drinking clean, filtered water throughout the day.

It's advised to take part in colon hydrotherapy or complete several water enemas to clear the colon the morning before the flush. While this isn't always necessary, any affected stool could hinder the success of the flush, lead to pain during the flush, and/or contribute to toxin exposure from gallstones stuck in the intestines.

1:30 p.m.

At this point, stop eating and drinking anything other than water. A light lunch of steamed rice and vegetables with unrefined salt is acceptable.

6 p.m.

Take the first dose of 15 magnesium sulfate capsules with at least eight ounces of water. Alternatively, you can drink six ounces of the Epsom salt solution mentioned above.

8 p.m.

Take the second dose of 15 magnesium sulfate capsules or six ounces of the Epsom salt solution. It's important to take it easy and rest throughout the evening. You may feel some movement in the gastrointestinal tract as water is drawn into the intestines because of the magnesium sulfate.

Prepare the fat solution. Cut grapefruits in half and juice them. You'll need four to six ounces. Alternatively, you can use four ounces of freshly squeezed lemon juice. Combine the fruit juice and four ounces of extra-virgin olive oil in a pint jar with a tightly fitting lid. Shake vigorously for 20 to 30 seconds to emulsify the solution. Visit the bathroom one last time and clean up the kitchen.

You can prepare a castor oil pack to facilitate gallstone removal, if desired. This isn't necessary, but some people say it helps. Simply apply a couple of tablespoons of cas-

If you're experiencing gallbladder symptoms or have known gallstones, it's important to facilitate the proper gallbladder function.



Gallstones will move through the ducts then through the intestines.



Be sure to source pure extra-virgin olive oil for the gallbladder flush.

tor oil to organic cotton flannel and place it over the liver and gallbladder area, under the ribcage on the right side of the body.

If you have trouble sleeping, you may take 2,000 milligrams (mg) to 4,000 mg of L-Ornithine with this solution. Sometimes people take anti-parasitic compounds, such as black walnut, to flush the liver and gallbladder.

10 p.m.

Drink the solution. Some people find it helpful to drink it through a straw. Lay down in bed immediately. The flush won't work unless you lie down in bed on your back. You must stay completely still for a minimum of 30 minutes. Ideally, you'll fall asleep for the night.

While you rest, gallstones will move through the dilated ducts and pass through the small and large intestine. If you feel the urge to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night, that's perfectly fine.

6 a.m.

Between 6 a.m. and 6:30 a.m., or upon waking, take the third dose of magnesium sulfate capsules or the Epsom salt solution. Go to the bathroom throughout the morning as needed. Observe what you're passing. Be sure to stay hydrated, drinking clean, filtered water throughout the morning. Plan to rest throughout the morning as the body is working hard to pass gallstones and detox.

8 a.m.

Take the fourth dose of magnesium sulfate capsules or the Epson salt solution. You'll continue to need to use the bathroom and pass gallstones.

10 a.m.

Drink a small glass of tart cherry concentrate and mineral water, apple juice, or bone broth, if you're feeling up to it.

12 p.m.

A light lunch can be eaten; fresh fruit is usually best tolerated at this point. If digestion still feels a little off, most people are back to eating normally by dinner. We recommend avoiding gluten and dairy for people with gallbladder concerns, but they should especially be avoided for the next several days. If you have known food sensitivities, please continue to avoid them.

Safety

Working with a practitioner to shrink and flush gallstones can be an important part of achieving overall health. Many people successfully flush gallstones with no problem when gallbladder flush instructions are followed precisely. Those with underlying medical conditions, young children, and pregnant and nursing mothers shouldn't do a gallbladder flush.

It's wise to work with a skilled clinician to assess underlying factors that could be contributing to gallstones and facilitating the body for proper removal.

Dr. Ashley Turner is a traditionally trained naturopath and board-certified doctor of holistic health for Restorative Wellness Center. As an expert in functional medicine, Turner is the author of the gut-healing guide "Restorative Kitchen" and "Restorative Traditions," a cookbook comprised of noninflammatory holiday recipes.

Best Vegetables for Your Heart

Promote healthy arteries and prevent plaque buildup by eating these delicious foods

Continued from Page 9

A study published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, which followed nearly 1,230 seniors for 15 years, found that the higher an individual's vegetable nitrate intake, the lower their risk for atherosclerotic vascular disease (ASVD) and all-cause mortality.

According to the study's authors, "These results support the concept that nitraterich vegetables may reduce the risk of agerelated ASVD mortality." Research has also shown a diet high in vegetable nitrates helps prevent and treat prehypertension and hypertension (high blood pressure) and protects against heart attacks, courtesy of their NO-boosting power.

Vegetable nitrates shouldn't be confused with the nitrates found in processed meats such as bacon, hot dogs, ham, and other cured meats. Dietary nitrates can convert into either health-boosting NO or nitrosamines, which are carcinogenic and should be avoided as much as possible.

Vegetable nitrates turn into beneficial NO while the nitrates in processed meats are primarily converted into harmful nitrosamines. The top 10 nitrate-rich foods that can help boost your heart health include arugula (480 milligrams of nitrates per 100 grams), rhubarb (281 milligrams), cilantro (247 milligrams), butter leaf lettuce (200 milligrams), spring greens such as mesclun mix (188 milligrams), basil (183 milligrams), beet greens (177 milligrams), oakleaf lettuce (155 milligrams), swiss chard (151 milligrams), and red beets (110 milligrams).

A recent study found that the higher an individual's vegetable nitrate intake, the lower their risk for atherosclerotic vascular disease and all-cause mortality.

> is an excellent way to increase your magnesium, along with many other important plant-

Promote healt arteries and preven laque buildup by eatir these delicious foods

Watermelon Also Boosts NO Production Watermelon is a popular summer delicacy, and it will also improve NO production, thanks to L-citrulline. However, it's important to understand that watermelon is high in net carbs and that consuming large amounts of it too often could worsen insulin resistance.

Watermelon has lycopene, a carotenoid antioxidant that gives fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes and watermelon their pink or red color. Its antioxidant activity has long been suggested to be more powerful than that of other carotenoids, such as beta-carotene, and research suggests that it may significantly reduce your risk of stroke.

A study that followed men in their mid-40s to mid-50s for more than 12 years found that those with the highest blood levels of lycopene were 55 percent less likely to have a stroke than those with the lowest levels. Other antioxidants, including alpha-carotene, beta-carotene, vitamin E, and vitamin A, showed no such benefit.

L-citrulline, which gains its name from the Latin word for watermelon, is a precursor of L-arginine, the substrate for nitric oxide synthase in the production of NO.

According to a 2006 study, "Supplemental administration [of] L-arginine has been shown to be effective in improving NO production and cardiovascular function in cardiovascular diseases associated with endothelial dysfunction, such as hypertension, heart failure, atherosclerosis, diabetic vascular disease, and ischemiareperfusion injury, but the beneficial actions do not endure with chronic therapy.

livery very ineffective ... In contrast, L-citrulline is not metabolized in the intestine kenhorst wrote. or liver ... L-citrulline entering the kidney, vascular endothelium, and other tissues can be readily converted to L-arginine, thus raising plasma and tissue levels of Larginine and enhancing NO production." In other words, eating L-arginine doesn't

work as well as eating L-citrulline and letting your body convert it to L-arginine.

Cruciferous Veggies Improve Arterial Suppleness

Cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage which are widely recognized for their an-

ticancer benefitsalso have a heart-healthy influence.

A study that examined the effects of vegetable intake on carotid artery measures, which are indicative of arterial health (narrow, hard arteries restrict blood flow and can lead to heart attack and stroke), found that those who consumed the most cruciferous vegetables had thinner and therefore healthier carotid arteries than those who consumed the fewest.

On average, those who ate at least three daily servings of cruciferous veggies had nearly 0.05 millimeters (mm) thinner carotid arterial walls (the artery in your neck) than those who ate two servings or less. Each 0.1-mm decrease in thickness is associated with a decreased stroke and heart attack risk ranging from 10 percent to 18 percent, so the results were considered rather significant.

Overall, each 10-gram daily serving of cruciferous vegetables was associated with a 0.8 percent reduction in carotid artery wall thickness. This link wasn't found with other types of vegetables.

"After adjusting for lifestyle, cardiovascular disease risk factors (including medication use) as well as other vegetable types and dietary factors, our results continued "Substantial intestinal and hepatic me- to show a protective association between tabolism of L-arginine ... makes oral de- cruciferous vegetables and carotid artery wall thickness," study author Lauren Blek

> "However, this does not discount the importance of other vegetable types, as we know increasing a variety of all vegetables is important to maintain good health. Our research suggests that recommendations to include a couple of servings of cruciferous vegetables amongst the recommended amount of vegetables may help to optimize the vascular health benefits.'

Eat Your Cruciferous

Veggies With Mustard Seed The sulforaphane in broccoli and other cruciferous veggies has potent anticancer

the Mediterranean diet, Ornish diet (plantbased), and DASH, according to both Forbes and US News and World Report.

Get Sufficient Sleep

Seven to nine hours of sleep every night is best for heart health—and overall health as well. Insufficient sleep increases the risk of coronary artery disease and cardiovascular disease, as noted in one review.

Consider Supplements

One of the best supplements for supporting heart health is aged garlic extract (AGE). Numerous studies have demonstrated the benefit of this supplement for cardiovascular health. AGE can stop and even reverse the accumulation of plaque (and thus slow the progression of atherosclerosis), significantly lower systolic and diastolic blood pressure, and reduce both total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol. Other supplements to consider for heart health include coenzyme Q10, magnesium, omega-3 fatty acids, fiber, and green tea.

Keep Moving

Muscles need to be worked to stay strong and healthy, and the heart is no exception. Aerobic exercise at a moderate pace for 150 minutes a week is the standard, plus several sessions of weight training per week are suggested. If you haven't exercised in a while, talk to your healthcare provider first.

The Heart of Women's Health

Women have unique heart-health issues though the keys to a healthy heart are universal

LISA ROTH COLLINS

small task, but it doesn't have to be difficult. An understanding and appreciation for the wonders of the heart and how it functions can be especially helpful when deciding what steps you need to take to keep it healthy. Discovering effective, natural ways to achieve this goal is part of this process.

Resting Heart Rate and Heart Rate Variability

Perhaps you've heard these terms from your doctor. If you have a fitness tracker watch or other devices, you may have heard them as well. But what are they and what do you need to know about them?

Resting heart rate is the number of times your heart beats per minute when you are at rest. This is when your heart is pumping the least amount of blood to provide your body with the oxygen it needs. According to the

Women's Health Initiative, a heart rate ranging from 60 to 100 beats per minute is normal, and women with rates at the lower end of the scale may be more protected against heart attacks.

When the researchers evaluated 129,135 postmenopausal women, they reported that those with a resting heart rate of more than 76 beats per minute were 26 percent Individuals with a high Keeping your heart in tip-top shape is no more likely to experience a heart attack or die from one when compared with women with a resting heart rate of 62 beats per minute or less.

> Heart rate variability is a measure of the variation in time between each heartbeat. This marker is controlled by the autonomic nervous system, which also regulates blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, and other important measures. Heart rate variability is traditionally measured using an electrocardiogram, but today's wrist and chest monitors allow people to take measurements at home or wherever they are.

> Basically, if you are anxious or in a stressful situation, the variation is usually low. If you are in a more relaxed state, the variation between beats may be higher. Therefore, individuals with a high heart rate variability may have better cardiovascular health and be better able to handle stress.

Fortunately, there are many lifestyle modifications you can make that can improve heart health and prevent heart disease without the use of medications. Diet and lifestyle changes should be the first line of defense unless you are in an emergency situation.

and Prevent Heart Disease Naturally

How to Improve Heart Health

heart rate variability may have better cardiovascular health and be better able to handle stress.

Cut the Sugar

You might think eating too much sugar is only associated with being overweight, but it also can cause heart disease. In a 15-year study that looked at added sugar and heart disease, individuals who consumed 25 percent or more of their daily calories as sugar were twice as likely to die from heart disease than people who consumed less than 10 percent added sugar.

Adopt a Healthy Eating Plan

The top-rated eating plans for heart health are





abi, arugula, or coleslaw, with mustard seed being the most potent. Adding a myrosinase-rich food is particularly important if you eat the broccoli raw or use frozen broccoli.

Ideally, broccoli should be steamed for three to four minutes to increase the available sulforaphane content. This light steaming eliminates epithiospecifier protein—a heat-sensitive sulfur-grabbing protein that inactivates sulforaphane while retaining the myrosinase in the broccoli.

This is important, because without myrosinase, your body can't absorb sulforaphane. If you opt for boiling, blanch the broccoli in boiling water for no more than 20 to 30 seconds, then immerse it in cold water to stop the cooking process.

If you prefer raw food, you would be better off eating raw broccoli sprouts instead of mature broccoli, as the sprouts contain up to 50 times the amount of anticancer compounds found in mature broccoli, including sulforaphane. As a result, you can eat far less of them while still maximizing your benefits.

Sauerkraut Does Your Heart Good

The fiber and healthy bacteria found in traditionally fermented and cultured foods also benefit your heart in a number of different ways. For example, probioticrich sauerkraut has been shown to reduce inflammation, promote gut health (which has system-wide implications), improve high blood pressure, reduce triglyceride levels, and maintain healthy cholesterol levels, all of which benefit your cardiovascular and heart health.

Lactobacillus Plantarum bacteria in fermented cabbages have also been shown to boost the activities of super-

Eat in Moderation

Overeating places a lot of stress on your heart as the digestive system steps up its activity. Eating too much can result in irregular, faster heart rhythms, which can result in a heart attack or heart failure.

Manage Stress Daily

The American Heart Association warns that chronic stress can cause heart trouble. Stress can lead to high blood pressure and increases the occurrence of cardiovascular events, as noted in a research article in The Lancet. Practice enjoyable activities that reduce stress, such as meditation, walking, visualization, dancing, yoga, tai chi, deep breathing, or journaling.

Bottom line

Women can keep their heart health in optimal shape by understanding some of the workings of the heart and adopting health-healthy habits. Be sure to get your blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels checked at regular intervals as suggested by the American Heart Association or under the advice of your physician.

To find the studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at *TheEpochTimes.com*

Lisa Roth Collins is a registered holistic nutritionist and also the marketing manager at NaturallySavvy.com, which first published this article.

oxide dismutase and glutathione peroxidase—two powerful antioxidants created in your body—and elevate gene expression of Nrf2, a transcription factor that regulates cellular oxidation and reduction and aids in detoxification. Sauerkraut is easy to make at home with just a few simple ingredients.

Magnesium-Rich Vegetables

Magnesium is profoundly important for heart health, and most people are deficient. More than 300 different enzymes rely on magnesium for proper function, and magnesium is required for a whole host of biochemical processes. This includes, but isn't limited to the creation of ATP (adenosine triphospate—the energy currency of your body), the relaxation of blood vessels, and healthy muscle and nerve function, including the action of your heart muscle.

If you're lacking in cellular magnesium, it can lead to the deterioration of your cellular metabolic function, which in turn can snowball into more serious health problems, including cardiovascular disease, sudden cardiac death, and even death from all causes. The best way to maintain healthy magnesium levels is to make sure you're eating plenty of darkgreen leafy vegetables.

Juicing your greens is an excellent way to increase your magnesium, along with many other important plant-based nutrients. When it comes to leafy greens, those highest in magnesium include spinach, swiss chard, turnip greens, beet greens, collard greens, and kale.

Aside from vegetables, there are other foods that are particularly rich in magnesium, including the following.

Raw cacao nibs and/or unsweetened cocoa powder: One ounce (28 grams) of raw cacao nibs contain about 64 milligrams (mg) of magnesium, as well as other valuable antioxidants, iron, and prebiotic fiber

that help feed healthy bacteria in your gut. Avocados: One medium avocado contains about 58 mg of magnesium, as well as healthy fats and fiber and other vitamins. They're also a good source of potassium, which helps offset the hypertensive effects of sodium.

Seeds and nuts: Pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds score among the highest, with one-quarter cup providing an estimated 48 percent, 32 percent, and 28 percent of the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) of magnesium, respectively. Cashews, almonds, and Brazil nuts are also good sources. One ounce (28 grams) of cashews contains 82 mg of magnesium, which equates to about 20 percent of the RDA. Fatty fish: Interestingly, fatty fish such

RAW SAUERKRAUT RECIPE

Here's a recipe for raw sauerkraut with fresh ginger from recipes.mercola.com INGREDIENTS 1 whole green cabbage

1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger 2 carrots, grated **Celery juice**

Starter culture PROCEDURE Grate, shred or slice the cabbage thinly, except for the outer leaves (set them

Female Versus Male Heart

Men and women are different in many ways, and this applies to their hearts as well. For example

- The female heart and some of its chambers are smaller
- by ratio than the male heart.
- Women's hearts pump faster than men's, but the male heart sends out more blood with each pump. Some of the chambers of the female heart are thinner and the
- veins are narrower than those of males.
- When under stress, the female pulse rate rises and results in more blood being pumped. Among males, however, stress leads to constricted arteries and a rise in blood pressure
- Accumulation of plaque causes heart attacks. In men, the plaque is usually hard and affects all three heart arteries. In women, the plaque is usually softer and blockage occurs in one or two arteries. Softer plaque tends to break away and travels in the bloodstream, leading to a heart attack.
- Women's hearts are affected by estrogen. When estrogen levels drop in perimenopause and beyond, the heart-protective power of the hormone declines, and the risk of heart disease climbs.
- Heart attacks in men typically involve a crushing pain in the chest, but women often feel acute pain in the back or upper abdomen, sweating, shortness of breath, and nausea.
- Sudden cardiac death is more common in men.
- · Women are more likely to have heart palpitations
- Heart attacks typically affect men at a younger age than women.
- · Women usually take longer to recover from a heart attack than men.

If you're lacking in cellular magnesium, it can lead to the deterioration of your cellular metabolic function, which in turn can snowball into more serious health problems.



Cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and cabbagewhich are widely recognized for their anticancer benefitsalso have a hearthealthy influence.

MARCOFOOD/ SHUTTERSTOCK

To find the studies mentioned in this *article, please see* the article online at TheEpochTimes.com as wild-caught Alaskan salmon and mackerel are also high in magnesium. A half fillet (178 grams) of salmon can provide about 53 mg of magnesium, equal to about 13 percent of the RDA.

Squash: One cup of winter squash provides close to 16.80 grams of magnesium—about 4 percent of your RDA.

Herbs and spices: Herbs and spices pack a lot of nutrients in small packages, and this includes magnesium. Some of the most magnesium-rich varieties are coriander, chives, cumin seed, parsley, mustard seeds, fennel, basil, and cloves. Fruits and berries: Ranking high for magnesium are papaya, raspberries, tomato, cantaloupe, strawberries, and watermelon. For example, one mediumsized papaya can provide nearly 58 grams of magnesium.

Heart-Healthy Benefits

of Onions, Other Quercetin-Rich Foods Last but not least, there are onions. Packed with quercetin, onions help combat inflammation and boost immune function. As a supplement, quercetin has been used to ameliorate obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and circulatory dysfunction. A 2016 meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials found that quercetin effectively lowered blood pressure at a dosage of about 500 mg per day. Other studies have shown that it helps reduce your risk of atherosclerosis.

Onions also contain sulfur-containing phytochemicals that help normalize your cholesterol and triglyceride levels and have anti-clotting properties that help lower your risk of stroke, coronary artery disease, and peripheral vascular diseases.

These delicious bulbs also contain polyphenols, which play an important role in preventing and reducing the progression of cardiovascular diseases, and inulin, which is an indigestible prebiotic fiber that nourishes beneficial bacteria in your gut. As a general rule, the more pungent on-

ions provide the greatest benefits. In summary, the best way to maximize your benefits is to eat a wide variety of vegetables on a daily basis, making sure to include nitrate-rich leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, magnesium- and quercetin-rich varieties, onions, and some homemade sauerkraut.

Dr. Joseph Mercola is the founder of Mercola.com. An osteopathic physician, bestselling 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.

aside). Shred the carrots and ginger, and add to the cabbage. Mix the starter culture in the celery juice, making sure it's completely dissolved. Add the juice to your vegetables, spreading it out evenly. Put as much as sauerkraut in a ceramic pot or glass container as you can. Get a masher, and mash the vegetables down. This will release more juices in your sauerkraut and eliminate any air pockets.

Place a cabbage leaf on top of your sauerkraut and tuck it down the sides. Cover the jar with the lid loosely (fermentation produces carbon dioxide, which will expand the iar).

Store the container in a place with a controlled temperature, like a cooler, for five to seven days. On the seventh day, transfer the sauerkraut to the refrigerator.

> Men and women have slightly different hearts and heart issues. For instance, women's hearts pump faster than men's and are more likely to have palpitations.

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Mind Over Medicine

In research studies and in real life, placebos have a powerful healing effect on the mind and body

ELISSA H. PATTERSON & HANS SCHRODER

Did vou ever feel vour own shoulders relax when you saw a friend receive a shoulder massage? For those of you who said yes, congratulations, your brain is using its power to create a "placebo effect." For those who said no, you're not alone, but thankfully, the brain is trainable.

Since the 1800s, the word placebo has been used to refer to a fake treatment, meaning one that doesn't contain any active, physical substance. You may have heard of placebos referred to as "sugar pills."

Today, placebos play a crucial role in medical studies in which some participants are given the treatment containing the active ingredients of the medicine, and others are given a placebo. These types of studies help tell researchers which medicines are effective, and how effective they are. Surprisingly, however, in some areas of medicine, placebos themselves pro-

vide patients with clinical improvement. As two psychologists interested in how psychological factors affect physical conditions and beliefs about mental health, we help our patients heal from various threats to well-being. Could the placebo effect tell us something new about the power of our minds and how our bodies heal?

Real-Life Placebo Effects

Today, scientists define these so-called placebo effects as the positive outcomes that can't be scientifically explained by reviewed were supported by high-quality the physical effects of the treatment. Research suggests that the placebo effect is caused by positive expectations, the provider-patient relationship, and the rituals around receiving medical care.

Depression, pain, fatigue, allergies, irritable bowel syndrome, Parkinson's disease, and even osteoarthritis of ments may not have been proven better the knee are just a few of the conditions that respond positively to placebos.

Despite their effectiveness, there is How Does a Placebo Work? in medicine.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administra- mysterious anymore. tion, the organization that regulates which medicines are allowed to go to the consumer market, requires that all new medicines be tested in randomized controlled trials that show they are bet- them feel better because all of those eleter than placebo treatments. This is an ments subtly convey the message that important part of ensuring the public they must be good treatments. has access to high-quality medications.

But studies have shown that the placebo effect is so strong that many drugs in the mind and body. Elements of the don't provide more relief than placebo body once thought to be outside of an treatments. In those instances, drug de- individual's control are now known to be velopers and researchers sometimes see modifiable. A legendary example of this placebo effects as a nuisance that masks is Tibetan monks who meditate to generthe treatment benefits of the manufac- ate enough body heat to dry wet sheets tured drug. That sets up an incentive for in 40-degree Fahrenheit temperatures. drug manufacturers to try to do away with

discourage patients who received placebos from reporting benefits.

Treating Depression

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, about 1 in 12 U.S. adults had a diagnosis of depression. During the pandemic, those numbers rose to 1 in 3 adults. That sharp rise helps explain why \$26.25 billion worth of antidepressant medications were used across the globe in 2020.

But according to psychologist and placebo expert Irving Kirsch, who has ally, the sound of the bell causes them studied placebo effects for decades, a to salivate even when they don't receive large part of what makes antidepressants any meat. A recent study from Harvard helpful in alleviating depression is the Medical School successfully used the placebo effect—in other words, the belief that the medication will be beneficial. tients use less opioid medication for pain

Depression isn't the only condition for following spine surgery.

The placebo effect can be sweet relief for patients but a nuisance to drug makers whose new product proves little better than a sugar pill.

> which medical treatments are ac-

tually functioning at the level of placebo. Many well-meaning

clinicians offer treatments that appear to work based on the fact that patients get better. But a recent study reported that only 1 in 10 of medical treatments evidence, according to a grading system by an international nonprofit organization. Nearly 70 percent of the studies examined had moderate or low-quality evidence and 22 percent had very-lowquality evidence. This means that many patients improve even though their treatthan the placebo.

stigma and debate about using placebos The power of the placebo comes down to in U.S. medicine. And in routine medi- the power of the mind and a person's skill cal practice, they're rarely used on pur- at harnessing it. If a patient gets a tension pose. But based on new understanding headache and their trusted doctor gives of how non-pharmacological aspects of them a medicine that they feel confident care work, and safety and patient prefer- will treat it, the relief they expect is likely ences, some experts have begun recom- to decrease their stress. And since stress mending increasing the use of placebos is a trigger for tension headaches, the magic of the placebo response isn't so

> Now let's say that the doctor gives the patient an expensive brand-name pill to take multiple times per day. Studies have shown that it is even more likely to make

Part of the beauty of placebos is that they activate existing systems of healing with-

A field called mind-body medicine deplacebos so that drugs pass the FDA tests. veloped from the work of cardiologist Placebos are such a problem for the en- Herbert Benson, who observed those terprise of drug development that a com- monks and other experts mastering conpany has developed a coaching script to trol over automatic processes of the body. It's well understood in the medical field that many diseases are made worse by the automatic changes that occur in the body under stress. If a placebo interaction reduces stress, it can reduce certain symptoms in a scientifically explainable way.

> Placebos also work by creating expectations and conditioned responses. Most people are familiar with Pavlovian conditioning. A bell is rung before giving dogs meat that makes them salivate. Eventusame conditioning principle to help pa-

Part of the beauty of placebos is that they activate existing systems of healing within the mind and body.



PERCENT

A 2013 study from the United Kingdom found that 97 percent of physicians acknowledged in a survey having used some form of placebo during their career.

Scientists believe that even the effectiveness of pharmaceuticals is affected by patients believing they will workthe placebo effect.

Furthermore, multiple brain imaging studies demonstrate changes in the brain in response to successful placebo treatments for pain. This is excellent news, given the ongoing opioid epidemic and the need for effective pain management tools. There is even evidence that individuals who respond positively to placebos show increased activity in areas of the brain that release naturally occurring opioids.

And emerging research suggests that even when people know they are receiving a placebo, the inactive treatment still has effects on the brain and reported levels of improvement.

Placebos Are Nontoxic and

Universally Applicable In addition to the ever-increasing body of evidence surrounding their effectiveness, placebos offer multiple benefits. They have no side effects. They are cheap. They aren't addictive. They provide hope when there might not be a specific chemically active treatment available. They mobilize a person's own ability to heal through multiple pathways, including those studied in the field of psychoneuroimmunology. This is the study of relationships between the immune system, hormones, and the nervous system.

By defining a placebo as the act of setting positive expectations and providing hope through psychosocial interactions, it becomes clear that placebos can enhance traditional medical treatments.

Using Placebos to Help People in an **Ethical Way**

The placebo effect is recognized as being powerful enough that the American Medical Association considers it ethical to use placebos to enhance healing on their own or with standard medical treatments if the patient agrees to it.

Clinically, doctors use the principles of placebo in a more subtle way than it's used in research studies. A 2013 study from the United Kingdom found that 97 percent of physicians acknowledged in a survey having used some form of placebo during their career. This might be as simple as expressing a strong belief in the likelihood that a patient will feel better from whatever treatment the doctor prescribes, even if the treatment itself isn't chemically powerful.

There is now even an international Society for Interdisciplinary Placebo Studies. They have written a consensus statement about the use of placebos in medicine and recommendations for how to talk with patients about it. In the past, patients who improved from a placebo effect might have felt embarrassed, as if their ailment weren't real.

But with the medical field's growing acceptance and promotion of placebo effects, we can envision a time when patients and clinicians take pride in their skill at harnessing the placebo response.

Elissa H. Patterson is a clinical assistant professor of psychiatry and neurology at the University of Michigan, and Hans Schroder is a clinical assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of Michigan. This article was first published on The Conversation.



As COVID-19 Slogs On, Seniors Suffer Growing Malaise

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Continued from Page 9 has hit seniors

COVID-19

particularly

hard. Some

feel trapped,

just waiting

time to run

out. Others,

however, have

found ways to

stay upbeat.

for their

"Folks are becoming more anxious and angry and stressed and agitated because this has gone on for so long," said Katherine Cook, chief operating officer of Monadnock Family Services in Keene, New Hampshire, which operates a community mental health center that serves older adults.

Henry Kimmel, a clinical psychologist in Sherman Oaks, California, who focuses on older adults, said, "I've never seen so many people who say they're hopeless and have nothing to look forward to."

To be sure, older adults have cause for concern. Throughout the pandemic, they've been at much higher risk of becoming seriously ill and dying than other age groups. Even seniors who are fully vaccinated and boosted remain vulnerable: More than twothirds of vaccinated people hospitalized from June 2021 through September 2021 with breakthrough infections were 65 or older.

The constant stress of wondering, "Am I going to be OK?" and "What's the future going to look like?" has been hard for Kathleen Tate, 74, a retired nurse in Mount Vernon, Washington. She has late-onset post-polio syndrome and severe osteoarthritis.

"I guess I had the expectation that once we were vaccinated the world would open up again," said Tate, who lives alone. Although that happened for a while this past summer, she largely stopped going out as first the Delta and Omicron variants swept quiet desperation."

This isn't something that Tate talks about with friends, although she's hungry for human connection.

"I see everybody dealing with extraordinary stresses in their lives, and I don't want to add to that by complaining or asking to be comforted," she said.

Tate described a feeling of "being worn out" and "flatness" that saps her motivation. "It's almost too much effort to reach out to people and try to pull myself out of that place," she said, admitting that she's watching too much TV and drinking too much alcohol. "It's just like I want to mellow out and go numb, instead of bucking up and

trying to pull myself together." Beth Spencer, 73, a recently retired social worker who lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan, with her 90-year-old husband, is grappling with similar feelings during this typically challenging Midwestern winter.

"The weather here is gray, the sky is gray, and my psyche is gray," Spencer said. "I typically am an upbeat person, but I'm struggling to stay motivated."

Spencer said her husband was recently diagnosed with congestive heart failure as

"I can't sort out whether what I'm going through is due to retirement or caregiver stress or COVID," she said. "I find myself asking 'What's the meaning of my life right now?' and I don't have an answer."

Bonnie Olsen, a clinical psychologist at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine, works extensively with older adults.

"At the beginning of the pandemic, many older adults hunkered down and used a lifetime of coping skills to get through this," Olsen said. "Now, as people face this current surge, it's as if their well of emotional reserves is being depleted."

Most at risk are older adults who are isolated and frail, who were vulnerable to depression and anxiety even before the pandemic, or who have suffered serious losses and acute grief. Watch for signs that they're withdrawing from social contact or shutting down emotionally, according to Olsen.

"When people start to avoid being in touch, then I become more worried," she said. Fred Axelrod, 66, of Los Angeles, who's disabled because of ankylosing spondylitis, a serious form of arthritis, lost three close through her area. Now she said she feels "a friends during the pandemic: Two died of cancer and one died of complications related to diabetes.

> "You can't go out and replace friends like that at my age," Axelrod said.



Some older adults have been able to find a community of new friends online and this has helped cure their loneliness, especially once they were able to meet in person.

66

I find myself asking **'What's the** meaning of my life right now?' and I don't have an answer.

Beth Spencer, 73, recently retired social worker

66

Older adults are thinking about mortality more than ever and asking, 'How will we ever get out of this nightmare.

Henry Kimmel, clinical psychologist

QILIN'S PRANCE FILMMAKER/SHUTTERSTO

Now, the only person he talks to on a regular basis is Kimmel, his therapist.

"I don't do anything. There's nothing to do, nowhere to go," Axelrod said. "There's a lot of times I feel I'm just letting the clock run out. You start thinking, 'How much more time do I have left?""

"Older adults are thinking about mortality more than ever and asking, 'How will we ever get out of this nightmare," Kimmel said. "I tell them we all have to stay in the present moment and do our best to keep ourselves occupied and connect with other people."

Loss has been a defining feature of the pandemic for Bud Carraway, 79, of Midvale, Utah, whose wife, Virginia, died a year ago. She was a stroke survivor who had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and atrial fibrillation, an abnormal heartbeat. The couple, who met in the Marines, had been married for 55 years.

"I became depressed. Anxiety kept me awake at night. I couldn't turn my mind off," Carraway said.

Those feelings and a sense of being trapped throughout the pandemic "brought me pretty far down," he said.

Help came from an eight-week grief support program offered online through the University of Utah. One of the assignments was to come up with a list of strategies for cultivating well-being, which Carraway now keeps on his front door. Among the items listed: "Walk the mall. Eat with friends. Do some volunteer work. Join a bowling league. Go to a movie. Check out senior centers."

"I'd circle them as I accomplished each one of them. I knew I had to get up and get out and live again," Carraway said. "This program, it just made a world of difference."

Kathie Supiano, an associate professor at the University of Utah College of Nursing who oversees the COVID-19 grief groups, said older adults' ability to bounce back from setbacks shouldn't be discounted.

"This isn't their first rodeo. Many people remember polio and the AIDs epidemic," Supiano said. "They've been through a lot and know how to put things in perspective."

Alissa Ballot, 66, realized recently that she can trust herself to find a way forward. After becoming extremely isolated early in the pandemic, Ballot moved in November 2021 from Chicago to New York. There, she found a community of new friends online at Central Synagogue in Manhattan, and her loneliness evaporated as she began attending events in person.

With Omicron's rise in December 2021, Ballot briefly became fearful that she would end up alone again. But this time, something clicked as she pondered some of her rabbi's spiritual teachings.

"I felt paused on a precipice looking into the unknown and suddenly I thought, 'So, we don't know what's going to happen next, stop worrying," she said. "And I relaxed. Now I'm like, this is a blip, and I'll get through it."

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

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

WISE HABITS

Why Perfectionism Stops Us From Creating New Habits Our perfect picture of how we will commit to a new habit can discourage us when reality intervenes

LEO BABAUTA

When we decide to create a new habit exercise, healthy eating, meditation, writing—we can get excited and optimistic. We may imagine how it will go perfectly. This is such a hopeful time! Unfortunately, reality has other plans.

Our perfect idea of how our new habit will go is pretty much never how it actually goes. We might do really well for a few days or even a couple of weeks, but inevitably we'll miss a day or two because of tiredness, busyness, sickness, visitors, forgetting, etc. And then things get derailed—not because of the interruption, but because of our perfect idea of how we hoped the habit would go.

This is one of the main obstacles to forming habits. Our hopeful idea of how it will go, and then our disappointment and frustration with ourselves when it doesn't go that way.

The idea that we should be super consistent and perfect in our habit attempts can derail us.

Here's what typically happens:

We think, "I'm going to start doing X every day!" Then our minds get excited and we start imagining how it will go, and how it's going to make our lives better and make us a better person.

We start trying to do X every day.

The reality doesn't match the imagination in some way: Doing X is not as fun as we thought it would be, or we miss a couple of days, or we repeatedly miss a couple of days.

We get frustrated by the way things are going. We are disappointed in ourselves. We're discouraged. We eventually quit and our self-image gets hurt.

You can see from this sequence that the problem isn't missing a couple of daysit's the expectation or fantasy that we had about how it would go, and the resulting



Making habits stick takes practice at starting again, and ample self kindness.

disappointment, frustration, and discouragement that has us quit and feel badly about ourselves. The problem isn't the reality, it's the ex-

pectation that things will go a certain way. How could we find a different way?

What if we simply said, "Let me try to bring

Reality-Based Habit Change

a daily ritual of doing X into my life, and be curious about what it will be like"? So there doesn't have to be a fantasy that it will go perfectly or brilliantly. We don't

know how it will be. But we can bring an intention to do it and a curiosity about what that will be like.

Then we start doing it. We miss a day, but this isn't a cause for discouragement. It's a cause for curiosity-what got in the way? What would it be like to start again today? Each day becomes a lovely place of learn-

Then "successful" days and "failure" days aren't really binary results of success/failure, but instead a rich place of curiosity and learning.

What would that be like for you?

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

Using Stress to Your Advantage

Athletes use stress to boost their well-beingand you can too

PAUL MANSELL

Almost everyone wants to know how to reduce stress. After all, stress can have many negative effects on both our physical and mental health. An increasing body of evidence shows that changing the way we think about stress might actually better help us manage it. Not only can this improve our well-being, including our mental health, it can also make us better able to thrive in stressful situations in the future. And the way you can learn to do this is from athletes.

The way a person thinks about stress in general is called a "stress mindset." Some people see stress as something negative and think that it should be avoided completely. Others see stress more positively and think it will have benefits for their health, performance, or productivity.

Studies in the United States and Australia have shown that people who see stress as enhancing can experience greater productivity at work, better mental health, and academic performance. There are also links between a positive mindset and how people view stressful situations—such as seeing difficult tasks as a challenge instead of a threat.

But until now, little was known about stress mindsets and athletes. Given that athletes encounter stressful situations that they often have little control over every day—such as from the media, or during a race or match—our research team wanted to investigate how their beliefs about stress impact their mental health.

We collected data from more than 400 athletes from around the world. Participants came from a variety of different sports and ranged from recreational to elite athletes. We used questionnaires to measure athletes' stress mindset and their mental health. We then analyzed how these two We found that athletes who saw stress as positive or enhancing were more likely to see stressful situations as a challenge. related to each other, alongside whether age, gender, and competitive level factored in.

We found that athletes who saw stress as positive or enhancing were more likely to see stressful situations as a challenge. This was also linked to better mental health on average, including more energy and fewer depressive symptoms.

Of course, chronic stress is linked to a whole host of negative health conditions so it's important not to depict stress as only being a positive thing. But if we highlight that responses to acute stress can actually be helpful, athletes are more likely to see better performance and mental health. For example, if an athlete sees the stress of competition as useful, it might lead them to have better focus and motivation to succeed.

Stress Mindset

Of course, athletes are a bit different from the average person. But that doesn't mean we can't also learn to change our own stress mindset to boost our mental health. Studies have shown that in the average person, watching videos that explain the positive effects of stress and why stress happens can help them to change their stress mindset.

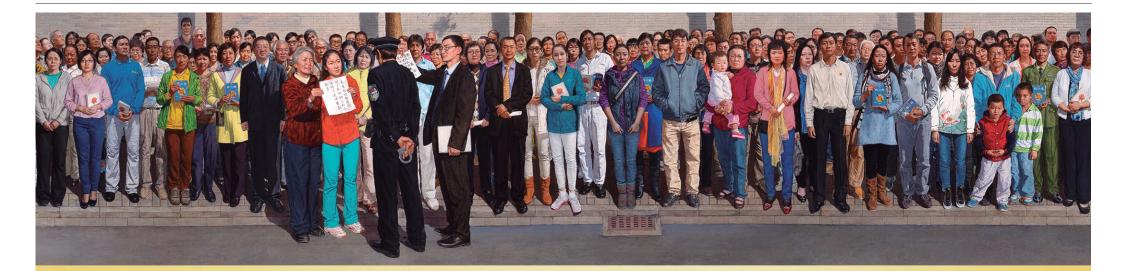
Studies have even shown that watching such videos can help people perform better when faced with a mock job interview and have better focus. Another study has also shown that thinking about your responses to stress as a positive (rather than negative) reaction can improve well-being and academic performance. This might involve a person thinking of their nervous stomach as a sign that they're excited instead of stressed.

The best way to put this into practice is to visualize your stressful situation and how you will respond to it, similar to what an athlete might do. For example, imagine you're about to give a presentation at work. First, acknowledge any symptoms of stress you might be feeling—such as an increased heart rate. Second, welcome these feelings, recognizing they're designed to help you focus and increase your energy.

Finally, visualize yourself making the choice to see stress as helpful and use these responses to thrive under pressure. This may seem difficult at first, but with practice, we can all learn to use visualization to reinterpret stress as being helpful.

Stress isn't always distress. If we choose to accept and embrace the upsides of stress, it can improve our mental health, performance, and productivity.

Paul Mansell is a doctoral candidate in stress in sport at the University of Birmingham in the UK. This article was first published on The Conversation.





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